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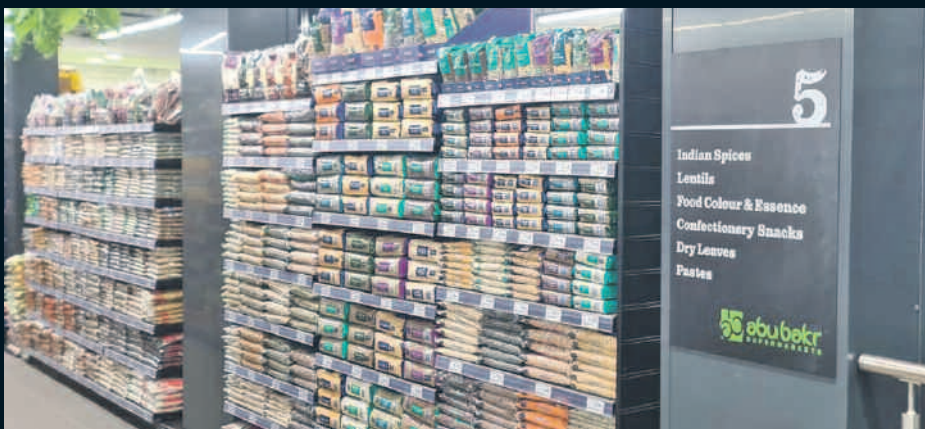
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Abu Bakr supermarket expands by opening new flagship site in Kirkstall

Leeds has just been given a new grocery store gem, but this grand enterprise offers more than just your palak and aloo.

Standing proud in a custom-renovated 10,000 square-foot site, with its own customer parking, the Abu Bakr supermarkets provide the ultimate local food shopping experience with their flagship store on Kirkstall Road.

Celebrating over 50-years success since the late Chawdry Mohammed Aslam and brothers set up their very first humble grocery store in Keighley in the 1970s; the business expanded as Mr Aslam’s eldest son Abid Hussain (fondly known as Brother Abid) brought Abu Baker to Hilltop Avenue in Leeds. He now runs four supermarkets with his brothers Sajid, Wajid and my son Asad across the city, each known as the local go-to for fresh produce, spices and halal meats.



The new state-of-the-art Abu Bakr supermarket in Kirkstall Road has taken just over a year to complete from concept, features continental and international foods and ingredients, fresh groceries, a custom-built butchery, bakery, shisha pipes and products section, and even has an impressive homewares department stocked with all kitchen equipment you could ever need.



TEAM: Big brother Abid Hussain (centre) with Wajid (left) and Sajid (right)

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“Jinn is something that I’ve grown up being told stories about as a child,” says Aneesa Marufu

North with highest at-risk gamblers

Launch of new addiction clinics’ as figure show 2.2 million people have gambling addiction

New gambling addiction clinics will open in England this year, following record demand for specialist support for gambling addiction.

The two new NHS clinics, based in Southampton and Stoke-On-Trent, will open from May and mean there will be seven specialist clinics in place across England.

Continued on page 10

“Gambling addiction took over my life to the extent I was suicidal and relationships with my family and friends had broken down.”



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Published by Media Buzz



Cllr Iqbal – Vice Chair of Hamara

“The Chair of the Hamara Centre, Mohammed Farouk Butt has sadly passed away at home peacefully on Feb 17, 2022. He devoted his whole life to the service of his community, and he achieved so much.

Mohammed Farouk Butt was the unsung hero gentle giant, who spent his entire life working for Beeston community, and then whole of Leeds.

Over the years hundreds of

youngsters started volunteering from Hamara centre and shaped their future to being successful professionals. Thousands and thousands of people have had help from Hamara centre.

He was never interested in personal gain or fame. He will be remembered for ever and his legacy and vision will continue.

About 30 years ago he got group of old people together and started meeting informally without any venue.

After a few years SLECG

rented a shop on lodge lane. Further along SLECG formed partnership with the next door church group ‘Faith Together in Leeds 11’ and applied for lottery funding and were successful. As a result, the Hamara Centre was achieved.

Over the years Hamara centre has been providing support for youth projects, tackling unemployment, health inequality and many strands of services projects for the people of south Leeds and further afield.”



Shanaz Gul, Director of Hamara

“A true community leader through and through, a huge loss for the community, Hamara and all who knew him. My deepest sympathies go out to his family and wife whom he loved dearly and spoke so fondly about on a regular basis. I was blessed to work so closely with him over the last few years and have experienced his

passion, determination, and love for his community first-hand, his dedication is unheard of. He strived to see the South Asian community flourish and as the lead of Hamara and behalf of the whole Hamara team, with confidence I say, we shall work relentlessly to bring his vision to fruition. May God bless his soul abundantly, and may he rest in peace.”



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Honouring his legacy

Mr Farouk Butt - the South Leeds hero who touched the hearts of thousands, leaves legacy behind

A Leeds stalwart who dedicated his life to working for Leeds communities for over three decades, sadly passed away following his short battle with cancer.

Mohammed Farouk Butt, Chairman of Hamara Centre, passed away peacefully at his home on 17th February.

Mr Butt came from Pakistan as a seven-year-old child, with his family in the 1950's and settled in the Holbeck area of Leeds. At school he would be found actively engaging in sports, and even successfully clinching the much-contended position of captain for his school rugby team,

despite being the only south Asian male there.

At one point Mr Butt was studying to become a doctor, he loved to read books, and his mother would often find he'd fallen asleep at his desk during his late night study sessions.

Having chosen to start a career in the building trade during the 80s Mr Butt at one point had his own wood yard, where he sold reclaimed timber.

But it was his vision of helping deprived south Asian communities that led him into the charity sector.

What we now know as the Hamara Centre in Beeston, was

originally a hub for the more senior members of the Asian community, and was called South Leeds Elderly Group (SLEG). They were based in a small office with only three staff.

At this time he also held a job at Heathrow airport, and upon finishing his shift, is said to have made his first stop at the Hamara Centre every time before heading to and returning from his shift in London.

He realised over time, the Asian community-especially the elderly found it difficult to have access to seek help, such as filling out forms as many of this generation did not speak, read or

write English. Therefore, SLEG became a safe haven for the elderly.

Over-time Mr Butt realised there was a higher demand for accessible community services, and he successfully secured one million pounds to build large centre to cater for the whole community. This is when Hamara was set-up, and at one point there was over 70 staff working at Hamara.

The centre became renowned for holding firm to delivering numerous proliferous programmes to both the young and elderly, both Asian and non-Asian.

More recently, Mr Butt's biggest challenge was overhauling Cockburn Sports hall for which the Hamara Centre had acquired a lease.

His dream was to demolish the old hall and build a new sports hall with training rooms in replacement.

After numerous challenges over four years, making tweaks to push successfully push planning approval of the new state of the art building, as fate would have it, it was finally approved on a day after his death.

Mr Butt is survived by his loving wife, two boys and two girls.



Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP, Leeds Central

"We were all saddened to hear that Mohammed Farouk Butt had passed away. I knew him for over 20 years, first through his work with the South Leeds Elderly and Community Group and more recently the Hamara Centre. He was a kind and gentle

man who always thought about others." He devoted his whole life to the service of our community in Beeston and he achieved so much. That is why he will be so greatly missed. All our thoughts are with his family and many friends. May he Rest In Peace.



Councillor Elizabeth Nash, Hunslet and Riverside Ward

"Mohammed Farouk was a lovely kind man. He was always ready to help people whenever he could. He worked tirelessly for the community and Hamara Healthy Living Centre has blossomed under his leadership. We will all miss him."

Mir Bostan

"Mr Farouk was a family friend, his family came from Pakistan and settled in Domestic Street, Holbeck. I met his father and became a very good family friend.

I know Farouk from very young age, he was always thinking about the community work, he spent his entire life working for the community.

He started with a small group of elders in 73 Lodge Lane, Beeston more than 30 years ago. He was never interested in personal gain or fame. The group members used to collect money and buying ingredients to make own food. We used to make curries and share it with group members. Mr Farouk as the chairman of Hamara

centre, spent the rest of his life helping the community, running many projects for everybody, youth, women, older people.

He was different, he was always thinking about inclusion and diversity. Hamara centre trained people and helped them to gain education and employment.

There were many challenges and obstacles to overcome, Mr Farouk embraced these challenges and turned it to a very successful community centre. We had no place to run the project, with very limited resources, but it was he who always believed that one day we will have a place which will be for everybody. He proved it,

and run a very successful community centre for more than 30 years.

More recently, he was working on a project to make extension of Hamara centre, led by learning disabled people. He gathered us, encouraged us to see our local businesses, and request them to participate and donate to the project.

