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Toryglen flat rented by Thistle Housing Association floods eight times in one year



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A MUM says she has been left on antidepressants due to the stress caused by more than a year of flooding in her flat.

Angela McCabe told how her then five-year-old boy was hospitalised with a chest infection and her teenage son forced to live with his gran due to conditions in the rented property.

The healthcare worker is at her wit's end following 12 months that have seen:

- *Eight separate flooding incidents in her bedroom, bathroom and kitchen
- *Raw sewage seeping in to her bathroom for nearly six weeks
- *Household items such as her bed, toaster and kettle ruined
- *New bathroom decor ruined by fresh flooding
- *A window explode, shattering glass across the kitchen and
- *An infestation of beetles in the bedroom and hallway.

Angela said: "When the latest flooding started I thought, 'I can't do this any more, I really can't'.

"It's so stressful and I don't know what else to do.

"I've been to the doctors and been put on antidepressants because I'm so stressed. Coming home is awful because you don't know what you're coming in to.

"This is going to sound silly but I wake up in the middle of the night thinking I'm hearing drips."



Angela McCabe whose flat in Toryglen has been flooded from above for months Picture: Gordon Terris

The 45-year-old and her two sons, aged 19 and six, moved into the Toryglen flat two years ago, which was rented from Thistle Housing Association.

This newspaper has told repeatedly of failings at Thistle that led to the social landlord finally being taken over by Sanctuary **Scotland**.

On March 12 last year Angela was shocked to find a large volume of water coming in to her bedroom from the flat above.

She contacted Thistle and was told there was work being done in the flat above so went up to speak to the workmen.

They told her a water tank had leaked while they were emptying it.

Sanctuary confirmed to the Glasgow Times a new heating system malfunctioned in a flat above and caused water penetration in multiple properties.

Angela said the workmen laid down sheets to soak up the water then plastered cracks on the ceiling.

The flat began to smell damp and she had to sleep in the living room while the bedroom dried out.



Angela McCabe whose flat in Toryglen has been flooded from above for months Picture: Gordon Terris

Her youngest son, then aged five, caught a chest infection from the dampness and ended up spending four days in hospital.

There was also, she said, an infestation of beetles that emerged in the bedroom and hallway.

Despite all this, Angela says she didn't hear anything further from Thistle about the issue.

Shortly after the first flooding, water began leaking in through the bathroom light fitting.

Angela, who has worked during the pandemic testing residents in care homes for for Covid-19, says she spoke to the workmen again.

But no one came out to the flat and she was left to resolve the issue for herself.

Then, on September 3 last year, water began coming in through the ceiling of the kitchen, soaking the cooker, toaster and kettle.

An out of hours plumber arrived around 9pm but said there was nothing he could do as he couldn't access the flat above.

At 11pm that night the electrics cut out - the electricity cupboard had also been flooded.



Angela left for work at 6.30am but contacted Thistle's office when it opened at 9am. She was told someone would come out so returned home.

At 3pm that day an electrician finally attended and carried out repairs.

Sanctuary told us that the flooding was due to the upstairs neighbour's bath overflowing - but Angela says the flat overhead was empty at this time and the upstairs neighbour confirms they moved in to the flat in October.

Just days later, on September 14, Angela was in the living room when there was a loud crack from the kitchen.

A pane of glass in the window had shattered, despite no one being near it.

Angela said: "When the glazier came out to see it he said that sometimes the gas in between the panes can build up then explode.

"But when I said that to Thistle they just laughed at me.

"If my wee boy hadn't been sitting with me in the living room when it happened then I would have been more angry - it could have been a lot worse."

Initially, she said, Thistle insisted she would have to pay for the damage but eventually the housing association conceded and paid for the repair.

In November, there began to be a strong smell in the bathroom and when a plumber attended it emerged a sewage pipe had broken.



Damage in Angela McCabe's flat

It took until December 22 - around five weeks - for the pipe to be repaired, despite raw sewage leaking into Angela's flat when neighbours flushed their toilets.

There was also boiling water leaking into the room.

Sanctuary said the lengthy delay was necessary due to a need to remove asbestos boards in the flat to allow the plumber safe access to the block's communal waste pipe.

