

Vermin infestation in Eric Milner A block

Rats and other pests have been found in the block, built in 1969, causing dining rooms and kitchens to be closed



By [Anwen Baker](#), News Editor (2013/14)
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Credit: Mattieu Aubry

Dilapidated Vanbrugh block Eric Milner A has succumbed to a vermin invasion, playing host to rats and silverfish.

Rats and other vermin have been found in the accommodation block, built in 1969, causing dining rooms and kitchens to be closed.

After a rat was spotted in the first floor dining room in early January all dining rooms, which are separate from the kitchens, have been locked and residents have been ordered to empty out all kitchen cupboards. As of yet residents are still unable to use their kitchens for cooking. According to one resident "some traps have been laid outside and in a couple of kitchens". Residents of Eric Milner A, a catered block during the week, have been offered free weekend meals to compensate for the lack of kitchen amenities.

This is not the first time that Eric Milner A has faced such problems. The 2012-2013 residents were forced to face ants, rats and broken water pipes amongst other issues.

Henry Hank Perks, a current Eric A resident, told Nouse "rats shouldn't be able to get in in the first place, and then also the way we've been treated once they've gotten in."

"The way we've been told to pretty just get on with it has been rather unfair. The attitude seems to be "That's Eric A for you, just get on with it!" whereas if the same problems were in Barbara Scott or Donald Barron there would be a much bigger deal made about it."



A photo of a silverfish, taken by Eric A resident Owen Symons

However, rats are not the only problem that these Vanbrites are facing. According to Perks, they have had “broken toilets and the first 2 and half weeks of last term we had no heating. People have had broken lights, broken windows, mould in their rooms, clogged drains, broken showers, silver fish in their sinks. We’re all pretty shocked that Eric A is staying up for another 5 years”.

A University spokesperson told Nouse “A rodent was discovered in a store room in Eric Milner White A block on 5 January. Environmental services contractors were called in and it was established that up to three kitchens may have been affected. We are monitoring the situation closely and keeping students informed via regular emails.”

Michael Duncan, Vanbrugh Chair, said “The university needs to do more to improve Eric A. Whilst the college welfare team has done a great job dealing with the current issues in the past couple of weeks, a lot of these problems are not new. If these older accommodation blocks are going to remain in use for the foreseeable future, the great community spirit they foster is not going to be enough.

“It’s important that the university invests in them to make them clean, modern and comfortable places to live, rather than only spending money when things go wrong.

“In the meantime, though, myself and the rest of the JCRC will be working closely with the residents of Eric A to support any action they wish to take in response to these problems.”

Additionally students from Eric Milner D block, which will be demolished in Easter, have now been moved into Eric Milner A. One Eric D resident told Nouse about moving into Eric A. They said ““We weren’t really given much notice about when we had to move out, we just got an email about two weeks before we had to leave.

“When I got here the rooms weren’t up to standard; my sink leaked, the light didn’t work, the carpet was damaged and the window sills were covered in mould. The kitchens were dirty and the fridges were full of mould when we got here.”

George Offer, YUSU Welfare Officer, commented on the University’s handling of the situation: “Although the presence of rats in University accommodation is unacceptable, the response from the University this time has been extremely rapid and generous ensuring all students affected were able to eat while their kitchens were out of use. I think this is due in no small part to the hard work of a number of JCRCs to stand up for their students when they’ve had a raw deal with their accommodation, which is making the University take notice, treat residents as grown ups and recognise their rights as tenants.”



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