He organised many fundraising walks and events for this project. He used to visit the learning-disabled members group and asking them questions regarding the care they gets and how to improve the service Hamara centre provide. He loves his community work and dedicate all his life to this cause."



Nadim Hanif, Asian Express Newspaper

"Our deepest sympathies go out to Mr Farouk Butt's family.

I'm honoured to say that we've had the pleasure of knowing and working with Mr Farouk Butt for over 20-years.

He made things happen in a way that very few community centres are able to

achieve.

Over the years, it's been a privilege featuring the hive of positive community activity that Mr Butt initiated.

Leeds has most certainly lost an irreplaceable hero - a man who's empowered so many people - giving them hope and opportunity over the last 30-years.

He leaves behind a legacy that his family will be proud of, and has set a standard of a true role model. He will be missed."

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Giving is a gift

Charities partner up with Leeds United Foundation to distribute hundreds of food parcels to vulnerable families

Islamic Relief UK partnered with Leeds United Foundation and Give a Gift to distribute 500 essential food packs to vulnerable people in Leeds including the homeless, asylum seekers, refugees and women who have suffered domestic abuse.

Leeds has seen a stark rise in families needing financial assistance and help with food.

Give a Gift, which helps disadvantaged people, has received more calls for help compared to the first two lockdowns due to the number of temporarily stopped or closed down services. They have also seen asylum seekers live off £5 a day and met families prioritising eating or heating as they struggle to pay their bills with energy prices increasing.

Soaring prices and inflation across all of life's essentials have severely impacted families' cost of living and UK households could be £1,000 worse-off in 2022, according to Resolution Foundation analysis.

The food packs which went out last month contained items such as rice, pasta, oil, cornflakes, and tinned vegetables – alongside products such as shampoo, shower gel, sanitary towels and more.

With poverty levels in the UK increasing, Islamic Relief UK is also distributing food parcels across the country with different partners.

John Mallalieu, Chief Executive Officer Leeds United Foundation said: "We are delighted to be able to continue our community volunteering programme for the people of

Leeds in partnership with Give A Gift and Islamic Relief UK.

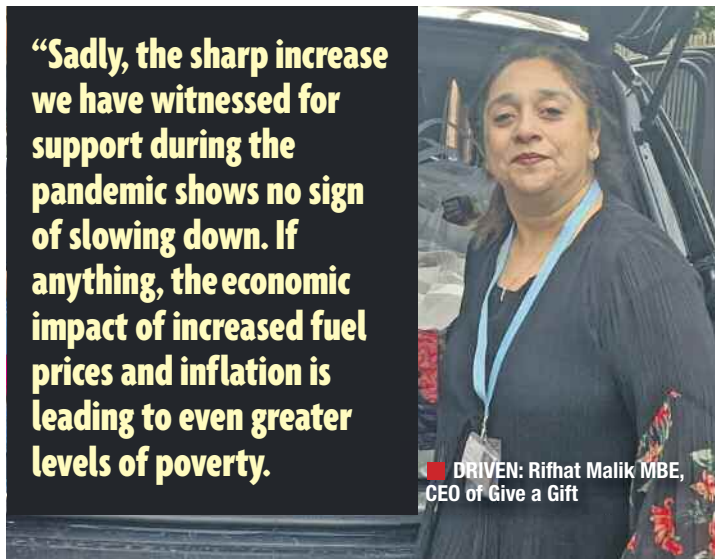
"Sadly the demand for foodbank support remains strong within our City and this well respected programme enables us to make a small difference to these 500 families in these most difficult times."

Rifhat Malik MBE, Project Manager at Give a Gift

to working with both partners on a longer-term basis to assist under privileged communities."

Tufail Hussain, Director of Islamic Relief UK said: "Islamic Relief UK is proud to be working with Leeds United Foundation and Give a Gift who are doing great work for their community."

"This is a very challenging time for many families in Leeds who



"Sadly, the sharp increase we have witnessed for support during the pandemic shows no sign of slowing down. If anything, the economic impact of increased fuel prices and inflation is leading to even greater levels of poverty."

DRIVEN: Rifhat Malik MBE, CEO of Give a Gift

said: "Sadly, the sharp increase we have witnessed for support during the pandemic shows no sign of slowing down. If anything, the economic impact of increased fuel prices and inflation is leading to even greater levels of poverty."

"This partnership with Islamic Relief UK and the Leeds United Foundation will provide much needed support at a difficult time for our families. We look forward

have been hit hard by the pandemic and are struggling financially. The food packs will give much needed relief and we thank our partners for their generous efforts to help those in need.

"Poverty in the UK is increasing and we must do everything we can to address this issue and reach out to communities across the country."

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Dating's dangerous secrets

More under 20s sexually assaulted after meeting offenders on dating sites

Dating Online? Play it safe when you meet face-to-face

The following safety advice was previously developed by the NCA along with Get Safe Online for users of online dating websites.

- Plan it. Say it. Do it.
- It's your date. Agree on what you both want from it before you meet up. Don't feel pressured to meet before you're ready or for any longer than you're comfortable with – a short first date is fine.
- Meet in public. Stay in public.
- The safest plan is to meet somewhere public and stay somewhere public. Make your own way there and back and don't feel pressured to go home with your date. If you feel ready to move to a private environment, make sure your expectations match your date's.
- Get to know the person, not the profile.
- The way people interact online isn't always the same face-to-face. Don't be offended if your date is more guarded when meeting in person or if things don't progress as fast face-to-face.
- Not going well? Make your excuses and leave.
- Don't feel bad about cutting a date short if you're not keen. You don't owe the other person anything, no matter how long you've been chatting or what's been suggested.
- If you're raped or sexually assaulted on your date, help is available.
- No matter what the circumstances, sexual activity against your will is a crime. Police and charities are here to help and support you.
- Readily accessible information for victims of sexual assault, however recent, can be found at: <https://sexualabuse.support.campaign.gov.uk>. It hopes to help individuals make informed decisions about next steps in seeking support and to empower them with a view to ultimately increasing levels of reporting.

The NCA's Serious Crime Analysis Section (SCAS), which supports police investigations into serious sexual assaults committed by strangers, released the new figures showing that the number of female victims of online dating-related sexual assaults aged 19 and under has increased since 2016.

SCAS reviewed data from 671 sexual assault cases reported to the NCA, which occurred between 1 April 2003 and 21 March 2021 following a first face-to-face meeting, after initial contact via an online dating website or app.

These update the findings of a 2016 report, which examined the 163 cases identified between April 2003 and July 2015.

The new data shows that while the levels of this type of offending has remained fairly stable since 2015, the proportion of reports from female victims aged 19 and under rose from 12% to 22%, with the proportion of male victims in this bracket rising from 25% to 31%.

The largest proportion of both male and female victims were still aged 20-29, accounting for 40% of cases.

The victims in 83% of the 671 cases were female, 17% were male; a slight change from the previous report with a 2% increase in the proportion of male victims.

Only offending on SCAS databases has been analysed. It doesn't include unreported incidents or offences which police forces have not sent to the NCA to be examined.

Louise Vesely-Shore, Principal Analyst in the National Crime Agency's SCAS team, said: "Although there hasn't been an overall increase in these offences since our initial report in 2016, it is notable that this form of crime continued during the pandemic, despite the substantial restrictions on people's lives.

"A sexual assault victim is never at fault and we do not want the circumstances in which these attacks take place to cause anyone to doubt that. We want victims to feel confident reporting it to the police."

The NCA published its findings alongside separate research collated by the BBC for its documentary, 'Dating's Dangerous Secrets'. This showed that 37% of dating app users have reported someone for inappropriate behaviour, 63% have felt uncomfortable on a date initiated via a dating app and 33% have experienced either harassment or abuse on such dates.

NHS



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Figuring out the vaccine

Reasons why readers, young and old, choose to get their Covid-19 jabs

While we are well on the way to moving out of the pandemic, while the UK Government rolling back restrictions and ending Plan B measures, the infection rate of Covid-19 is still high.

Uptake of the vaccine has been very high across the UK with people booking their additional booster jabs, however there are some people who are still apprehensive about getting the jab which is

understandable given the amount of misinformation out there.

Two doses of the vaccine are still the best way of protecting you against Covid-19 and its variants, with booster jabs giving you around 90% protection shortly after administration.

We know that there are many reasons people are doubtful about getting the vaccine, so we wanted to speak to people from our community to find out what

convinced them to get the vaccine.

Every adult in the country now needs to get a Covid-19 booster vaccine, because two doses does not give you enough protection against catching Omicron.

From the outset the evidence has been clear: Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups had higher rates of infection, serious disease, and deaths from Covid-19.

“My entire family and I are fully vaccinated... this is the best way of protecting ourselves”



24-year-old Information Analyst Shivali was still studying her Master's degree when she got her first Covid-19 jab. She knew instantly that this was the best way of protecting herself and her family.

