

Cancer patient worries about repeat of flooding at her home

A woman living in a ground floor flat in Queen's Court, Blackhall believes it is in danger of being flooded again – only two years after she had to move out of her home to allow repairs to be carried out.

Last time there were severe floods Jenni Paling was out of her home for six months while the flood damage was repaired and she lost a lot of sentimental items, much of it due to sewage contamination. With any forecast of heavy rain the danger of being flooded once more fills her with dread.

Mrs Paling is now undergoing treatment for cancer and the situation has become more important than ever. As a chemotherapy patient she has to avoid infection, and flooding is a risk to her as well as creating stress.



21st September 2022 Edinburgh – Queens Court Resident Jenni Paling at her property which has been flooded several times due to an issue with drains.

Her daughter Emma said: “She is not fit enough to relocate should her flat become flooded again. On top of everything

else she is going through, it is something else she really could do without having to worry about. Residents of Queen's Court have complained repeatedly to Scottish Water and to Edinburgh Council yet they are still to act.

"My mum has sandbags to put outside her door, which due to her current health situation, the neighbours are doing for her."



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Cllr Hal Osler said: "The situation at Queen's Court has been going on for a number of years and has been truly horrendous for the poor residents who live there. They have been flooded out twice, the second time shortly after the residents had only just been able to return.

"It's not a blocked gully issue, it's far worse. Queen's Court sits at the bottom of a gradient and it has a mains sewer running down the side of the property meeting another pipe that it connects to. When there are heavy rains the sewer

build up becomes overwhelmed and floods the garden and lower flats.

“I have been working with residents, Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP, officers and Scottish Water to make improvements to this situation which you can imagine is not a quick fix. Small immediate things have happened for example. the gullies in the area are on the Council sensitive list and Scottish Water have fitted non return valves. There have been several meeting with Scottish Water and I have this week been included in an email exchange with Scottish Water about an agreement to fit flood defences. The issue I am afraid is always the same which is money.

“I brought a motion to council last year asking that the Convener of Transport and Environment write to Scottish Ministers to seek more funding (which she did). The response back was the Council can apply for funding for projects. I am following this up with officers as this is not a single issue. It is wider and unless we improve the system itself then small bits of work will only push the problem further down the road.

“There are issues in many other places like Blackhall, Craigleith Hill, Drylaw, Inverleith and the Orchard areas and my firm commitment is to make improvements across the area as otherwise the problem will just move to other unsuspecting residents.

“I have spent some time checking the sensitive gullies that I know flood to ensure that they are clear. Though this in a way can add to the problems by adding more water to the system. I have been in communications with officers to see where we are in applying for funding for flood prevention. I will also be following up with Scottish Water to see why action has not been taken.

“To be honest I dread the weather forecast when heavy rain is predicted as I know the stress and impact that it has on

residents the fear of being flooded and the anxiety it has on them. One of the reasons I stood as a councillor again was to drive forward proper flood relief measures so that residents don't have to fear the rain."

Mrs Paliing said:"The drains for surface water are now cleaned regularly after the big flood – the drain which is being flooded goes under the wall and away to other area. This is flood back from elsewhere and we've reported it every time it happens- it's a rain drain primarily but sewerage is coming into it. Honestly no one cares."

A Scottish Water spokesperson said: "Scottish Water have been working on developing a solution to reduce the risk of flooding at Queen's Court in Blackhall. We are now progressing detailed planning of the proposed mitigations that will reduce the impact of future flooding incidents."

When asked about immediate action Scottish Water replied: "Mitigations to reduce the impact of flooding take time to plan and deliver, however, until they are in place, Scottish Water will always look to attend to properties and areas affected by flooding as quickly as possible."

FirstPort Limited who manage the privately owned retirement development at Queen's Court at present will hand over to Trinity Factors will take over property management on 1 November.

A spokesperson for FirstPort Limited said: "We understand the distress and anxiety that flooding has caused for our residents at Queen's Court and we worked with insurers to repair the damage and get residents back into their homes as quickly and safely as possible. We are working with Scottish Water to install mitigation measures, including flood doors and barriers, to better protect the building when adverse weather puts it at risk."



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