**Distribution:**

Animal fleas

**Information and control advice**

Both dog and cat fleas are found throughout the UK and are the main flea species encountered in the home. The cat flea is by far the most common as they can also live on dogs. The human flea is now a relatively rare species and is therefore unlikely to be found in the home.

**Biology:**

The adult flea lays its eggs amongst the fur of the host animal but they soon drop off into the animals sleeping or resting place and onto carpets and floorboards where they hatch into the larval stage. These larvae feed on various types of debris including dead skin and dust, but mainly on the faeces of the adult flea. Once larval development is completed they spin a cocoon and enter the pupae stage. Generally, the adult flea will emerge from this stage after approximately one month. However the adults may remain within the cocoon for considerably longer, only emerging when they sense the vibrations caused by a passing host. It is this aspect of flea biology that often leads to flea infestations being encountered in properties long after the cat or dog has left. Although animal fleas prefer to feed exclusively on the blood of their host animal, if that animal is not around or the infestation level is very high they will feed from humans.

**Significance:**

Although fleas are generally considered to be responsible for transmitting diseases there is little evidence to suggest that the cat or dog flea transmits any serious illnesses to humans. However, the highly

Image of a animal flea.

Irritating nature of flea bites to both the host animal and humans can be very unpleasant.

**Control:**

Control of animal fleas in the home is best achieved in 3 stages. Firstly, the cat or dog should be treated with an insecticide provided by your vet. Secondly, the animals bedding should be washed, all floor areas and upholstered furnishings thoroughly vacuumed to remove animal hair, flea eggs, pupae and other debris. Thirdly, all the above areas should then be treated with an insecticide approved for this specific purpose. Again this product should be purchased from a vet and the manufacturer’s instructions followed. Our pest control section can also arrange treatment but a charge is made for this service (discounts available subject to status).

**ALWAYS FOLLOW THE MANUFACTURERS INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE ON THE CONTAINER.**

If you have tried all the above advice for at least 4 weeks and still have a problem with fleas in your home, or you would prefer to get professional help, then Lewisham Council can offer you a treatment service. The cost of this is £125 full rate or £62.50 for discretions for one treatment and one retreat should it prove necessary.

If you would like to make an appointment, please contact:-

Servicepoint on 020 8314 7171.