“I am a very family-orientated person, and not being able to see

family members outside of my home really hit me hard during the first lockdown,” says Shivali.

“At the time I felt helpless, but eventually started to make use of the spare time I had to try to help myself and others around me keep a positive mindset.

“It's been brilliant to see everyone in our communities coming together and making a concerted effort to ensure everyone understands the importance of vaccinations and has access to correct information,” she adds.

“I got the vaccination whilst I was still studying, and took it as soon as I could, without hesitation.

“My entire family and I are fully vaccinated because we understand that this is the best way of protecting ourselves from more serious

implications of Covid-19, and restoring some kind of normality to life.

“Without the vaccinations I know I'd be more prone to catching the virus and passing it on. Many of my older family members have conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure, I didn't want to cause them any more health problems.

“It's crucial that we all get the vaccine to protect ourselves and our loved ones. No one wants this pandemic to last any longer, the sooner we are vaccinated the sooner we can get out of it.”



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It takes minutes to get your Covid-19 Booster. It can take much longer to recover from Covid-19.

Around 96.3% of pregnant women with asymptomatic Covid-19 were unvaccinated

Pregnant women who have not yet had their first, second, third or booster dose of a Covid-19 vaccine are being urged to get their jab as soon as possible.

Data from the UK Obstetric Surveillance System shows 96.3% of pregnant women admitted to hospital with Covid-19 symptoms between May and October 2021 were unvaccinated, a third of which (33%) requiring respiratory support. Around 1 in 5 women who are hospitalised with the virus need to be delivered preterm to help them recover and 1 in 5 of their babies need care in the

neonatal unit.

Geetanjali Singh, an optician, who has recently given birth to her second baby and has been fully vaccinated said: "I gave birth to a healthy baby boy just before Christmas. I am so grateful that the guidance on pregnancy and the Covid-19 vaccine changed last year.

"Plus my husband contracted Covid whilst I was pregnant, so being vaccinated gave me peace of mind that I and my baby had some protection.

"My advice to any pregnant people unsure about having the vaccine is

to speak to your midwife or health professional and make an informed choice."

The vaccine is the best way to protect you and your baby. Being pregnant can put you at greater risk of getting seriously ill with Covid, which increases the chances of your baby being born prematurely, or even being stillborn. If you're pregnant, get vaccinated or boosted now. Go to nhs.uk/covidvaccination



Deputy Lieutenant Zulfi Karim

"The booster jabs offer us all the very best way of protecting ourselves"

West Yorkshire Deputy Lieutenant Zulfi Karim himself contracted Covid-19 two years ago, which took months for him to recover from.

Having experienced Covid-19 first-hand, and realising how fortunate he is to have survived it, he knew how crucial it was to get the correct messaging across to the South Asian communities, dispelling myths, and educating people that the Covid-19 vaccine as a route of of the pandemic.

"More often than not, Asian families have three generations living in one household, so the risk of contracting Covid-19 is higher, especially for those who are elderly or for those with underlying health issues," says Mr Karim.

"Via numerous avenues, including social media, door-to-door awareness campaigns, leaflets, and messaging in mosques, we have fought fake news, we have challenged conspiracy theories, and we have raised awareness of the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine," said Mr Karim.

"We've all either survived Covid-19, or know of someone who hasn't. We've lost friends and family in this pandemic. The vaccine, and the booster jabs offer us all the very best way of protecting ourselves, our loved ones and our fantastic local NHS."

Covid-19 Vaccine and Pregnancy

- Covid-19 vaccines are safe for pregnant women and are recommended in pregnancy.
- There is no evidence to suggest that the vaccine brings any harm to unborn babies and vaccines remain the best protection against Covid-19.

- There is no evidence that Covid-19 vaccines affect fertility in males or in females.
- Pregnant women who do get symptomatic Covid-19 infection are 2 to 3 times more likely to give birth to their baby prematurely.
- Severe illness due to Covid-19 is more likely in later pregnancy.

● Covid-19 remains highly infectious. It is more important than ever for you to get vaccinated.

● Over time, two doses of the Covid-19 vaccine do not give enough

protection.

● A booster will strengthen your protection from serious illness from Covid-19 and give you the best possible defence for you and your family.

● If you haven't had your booster, then go to the NHS website to book an appointment or find your local walk-in vaccination centre; encourage friends and family to do the same.

Get your booster now.
nhs.uk/covidvaccination

Everyone aged 16 and over now needs to get a COVID-19 booster vaccine because two doses does not give you enough protection against catching Omicron. To book yours and find out more visit nhs.uk/covidvaccination

All together >

North with highest at-risk gamblers

Launch of new addiction clinics' as figure show 2.2 million people have gambling addiction

Cover story continued

The other five NHS gambling addiction clinics in London, Leeds, Manchester, Sunderland and a national children and young person's pilot clinic will inform the rollout of further gambling clinics when the services are evaluated later this year.

The north of England has the highest prevalence of at-risk gamblers, with 4.4% of adults in the North West and 4.9% in the North East being at the most risk of addiction.

Between April and December last year, 668 people with the most severe gambling addiction issues were referred to NHS gambling clinics – up from 575 during the same period in 2020 – a 16.2% increase.

The news comes alongside a letter from NHS mental health chief Claire Murdoch to GambleAware, confirming that the NHS will be fully funding its own gambling services from April - bringing the support in line with other NHS services.

The decision follows feedback from patients and clinicians opposing the conflict of interest from the

gambling industry, which generates profits of over £14 billion a year in the UK, in funding treatment for addiction.

Research published by Public Health England (now the UK Health Security Agency) last September also estimated around 0.5% of the adult population, around 2.2 million people, are likely to have some form of gambling addiction.

NHS mental health director Claire Murdoch said: "Gambling addiction is a cruel mental health condition that can devastate people's lives – our pilot clinics are already having a lasting impact in helping people to take back vital control of their lives."

"The opening of two new gambling clinics in May, as a part of our £2.3 billion investment into mental health services, will mean we can help even more people with the most serious gambling problems."

"It is also absolutely right that the NHS now funds these clinics independently, recognising the harmful effects this addiction can have on the nation's mental health, and that predatory tactics from gambling companies are part of the problem, not the solution."

Health Minister, Gillian Keegan said: "The detrimental impacts of harmful gambling are stark and widespread – it affects people's savings, relationships and health."

"I am committed to protecting people harmed by gambling, including through supporting treatment and recovery at the specialist NHS gambling addiction clinics as part of the NHS Long-term Plan investment of £15 million to expand these specialist services."

"The new gambling clinics will help ensure more people can access the help they need to tackle their gambling addiction."

Later this year the NHS will launch a new Gambling Harm Network and Clinical Reference Group, which will bring expertise together and enable clinical teams to share best practices for helping to treat gambling addiction.

Gambling addiction if it takes hold can destroy lives. Nick Firth, aged 31 from West Yorkshire, struggled with a gambling addiction for 12 years. Feeling ashamed to admit he had a problem, the addiction also took over his life to the extent he would beg, borrow, and steal money to fund it,

straining relationships with family and friends.

Nick finally reached out for help from NHS gambling services during the peak of his addiction in January last year, when he felt suicide was the only way out. With his own NHS support worker, Nick underwent group cognitive behavioural therapy to help treat his addiction and as a result, hasn't gambled since.

Nick said: "Gambling addiction took over my life to the extent I was suicidal and relationships with my family and friends had broken down."

"The team at the NHS gambling addiction service have helped completely turn my life around, engaging with NHS services is one of the best things I've ever done – it's helped me get control of my life back and I'm rebuilding trust with my family and friends, once again having happy and healthy relationships with people close to me."

"Anybody out there who is struggling with addiction should know they are not alone, while there is no quick fix, there is help out there that can help treat your addiction and seeking help is the best thing you can do to help yourself get better."

In January 2020, NHS mental health director Claire Murdoch wrote to gambling companies outlining actions they should take to improve the odds for people struggling with addiction. Other than the restriction of bets taken by credit cards, implemented when the Gambling Commission outlawed the practice, the gambling industry continues to offer customers VIP packages and streams live sports, all of which can be potentially harmful to those struggling with addiction.



The gambling industry generates profits of over £14 billion a year in the UK





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The Balloon Thief

“Jinn is something that I’ve grown up being told stories about as a child,” says prize-winning author Aneesa Marufu

Manchester-based Aneesa Marufu has been inspired by both her South Asian-British heritage and her experiences as a second generation immigrant. She wanted to write a book for teens that discusses - in a fantasy setting - ideas of identity, belonging, an immigrant experience and much more beyond.

