Individual submission by the friend of a disabled man.

Circa 2014/15 XXX had a rodent problem in the property that had chewed out some live electrical cables and also a water pipe under the kitchen floor. A report was put in and the council came back and said they could not hear any water under the kitchen even though it was noticeable but agreed the electrics needed to be sorted as soon as possible, however to do so everything had to be boxed and taken out of the property. This argument between them and me went on for nearly 3 years as they were not going help provide storage as XXX does have a lot of high valued items which he had accrued prior to becoming a council tenant and sees it as an investment as he is a music producer ( or rather was which I will come to later).

I then decided to use my student finance allowance to help XXX pay for storage but what ever was taken out was never enough and as I was a FT student I couldn’t really fully concentrate on moving the items out when I had either assignments or exams to prepare for. This went on for over a year and I have receipts to provide how much was paid out during this time but the electrical were finally fixed so works could be done on the kitchen. All this time the water was still gushing and coming through the floors boards in the kitchen making it perilous to enter for an abled bodied person let alone someone who is unsteady on his feet and prone to falling down. When a date was finally made to start work in the kitchen and the builders arrived, it was found that the pipe that was gushing under the kitchen floor wasn’t attached to the mains leading into the house but was actually purposely put in separately for the previous tenant (of which the council said that they had no record of, even though when speaking to neighbours in the area, they’ve said that they find it ridiculous as the outhouse had to be brought in by a crane and special permission was required to do so). Once the builders had ripped everything out they had to allow the area to dry completely and had to bring in an industrial dehumidifier (again at a cost to XXX) before they could go on to repair the walls and put in the new kitchen unit.

This all happened in the summer of 2018. In August of 2018, XXX had his first blackout and fall. This happened in the new kitchen when he tugged on the drawer to open it. Due to his neurological disability his short term memory isn’t what it was and thought it was the old kitchen where the drawers were and could get stuck. He was complaining about how painful his back was and didn’t want to go to the hospital at that time. I was due to start uni again in September 2018, and while I was away in Norfolk for a field trip I got a call from him explaining that he needed me to head back immediately as he had another fall. I cut my trip short and left for London and took him immediately to the hospital. It was there that we had found out that he had cracked his L1 vertebrae which was what was causing him so much pain.

Because there was very little they could do, he was sent back with some medication with a referral being made to have X-rays and CAT scans being organised for him at a later date. Between October and November of 2018, I had to call the ambulance no less than 6 times due to his back being in agony and at least 2 of those visits saw him being admitted for at least 1 days (or 2). It was only after one the scans that it found that at some point (they are unable to pin point where or when) that XXX had a mild stroke. A lightbulb went off in his and my head, because of the stress that he was under and the constant high BP that he was having for several years (even prior to the water gushing under the floor boards in the kitchen) that he had a stroke.

One of the last few hospital visits we had with, one the OTs there organised for carers to be brought in to take a bit of the strain off me so I could concentrate on my MSc. During the financial assessment, he was informed then that judging and looking at his income that he would not need to make any contribution to his care package. However, he was very surprised to see that he had in fact had to pay for his care. Something which to this day he believes that he should not have to pay, especially seeing as that the stroke, the falls that has led to a cracked L1 vertebrae which has caused him is all at fault with the council, especially with housing. If they had only listened to him and me in the first place and realised that there was gushing water under the floor boards and have kept better records they would have been able to identify that the pipe was not being from off the main mains into the property but rather had been moved a little further down the flat in order to be put through under the floorboards from the from of the property and out into the garden. None of this would have happened. And now he’s being summoned to court for the outstanding payment which is causing him further anxiety on top of his current circumstances and I fear that he may suffer from another stroke or heart attack which is bad as I do not live at the property, or he may self harm which he has done in the past.

He has now been summonsed to court for non-payment.

I am truly at my wits end with this and its now causing me sleepless nights.