Angela said: "They never even covered it up even though I told them I had a five-year-old boy here.

"I phoned Environmental **Health** and someone came out - they were horrified.

"It came to a point that I wanted to move in with my mum but because I was working on the covid team that wouldn't have been suitable."

Angela, who also has a son of 23, had her teenager move to live with his gran and she took steps to make the flat safer for her youngest boy.

After the sewage pipe was repaired in December, Angela redecorated her bathroom... but days later water began leaking through the light fitting.



Damage in Angela McCabe's flat

In total there have been eight flooding incidents in the past year, the most recent occurring this month.

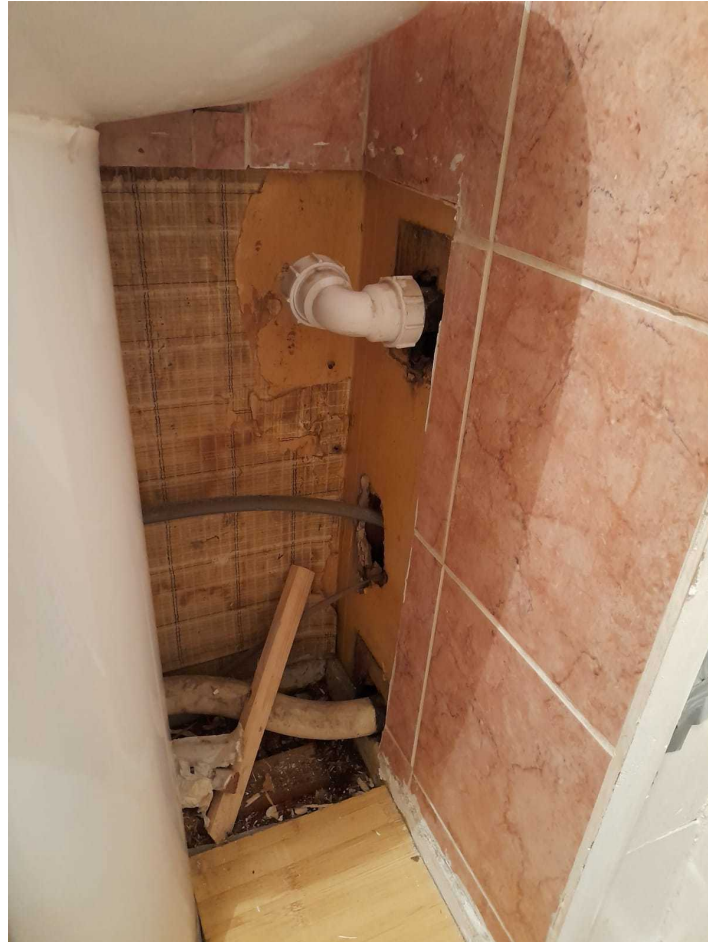
She says she lights candles in the bathroom at night because she's too afraid to switch the electricity on and she never allows her son in the bathroom on his own.

Thistle's housing stock officially transferred to Sanctuary on March 1 and the new landlord says it will take control of the situation.

The Glasgow Times was told a housing officer will contact Angela to arrange an inspection of the flat this week.

A Sanctuary Scotland spokesman said: "We sympathise with Ms McCabe's distress and are sorry she feels her former landlord let her down.

"From Ms McCabe's account it appears the reasons for Thistle's actions could have been better communicated at the time."



Damage in Angela McCabe's flat

Angela said: "The flat stinks of dampness. I have air fresheners and candles everywhere to try to mask the smell.

"I have redecorated and it looks like all that will need ripped out to find the source of the leaks as the water is still coming in.

"This is so stressful, it feels like it will never be resolved and I don't know who to turn to."

The Sanctuary spokesman added: "We are aware of the cosmetic issues within the property which, while visually unappealing, do not impact on Ms McCabe or her family's health and result from historic water penetration.

"The Scottish Government's lockdown restrictions allow only emergency repairs to be carried out inside people's homes and cosmetic issues are not classed as emergencies.

"Ms McCabe will be contacted to arrange a date to decorate these areas as soon as we're legally allowed to do so."