Her debut book, ‘The Balloon Thief’, is an epic journey (both literal and metaphorical) in one girls’ story; to find a safe place in the world, to find acceptance and companionship, and to triumph in a personal and societal battle to establish her own identity.

It is also a story that opens up a discussion of terrorism, extremism and racism, drawn from Aneesa’s own experiences with Islamophobia, and transposed to this fantasy world.

Inspired by both classic literature, which draw on myths and fairy tales from other cultures, Aneesa is keen to share the inspiration her heritage

has provided.

From Islamic folklore, to superstitions, to real figures and mythology, ‘The Balloon Thief’ carefully interweaves these ideas seamlessly.

And, as a young mother, balancing two young children with the demands of being a first time author, Aneesa also wants to have the conversations that move the book world along. She’s on a mission to help facilitate a diverse range of backgrounds, and all the elements that make up an individual’s identity, in all different kinds of books, across different genres.

Aneesa is keen to talk on all kinds of topics, she says: “My hope with this book is to show that the world is not so black and white, that people are often the product of their environment and life experiences. In short, hate breeds hate, however I hope to show that love and friendship can and do prevail.”

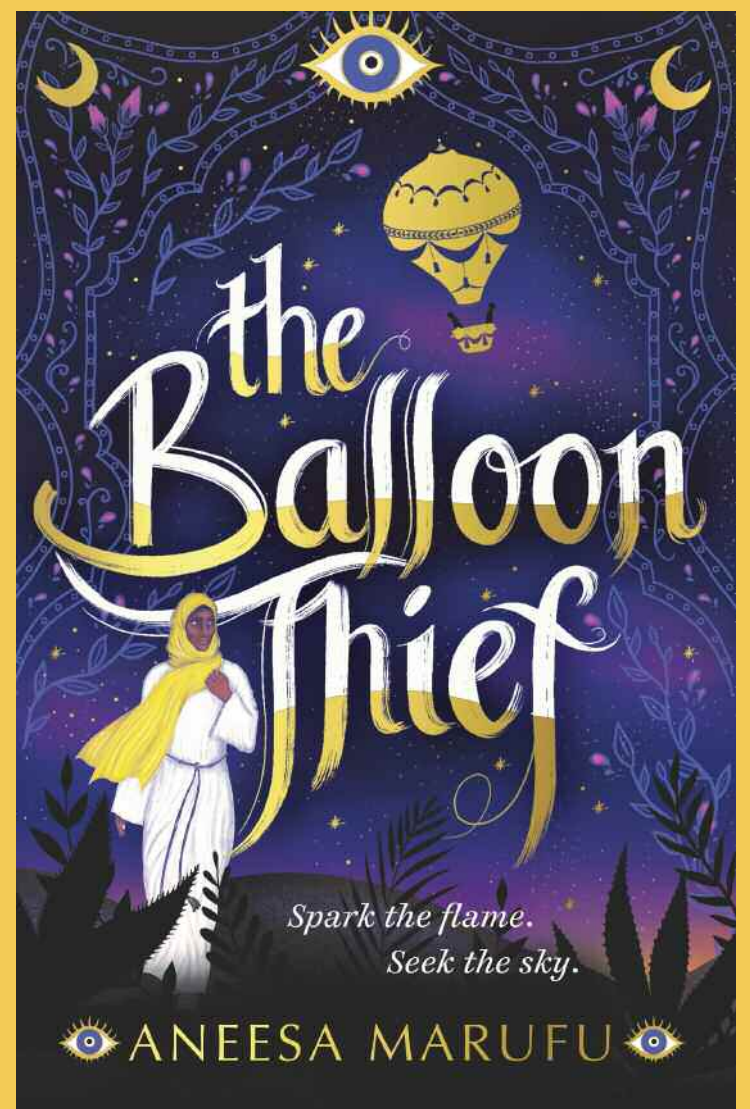
Questioning identity and second generation British Pakistani experiences

“I think growing up, I experienced my fair share of racism that led me to questioning my identity.

“Being a second generation British Pakistani, I often found myself feeling not Asian enough to please my parents and grandparents, yet not British enough to fit in with my peers. This left me almost stuck in-between two very different worlds and not really knowing where I belonged.

“I wanted this book to be a place where I could explore my own cultural identity, as well as the themes of terrorism and extremism, and to break down cultural stigma and stereotypes, whilst also showing through the character of Khadija. Her race is an element of her identity, it is not the entirety of who she is.

The book opens up a discussion of terrorism, extremism and racism, drawn from Aneesa’s own experiences with Islamophobia



“In the same way that I am British Pakistani, there are other elements of my identity that go beyond my race, such as my gender, my age, being a mother, my work, my hobbies/interests and more.

Fairytales, Jinn and South Asian traditions

“I’ve always loved the fairy tales from One thousand and One Nights, as well as the story of Aladdin and the jinn.

“I’ve also been inspired by the increase in diverse books over the years, which draw on myths and fairy tales from other cultures.

“Islamic folklore - the jinn kings

and queens mentioned in the book are real figures in mythology.

“Jinn is something that I’ve grown up being told stories about as a child – I remember being told to not walk under trees at night because that’s where jinn are rumoured to sleep! Growing up with these superstitions was a big inspiration for the book.”

Aneesa Marufu lives in Manchester. When she isn’t running around after her toddler, she’s hunting for a new book to escape into. The Balloon Thief, her debut novel, was the winner of the Kimberley Chambers Kickstart Prize in 2019.

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House prices have risen at the fastest annual pace in 17 years, amid "robust" demand and low supply.

Building society Nationwide said prices rose by 11.2% year-on-year and by 0.8% between December and January.

Affordability is already a key issue with house prices rising much faster than wages throughout the pandemic.

A deposit now constitutes a record percentage of a first-time buyer's salary.

"A 10% deposit on a typical first-time buyer home is now equivalent to 56% of total gross annual earnings, a record high," said the building society's chief economist, Robert Gardner.

"Similarly, a typical mortgage payment as a share of take-home pay is now above the long-run average, despite mortgage rates remaining close to all-time lows."

The average price of a property in the UK was £255,556 last month - up from £254,822 in December - as demand remained "robust," Mr Gardner said.

"Mortgage approvals for house purchase have continued to run slightly above pre-pandemic levels, despite the surge in activity in 2021 as a result of the stamp duty holiday, which encouraged buyers to bring forward their transactions to avoid additional tax."

"Indeed, the total number of property transactions in 2021 was the highest since 2007 and around 25% higher than in 2019, before the pandemic struck."

"At the same time, the stock of homes on estate agents' books has remained extremely low, which is contributing to the continued robust pace of house price growth."

Property becomes less affordable

However, it's predicted the increase in house prices will slow this year as property becomes less affordable.

Mr Gardner said the outlook for the housing market "remains uncertain", but house price growth had "outstripped earnings growth by a wide margin since the pandemic struck".

He added that with interest rates expected to rise in the coming months affordability could be hit further.

The Bank of England raised its key interest rate to 0.25% in December, and it is expected to make further increases this year.


Mr Gardner said reduced affordability would be likely to dampen market activity and house price growth this year "especially since household finances are also coming under pressure from sharp increases in the cost of living" - with inflation hitting 5.4% in December, its fastest pace since 1992, and set to rise further in the coming months as energy prices go up.

House prices see fastest growth rate in 17 years




The average price of a property in the UK was £255,556 last month - up from £254,822 in December


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Talking therapies

NHS offers a range of counselling and guided self-help for anxiety, depression, and other common mental health problems

A new NHS campaign is encouraging people struggling with their mental health to seek confidential help from NHS talking therapies.

Research shows that nearly half of South Asians put off seeking professional help and the NHS is encouraging them to make use of a range of free services available for anxiety, depression, and other common mental health problems – either by self-referral or by contacting their GP.

The NHS offers a range of talking therapies, such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), counselling and guided self-help.

Support is offered in a number of ways, including in-person and video consultations, telephone and interactive text messaging, a self-help workbook with therapist support, online courses, and one-to-one or group therapy.

Harmeet, who was helped by NHS Talking Therapies, said: “When I was down, I didn’t think any kind of therapy would help me.

“But just talking about my problems and knowing someone was listening instantly provided some relief. Don’t think you’re not worthy of help or that it won’t work – just give it a try, I’m glad I did.

“NHS therapy pulled me out of the dark hole I found myself in.

“By reaching out for help, especially to someone who is independent and totally non-judgmental, I was able to share what felt heavy and release the weight I had been carrying.

“I can’t shout about it enough - my mental health is better than ever before.

Mental Health Therapist Ummar said: “People often think their problems aren’t

serious enough to warrant therapy, but if you’re in any doubt, a free, confidential video or in-person consultation with a fully trained expert will quickly assess if you need professional help.

