

Flood Champion's Fears For Repairs To Water Damaged Homes

Submitted by: Shepherd PR Limited

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A leading campaigner for the victims of flooding fears householders whose properties have been affected by the adverse weather conditions could be targeted by unscrupulous tradesmen.

The chair of The Flood Protection Association, Mary Dhonau OBE, fears the effect could see flood victims dealt a double blow, with shoddy repairs impacting on their existing misery.

Mary is a tireless campaigner on flood-related issues and received an OBE in 2009 for the cause. She is also the chief executive of the Know Your Flood Risk Campaign and runs a community flood consultancy.

With first hand experience of the upheaval flooding causes, Mary's own home in Worcester has been affected on many occasions, the worst being two separate occasions when it was washed out by three feet of raw sewage.

Mary said: "Being flooded is an appalling experience, but often the reality is that for those victims of flooding, the recovery stage can be worse than being flooded.

"Often people have said that they fear having builders in their homes more than they fear being flooded again.

"Sadly, some people have also had to move out again after initial flood repairs were carried out, to have poor workmanship redone correctly, and this only compounds the trauma.

"Householders affected by flooding are often anxious to return home and back to normality as soon as possible, so when a seemingly friendly builder knocks at the door promising to 'fix it quick and cheap,' the traumatised home owner will often grab at the 'ray of light' offered.

"Unfortunately, unscrupulous contractors are likely to come out of the woodwork and target those affected, with so many properties affected by water damage recently.

"But flooded houses need restoring by sympathetic builders who can go that extra mile to support people who, after all, have not chosen to have a builder in their homes but their situation has forced the situation on to them.

"Professional contractors will also realise that they are dealing with people who are traumatised, who have often lost everything dear to them including their homes, as well as their sanctity and everyday normal pattern of life.

"So I would urge those affected by floods to ensure they have a suitably qualified builder, who will restore the property correctly, not cut any corners and enable the homeowner to move back as soon as possible, knowing that a good job has been done.

"Those affected should use a trusted, quality contractor and look for a one carrying a recognised sign

of competency, such as a member of the trade body The Property Care Association.”

The Property Care Association (PCA) (<http://www.property-care.org/>), which has a Flood Remediation Group (<http://www.property-care.org/general-information/flood-restoration>) dedicated to best practice in the recovery of water damaged buildings, has seen first-hand the problem of inappropriate flood repairs.

PCA general manager, Steve Hodgson said: “In our experience, problems with repairs to flood damaged properties are common - but may only surface months or years after the property is repaired.

“In areas such as Hull, which suffered catastrophic flooding in 2007, we have seen some householders suffer because some contractors with little or no understanding of the effects of water in buildings carried out remedial work.

“Homes were repaired and then around six months later householders were dealt a double blow because the property became blighted by damp (<http://www.property-care.org/damp-control>) and they had to leave their home again for more repairs to be carried out.

“The PCA specialises in managing damp in buildings, and property and home owners affected by the recent floods can get in touch for professional advice on repairs.

“By using the right recovery strategies a building will be reoccupied faster with fewer problems and allow those affected to get their lives back sooner.

“It may also be possible to use products and techniques that will allow a building to be repaired and reoccupied before the fabric of the building is completely dry, meaning people get back living in their homes, without compromising the repair or living conditions.”

The PCA is a member of TrustMark, the scheme supported by government to help property owners find reliable and trustworthy tradespeople to make home improvements.

The Association has drawn up a practical Code of Practice, which sets out the principles of flood recovery, and members of the trade body can also provide access to a unique insured guarantee for this type of work.

This allows members to issue guarantees on flood recovery work that can be supported by an FSA regulated product, available from Guarantee Protection Insurance.

To find out more log onto the www.thefpa.org.uk or www.property-care.org

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Notes To Editors

About Mary Dhonau

The chair of the Flood Protection Association, Mary has been flooded herself on many occasions and has extensive experience in supporting and advising the victims of flooding during their recovery.

She has championed promotion of individual flood protection and resilience and is a passionate advocate of empowering communities to recognise and take responsibility for minimising their collective flood risk.

Mary has represented the 'voice of the flood victim' at government level, in the media, and at flood risk management national conferences.

She has worked alongside the Environment Agency at many 'flood surgeries' and is a respected figure within the flood protection industry. Mary was awarded an OBE in 2009 for her services to the environment.

About the Property Care Association (PCA)

Noted for its training and technical expertise, the PCA incorporates the British Wood Preserving and Damp-proofing Association (BWPDA), which has been in formation for 80 years.

Its contractor members are all carefully vetted before being awarded membership - and are then subject to rigorous auditing procedures once admitted to the Association.

The trade body represents the UK's structural repair sector, as well as the structural waterproofing, wood preservation, damp-proofing, flood remediation and invasive weed control industries.

As well as delivering a trusted repair procedure, PCA members are able to carry out specialist surveys as part of the house-buying procedure to identify potential problems – as well as a range of other services designed to preserve and protect homes and buildings across the UK.

To find a PCA member log on to www.property-care.org and select the 'Find A Member' service.

Press release issued by Jane Shepherd of Shepherd PR Limited, 01538 308685, mobile 07985 129315.