“You won’t be wasting anyone’s time; the NHS is here to help you. If you’re not fluent in English, there are therapists and translators who speak your language – just ask.”

A survey commissioned by NHS England and NHS Improvement found that South Asians were more likely to be concerned about their mental health in 2021 (64%), compared to 54% of the general public, and 42% of South Asians didn’t seek professional help after experiencing issues as they didn’t think it was serious enough (compared to 45% of the general population).

However, 69% of South Asians plan to focus more on their mental health in 2022, compared to 59% of the wider public..

■ Mental Health Therapist Ummar



■ Harmeet, who was at a seemingly hopeless juncture of her life, says NHS therapy pulled her out of the dark hole she found herself in



Visit [nhs.uk/help](https://www.nhs.uk/help) for more information



From ballroom to boardroom

Rashmi Becker recognised with MBE for Services to Disabled People

Dr Rashmi Becker has been recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours List with an MBE for services to disabled people. The investiture took place at Windsor Castle, held by The Princess Royal on 22nd February.

Rashmi, who is guardian to her disabled brother who has Autism, established pioneering dance company 'Step Change Studios' to support disabled people to dance. She is also a disability advocate, having worked in social care, and a Board Member of Sport England, where she is the organisation's first Board Champion for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Rashmi said: "I cannot describe how special this day has been. I am still processing receiving an MBE from The Princess Royal, and sharing conversation about inclusive dance. I am both proud and humbled by this recognition.

"I have long championed the positive impact of physical activity on our wellbeing and have seen the direct benefits to my brother's quality of life. But there remain far too many barriers to participation. Both through Step Change Studios and my wider advocacy work I have tried to contribute to removing some of those barriers.

"Dance is such a creative, fun way for people to connect, to feel good, and to be active. Many of the people we support experience loneliness, and can find it challenging to access activities that are welcoming and inclusive. The joy that people feel when they

come together on a dance floor, and are able to realise their potential is extremely satisfying for everyone involved."

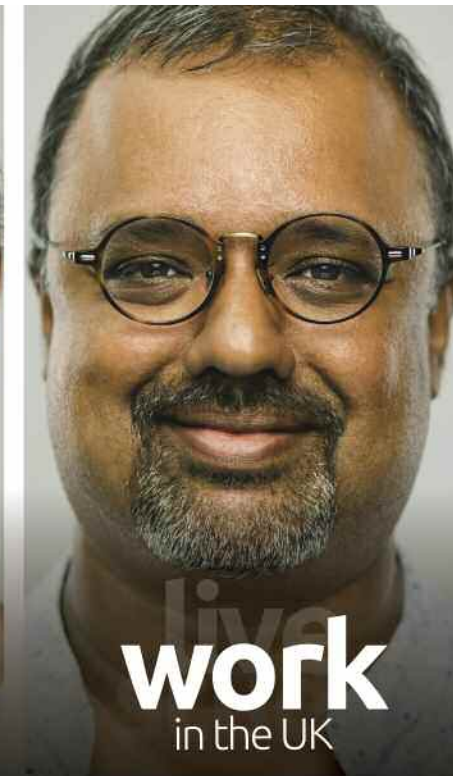
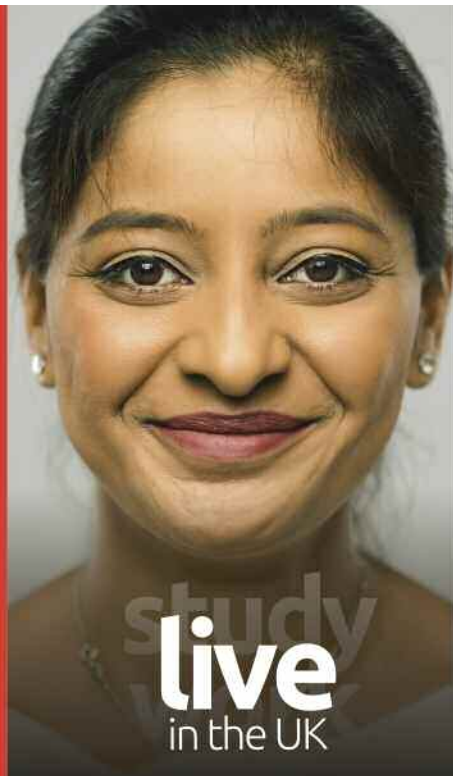
The arts have also provided a platform for Rashmi to highlight wider issues that impact disabled people, and also carers. She recently undertook an initiative supported by Arts Council England to highlight the lived experience of carers, producing podcasts and a series of dance films exploring carers' lives. She is also leading a project supporting people of South Asian heritage with sight loss to be active through dance.

Previously, Rashmi conceived and edited an award-winning photographic book highlighting the role of support workers in lives of people they support, and has contributed to a book highlighting the disproportionate number of people with learning disabilities in the criminal justice system.

Rashmi said: "1 in 5 people in the UK has a disability, yet glaring inequalities persist in every aspect of life from education and transport, to housing, and health. It requires determination and resilience to push for equal treatment to things that many people take for granted. My work has brought me into contact with so many allies across different sectors of society who are equally driven to see positive change. I am grateful to everyone that has supported, encouraged, and inspired me."

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“As we speak of the need to uphold international law, respect legally-recognised frontiers and protect territorial integrity, we should remember that these principles are universal. We cannot pick and choose where to apply them.”

Kim Leadbeater MP - recognition of the State of Palestine

In a debate in Parliament yesterday on the recognition of the State of Palestine, Kim Leadbeater MP said: “This is a timely debate.

“While our attention is – quite rightly – focused on events in Ukraine, an immediate crisis in one part of the world should not prevent us from addressing a long-running injustice elsewhere. As we wrestle with what we can do to defend the people of Ukraine, it would be a dereliction of duty to consign the people of Palestine to the ‘too difficult’ pile.

“And as we speak of the need to uphold international law, respect legally-recognised frontiers and protect territorial integrity, we should remember that these principles are universal. We cannot pick and choose where to apply them.

“So while we demand that our adversaries adhere to these principles, we should also be ready to remind our friends that they should do so too. And I speak as someone who sees no contradiction in being a friend of Israel and a friend of Palestine. To do so is to be a friend of humanity and a

friend of peace.

“The treatment of the Palestinians is a stain on the conscience of the world. They have every right to conclude that for decades they have been subjected to a relentless campaign of oppression, subjugation of their basic human rights and the illegal occupation of their lands. The consequences of this history of injustice are felt day in day out as the people of Palestine go about their lives.

“To take just one example – and there are many more – how can it be

right that in such a small geographic area a woman giving birth in the Occupied Territories is nine times more likely to die than a woman in Israel?

“For me, the suffering of human beings – families, young children, the old and the sick – should always be at the forefront of our minds. For many of those people, abstract principles like sovereignty and self-determination probably don’t mean very much. But that doesn’t mean they aren’t important.

“Do I believe the recognition of the State of Palestine alongside the State of Israel would end their suffering overnight? No, of course not. But is it an essential and overdue step on the road to a peaceful settlement that would start to put these historic injustices right? Yes it is.

“By recognising the State of Palestine we would be offering its people the hope of a better future, one in which they are entitled to the same rights and respect as their

neighbours. It may be a symbolic act but, as Professor Yossi Mekeberg of Chatham House says, “the power of symbolism cannot and should not be underestimated...there is overwhelming evidence that international recognition of Palestine would serve the causes of peace, justice and international law.”

“If we believe, as we do, that there must be a negotiated, diplomatic settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which ensures a safe and secure Israel, alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state, then we should take whatever steps we can to advance that process. Recognition of the State of Palestine would be a powerful demonstration of the right of both Palestinians and Israelis to enjoy security, dignity and human rights.

“If we truly believe in the universal principles of justice and self-determination under international law it is a step we should take without delay.”

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The higher education system in England will be made fairer for students and taxpayers thanks to major reforms announced by the government.

Student finance will be put on a more sustainable footing by ensuring more students are paying back their loan in full, and there will be a clampdown on poor-quality university courses that don't benefit graduates in the long-term.

Under the current system, more people than ever are going to university but too often, students are racking up debt for low-quality courses that do not lead to a graduate job with a good wage. This means that some students never even start paying off their student loan. And currently, only a quarter of students who started full-time undergraduate degrees in 2020/21 are forecast to repay their loans in full.

The cost of student loans is increasing quickly. The value of outstanding loans at the end of March 2021 reached £161 billion and it is forecast to rise to half a trillion pounds by 2043.

The government is taking action to tackle the problem head-on, rather than passing the problem on to future generations, by setting out major changes to the way students will repay their loans, and creating a sustainable system which also guarantees access for all.

To make the system fairer for students, the student loan interest rate will be set at RPI+0% for new borrowers starting courses from 2023/24, meaning that graduates will no longer repay more than they borrowed in real terms. This meets a key manifesto commitment to address student loan interest rates in this parliament.

Combined with the continued tuition fee freeze announced earlier

Fairer higher education system for students and taxpayers

this month, a student entering a three-year course in academic year 2023/24 could see their debt reduced by up to £11,500 at the point at which they become eligible to repay.

Today the government has also announced the tuition fee cap will be frozen at £9,250 for a further two years - up to and including 2024/25, further reducing the real cost to students.

To make the system fairer for taxpayers, the repayment threshold - the point at which graduates start repaying their student loan - for new borrowers starting courses from September 2023 will be set at £25,000 until 2026-27.

This still means that graduates will not start repaying until they have reached well over the current median young non-graduate salary of £21,500.

This makes sure that someone benefitting from a university degree makes a fair contribution to its cost: for example, a graduate earning £28,000 would pay back £17 a month.

Graduate salaries are continuing to rise - in 2020, the average salary for a graduate aged 21-30 was £6,500 higher than for a non-graduate - so it is right we ask those who are benefitting financially from the investment the taxpayer has made in their higher education to contribute

towards it.

The student loan repayment term will also be extended to 40 years for new borrowers from September 2023, to ensure more students repay their loan in full, taking into account the fact that people are now working and earning for longer.

lifelong flexible post-18 options to help people train, retrain and upskill.

"This package of reforms will ensure students are being offered a range of different pathways, whether that is higher or further education, that lead to opportunities with the best outcomes - and put an end once

Higher and Further Education Minister Michelle Donelan: "We are delivering a fairer system for students, graduates and taxpayers as well as future-proofing the student finance system. We are freezing tuition fees and slashing interest rates for new student loan borrowers, making sure that under these terms no-one will pay back more than they have borrowed in real terms. This Government is delivering on its manifesto pledges.

"We are investing an extra £900m in our post 18 education system and bringing about a revolutionary change in the way students can study, retrain and upskill throughout their lifetime."

The government has also published two consultations. The first will seek views on how to ensure young people are encouraged to pursue the right path for them, and receive a fair deal for their investment if they choose to go to university.

This includes considering the introduction of minimum eligibility requirements, to ensure students aren't being pushed into higher education before they are ready, and student number controls, so that poor-quality, low-cost courses which lead to poor outcomes for students, aren't incentivised to grow uncontrollably.

The second will set out plans to deliver the Lifelong Loan Entitlement (LLE) worth the equivalent of four years of post-18 education (i.e. £37,000 in today's fees) to support students to study, train, retrain or upskill at any stage throughout their lives through flexible and modular courses.

This is a seismic shift in the way post-18 education is funded and accessed, providing more options, unlocking opportunities and improving social mobility.

"We are investing an extra £900m in our post 18 education system and bringing about a revolutionary change in the way students can study, retrain and upskill throughout their lifetime."

Taken together, these changes will lead to significant savings, ensuring the student finance system is sustainable for the long term and can continue to benefit hundreds of thousands of students each year.

Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi said: "Our country's world leading universities and colleges are key to levelling up opportunity by opening up access to a range of

for all to high interest rates on their student loans.

"I am delighted to oversee such a substantial amount of investment - nearly £900m - reinforced by a revised, fairer, and more sustainable student finance system which will keep Higher Education accessible and accountable. These changes will create a fairer system for both students and the taxpayer."

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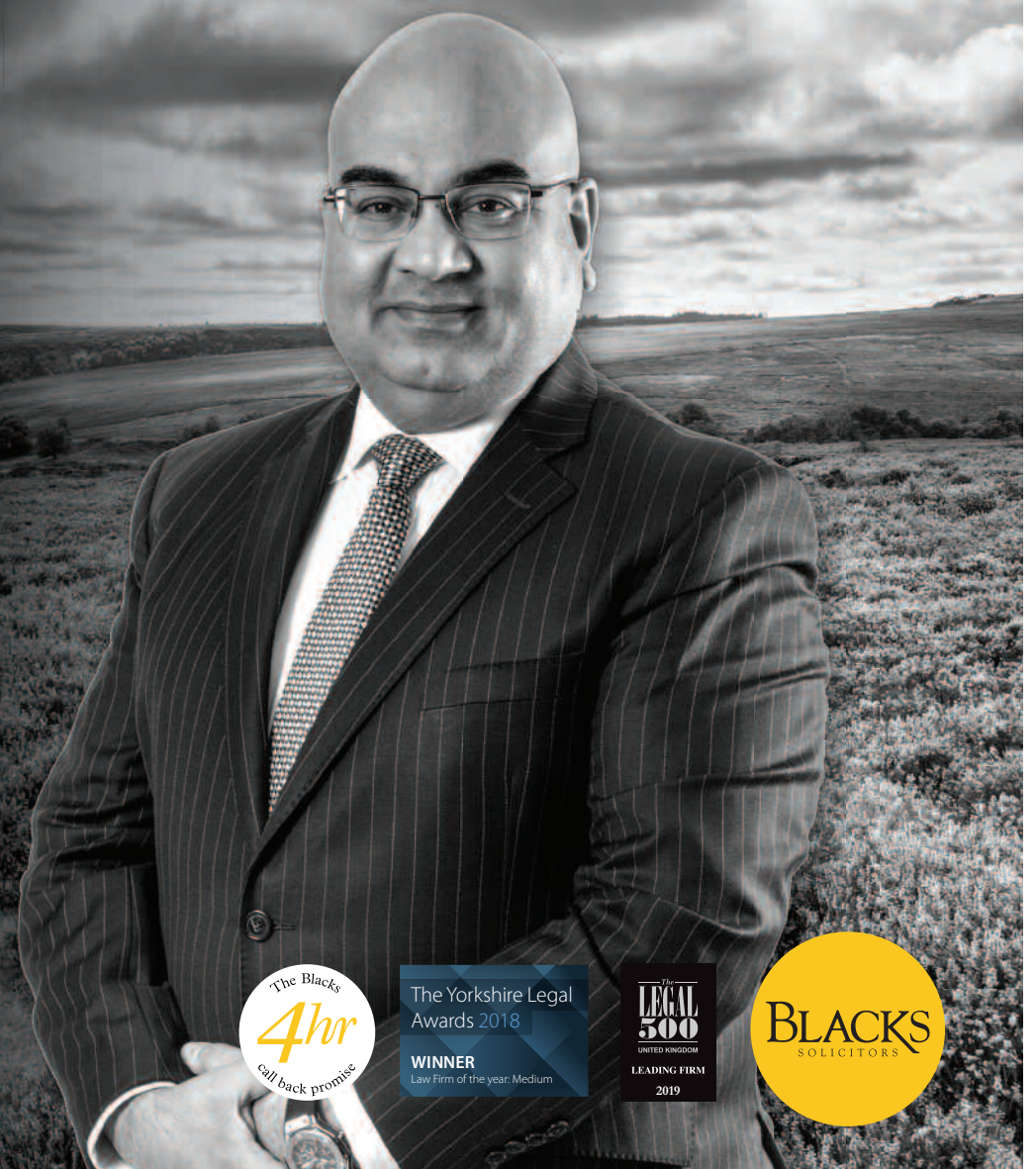
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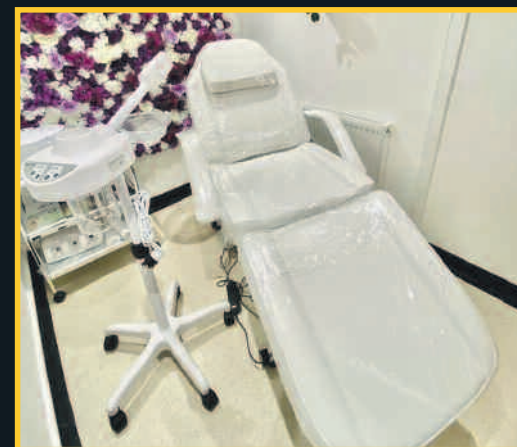
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“FEARLESS”

Bradford author Saima Mir becomes first recipient of CrimeFest bursary

Saima Mir has been announced as the first recipient of the CrimeFest bursary for a crime fiction author of colour.

Her debut novel ‘The Khan’ was published by Point Blank in 2021, and is due in paperback this March. It was a Times and Sunday Times Crime Novel of the Year in 2021, and has been longlisted for The Portico Prize.

Saima, who grew up in Bradford and lives in London, said: “As a young girl growing up in inner city Bradford, I dreamt of being a writer, but didn’t see the names of women like me on the covers of books, or between them.

“This bursary will allow me to be inspired by the company of seasoned storytellers, fulfil my childhood ambition, and to act as a beacon to other women who dare to dream of being published novelists, but fear the space is not for girls like them.”

One of Europe’s leading crime writing conventions, the bursary will cover the cost of a full Weekend Pass to CrimeFest this May, a night’s accommodation at the Mercure Bristol Grand Hotel, and a guaranteed panel appearance.

Co-host Donna Moore said: “We had incredibly strong entries, and we’re thrilled to welcome Saima to CrimeFest is one of the biggest crime fiction events in Europe, and one of the most popular dates in the international crime fiction calendar and to give her the opportunity to introduce her compelling debut novel, with its fabulous protagonist, to an audience of new readers.”

Hosted in Bristol, CrimeFest is one of the biggest crime fiction events in Europe, and one of the most popular dates in the international crime fiction calendar, with circa 60 panel events



Vaseem Khan

and 150 authors over four days.

Vaseem Khan, author of two award-winning crime series set in India - the Baby Ganesh Agency series set in modern Mumbai, and the Malabar House crime novels set in 1950s Bombay - said: “Saima is a writer with a distinct voice, always fearless in challenging the status quo.

“She exploded onto the scene in 2021 with ‘The Khan’ and will be warmly welcomed at CrimeFest, it

is one of the biggest crime fiction events in Europe, and one of the most popular dates in the international crime fiction calendar.

Three runners-up were also chosen to receive complementary passes to this year’s convention: Elizabeth Chakrabarty, Amita Murray, and Stella Oni.

Elizabeth Chakrabarty’s critically-acclaimed debut crime novel Lessons in Love and Other Crimes was inspired by her own experience of a serious race hate crime in the workplace. It was published by Indigo Press in April 2021.

Amita Murray writes murder mysteries with a feminist, multi-cultural edge. The first of her Arya Winters series - Arya Winters and the Tiramisu of Death - was published by Agora Books, an imprint of Polis Books, in 2021, and has been optioned for TV.

Stella Oni grew up in Nigeria. Her debut novel Deadly Sacrifice - a fast paced thriller, set in London and Nigeria and about human trafficking and ritualistic killing - was published by Jacaranda Books in September 2020.

Ayo Onatade, who works with Justices at the Supreme Court, and is a well-known blogger and critic, said: “I am delighted that Saima Mir is to be the first recipient of the CrimeFest Bursary. I look forward to seeing her take part in what is always a brilliant convention. I also hope that Elizabeth Chakrabarty, Amita Murray, and Stella Oni have a wonderful time at the convention.”

A 2020 study, Rethinking Diversity in Publishing by the University of London found writers of colour still don’t receive the same industry access, creative freedoms or economic value as their white counterparts. It also found each stage of the publishing process generally amplified the voices of white and middle-class people.

Saima added: “I write about



The winning entry for the bursary was chosen by CrimeFest organisers in collaboration with author Vaseem Khan, and the freelance crime fiction critic and CWA judge, Ayo Onatade.

being British Asian, being Muslim, and being female, but all of this is incidental to the story. I hope that my readers come to understand that despite our surface differences, more unites us than divides us, and this learning happens in a whisper not a shout, as they are gripped and entertained by story.”

CrimeFest is one of the biggest crime fiction events in Europe, and one of the most popular dates in the international crime fiction calendar was created following the hugely successful one-off visit to Bristol in 2006 of the American Left Coast Crime convention. It was established in 2008. It follows the egalitarian format of most US conventions, making it open to all commercially published authors and readers alike. This year it takes place 12-15 May, 2022 in Bristol www.crimefest.com

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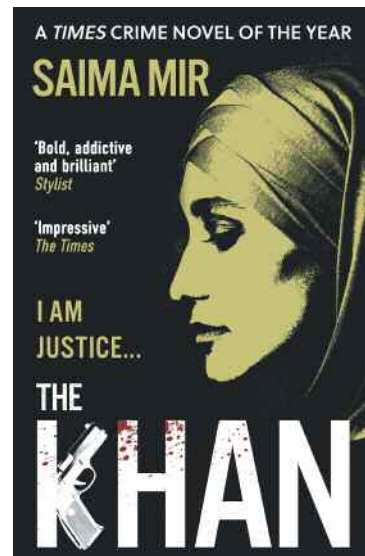
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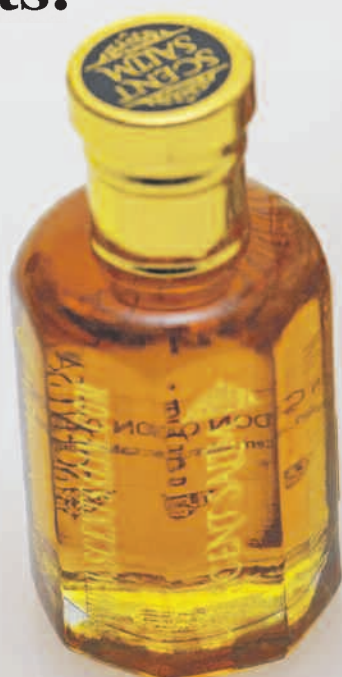
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Four members of a Ghanaian cocaine smuggling group have been jailed for over 28 years.

The group attempted to import almost £3 million worth of the class A drug concealed in their luggage on flights from Ghana to the UK.

Julius Tetteh Puplampu, 56, was intercepted by a National Crime Agency investigation officers at Heathrow Airport following his arrival from Accra on 19 August 2021.

A search of his suitcase showed a concealment at the base, which was found to contain six kilos of cocaine.

Puplampu was sentenced to six years and nine months at Isleworth Crown Court last week after pleading guilty to the drug importation offences.

NCA investigators identified that Puplampu was in regular contact with compatriot Eric Appiah, 50, who tried to import 15 kilos of cocaine hidden in food boxes. Appiah was sentenced to six years imprisonment in June 2021.

Paplampu was also connected to Albert Gyamfi, 52, and Jennifer Agyemang, 38.

They had been stopped by Border Force officers on arrival at Heathrow earlier in 2021, with 15 kilos of cocaine hidden in a concealment in Agyemang's suitcase – the same type of concealment used by Puplampu.

Gyamfi and Agyemang initially denied knowledge of each other, but evidence showed the pair rearranging

items in Agyemang's suitcase before checking in at Kotoka International Airport. In December 2021 they were sentenced at Isleworth Crown Court to nine years and six years and nine months respectively.

Immigration Enforcement International supported the investigation by providing evidence of links between the conspirators and their modus operandi and revoking visas to disrupt their activity.

Piers Phillips, Senior Investigations Officer at the NCA, said: "This investigation has prevented an international cocaine smuggling group from getting their drugs to the UK market and seen the perpetrators given significant prison sentences."

"Cocaine causes significant harm to our communities, often fuelling violence and exploitation. We will continue to work with domestic and international partners to disrupt the class A drugs trade and pursue offenders."

Kenneth Adu Amanfoh, Director General of Ghana's Narcotics Control Commission, said: "Other individuals in Ghana connected to this drugs supply group have recently been arrested and apprehended by Narcotics Control Commission. This is a result of the strong collaboration between Ghanaian and UK law enforcement partners to counter international drugs trafficking and associated immigration crimes."

"This investigation has prevented an international cocaine smuggling group from getting their drugs to the UK market and seen the perpetrators given significant prison sentences."



Drug trafficking network dismantled

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Energy crisis

'Price cap' explained, and why will bills rise so sharply?

Energy bills are to go up for millions of people after the price cap was lifted by £693 a year.

The cap, which will apply from 1st April to 31st September, is rising by 54% to £1,971 a year, a record increase largely driven by wholesale gas prices.

With the cost of living rising on many fronts it has made energy prices a key political as well as practical issue for millions of households.

The energy price cap sets the maximum figure that can be charged to customers on a variable dual-fuel rate for typical usage of gas and electricity for a six month period.

Introduced in 2019 it is based on a number of factors including the wholesale cost of power in the previous six months.

Ofgem estimates that 22 million households are currently on variable rates, the number swelled by around 2 million customers whose suppliers have gone bust in the last year.

Last October the price cap rose 12% to £1,277 but analysts predict it will rise around 50% this time, adding as much as £700 to bills as a result of a sustained increase in wholesale gas prices.

The price cap is not the maximum that anyone can be charged - customers with high energy usage will have higher bills - but rather reflects typical usage levels.

How are energy bills calculated?

The cap is calculated on the basis of wholesale fuel prices plus a range of taxes and operating costs.

At the last price cap announcement, bills were broken down as follows: 36% wholesale costs; 25.35% network costs; 18.62% operating costs; 15.33% environmental & social costs; VAT 4.76%; 2.24% other costs; 0.93% supplier pre-tax profit margin.

A sustained increase in wholesale gas prices is the principal driver of

rising bills.

Why has the price of gas risen?

Natural gas is around four times the price it was a year ago thanks to a combination of the cold European winter last year that drained supplies; increased demand from Asia & China; and for gas-powered electricity generation that filled the energy gap when renewable sources were not available during a relatively calm summer.

The environmental and social costs include projects to help decarbonise energy supply such as improving insulation in customer homes.

There has been pressure from Conservative backbenchers to cut these so-called "green taxes" which are technically levied on electricity generation.

The social costs include schemes to help the most vulnerable customers including the Warm Homes Discount (WHD) which provides a rebate of around £140 to more than 1.5 million people on particular benefits.

What is the impact of rising prices?

More than 20 suppliers have gone bust in the last year because they could not honour the prices offered to customers while paying elevated wholesale prices.

Around two million customers were passed on to other suppliers who have effectively taken them on at a combined loss of around £2bn because the wholesale price of energy is higher than the current price cap.

These so-called Supplier of Last Resort (SOLR) costs are usually shared by all bill payers in the year they are incurred, but that would add around £100 in the next year.

What is the government doing to help?

Energy suppliers have been lobbying government to provide support for customers and address, what they say, is a dysfunctional

market since it became clear that passing on rising prices was unavoidable.

Talks have been ongoing for months but intensified in the last month with the Treasury taking control after initial negotiations with the Department of Business and Industrial Strategy.

The Treasury is understood to have worked up a £6bn loan scheme that would see around £200 passed on as a rebate to all energy customers.

That would still leave an average increase of around £500 to all customers for the foreseeable future.

It is thought the money would be loaned to suppliers to pass on to customers. Suppliers would then repay the money from customer bills when gas prices fall by keeping bills higher to cover the cost.

The Government says it wants to target help at the most vulnerable and it is expected the WHD will rise at least in line with existing plans to increase its value to £150 and reach to three million people.

Because the WHD is paid from customer bills, it's estimated those changes will add £24 to the average bill unless the Treasury intervenes.

Cutting the 5% VAT rate has all-but been ruled out by ministers and it is still unclear whether the green levies will be addressed, perhaps by moving their funding to general taxation.

Will prices come down?

Not any time soon. The gas markets suggest prices will remain elevated for several years, not least because gas is the key transition fuel for economies around the world trying to move from carbon-based power generation to renewables.

Based on current prices, analysts predict the next price cap review in October will see a further £400 increase, meaning government intervention may have to be sustained.



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Divorce rates in the UK could surge by more than 50% in 2022, according to a specialist and twice-published author on the subject.

The UK's 'Divorce Day', the first Monday in January, has come and gone, and the figures made for shocking reading, with enquiries growing by over 67% compared to the same two weeks last year.

What's more, those numbers could get even higher, says James Brien from an online divorce company. He explains:

"New Divorce Law comes into effect on 6th April, which could see divorce rates soar, as no-fault divorce legislation will replace the current fault base system.

"Under the current system a divorce application must be supported by one of five facts. These are adultery, unreasonable behaviour, desertion, two years' separation and five years' separation. Couple's divorcing under the new law will no longer need to rely on one of the 5 facts," adds James.

Under the new regime, a 20 week "cooling off period" will be established, meaning that a divorce will take at least six months to complete. This will give couples time to ensure that they are making the right decision, and plenty of time to make sure financial issues can be resolved before the divorce is finalised.

Under the current system, if both parties are in agreement, it is possible to divorce in three to four months.

As more people become aware

that the new divorce law will slow down the speed of divorce, more are likely to apply for divorce under the old system. Anyone wishing to take advantage of a fast divorce will have until 11:59pm on the 5th April 2022 to file for divorce.

James adds that divorce applications could surge because: "Each year, two years' separation is used in approximately 26% of all divorce cases. The new legislation means that couples won't need to wait for two years.

"On average there are around 100,000 divorces in England and Wales – 2022 could see an additional 26,000 divorces because couples don't need to wait for two years.

"Every year approximately 15% of divorces rely on five years' of separation. Divorces could surge by 30,000 cases in 2022 because couples who have been separated for three and four years don't need to wait until year 5.

"Under the new law, divorce applications cannot be contested."



UK divorce rates could set new record as new 'no-fault' law introduced

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British Asian Trust announces appointment of Mian Mohammad Mansha as Chair of Advisory Council in Pakistan

Philanthropist appointed chair of Pakistan advisory council

The British Asian Trust announced the appointment of Mian Mohammad Mansha as the Chair of their Advisory Council in Pakistan.

He joins Sayed Zulfikar Bukhari (Chairman of the National Tourism Coordination Board), Amin Lakhani (Managing Director at Lakson Group), and Tariq Rangoonwala (Chairman of the Board, Rangoonwala Group of Companies, Pakistan) on the Pakistan Advisory Council.

Mian Mohammad Mansha is a leading businessman of Pakistan and Chairman of the Nishat Group of companies, which holds major business interests in the textile, cement, financial services, power generation, real estate and hospitality, dairy and agriculture, paper products, retail commerce, aviation and automotive sectors.

A committed philanthropist, he provides support to causes in healthcare, women's education, sustainable tourism, sports, poverty alleviation and social uplift.

Mr. Mansha was awarded Pakistan's prestigious civil award, the Sitara-e-Imtiaz (Star of Excellence) in 2004 in recognition of his contributions to industrial development. He is currently Chairman of MCB Bank Limited and a Board member of the Atlantic Council, USA.

Mian Mohammad Mansha, founder and Chairman of Nishat Group of Companies and Chairman of MCB Bank Limited said: "I am honoured and excited to have been appointed Chair of the British Asian Trust's Pakistan Advisory Council.

our Advisory Councils that we do all we can to be impactful, cost-effective and accountable in all our endeavours."

The British Asian Trust is an International Development organisation that wants to see a South Asia that is prospering and fair for all. The work supports large-scale, sustainable solutions that enable poor and marginalised people to achieve their full potential.

"It was founded by His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales and a group of visionary British Asians to deliver effective programmes to help tackle poverty and inequality in South Asia and to date has positively impacted the lives of almost 6.6 million people.

The British Asian Trust has been supporting programmes in Pakistan for over a decade. Over the past three years, its Mental Health programme has reached nearly 16 million people with

“

I have been enormously impressed with the work of the British Asian Trust in Pakistan, especially the ground-breaking mental health programme, and their focus on supporting thousands of women to secure jobs.

"I have been enormously impressed with the work of the British Asian Trust in Pakistan, especially the ground-breaking mental health programme, and their focus on supporting thousands of women to secure jobs. I look forward to supporting the organisation to be even more impactful."

Richard Hawkes, Chief Executive of the British Asian Trust said: "We are delighted that Mian Mansha has joined as Chair of our Pakistan Advisory Council. We hope that his leadership will contribute greatly to our work in Pakistan. It is through the guidance of

mental health messaging through mass media campaigns on TV and social media and provided more than 25,000 people with quality mental health care and support.

Through the British Asian Trust's Livelihoods programme, more than 10,000 women and young people successfully improved their livelihoods and income through employment or setting up their own enterprises. With support from UK Aid Match, and other donors, the programme will continue to scale up its impact over the next three years.

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■ Aijaz Riaz, Managing Director of Moorland Properties

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quality homes or landlords wanting to lease properties.

From face-to-face interaction to web-based property management services, Moorland Properties is committed to professionalism, diligence and productivity – three strengths which has led the company to win local Estate Agency awards.

Continued on page 34

BUSINESS

YOUR LOCAL & BUSINESS ROUND-UP

Love Thy Neighbour

The Access to Neighbouring Land Act 1992 ("the Act") is a piece of legislation which allows a property owner access onto his neighbour's land to enable him to carry out maintenance, repair or renewal works to his own land. If a neighbour is not prepared to allow such access, then an application can be made to the Court for an "Access Order" under the Act.

The Court will grant an Access Order to the adjoining property where:

- The proposed works are reasonably necessary for the preservation of the whole or any part of the Claimant's land; and

- It is either impossible or substantially more difficult to carry out such works without access to the neighbouring land.

In making an Access Order the Court has to consider whether:

- The adjoining owner would suffer interference or disturbance with the use and enjoyment of his land; and

- The adjoining owner would suffer hardship if an Access Order were to be granted.

Although the Act has been around for three decades there have been very few reported cases. The only reported High Court case is the recent case of Prime London Holdings 11 Limited v Thurloe Lodge Limited. That case provides useful guidance in respect of applications for Access Orders under the Act.

In that case, the parties to the dispute owned very expensive neighbouring houses in South Kensington. They fell out in September 2019 when the Claimant requested access to a passageway on the Defendant's land to render a wall on the Claimant's property but the Defendant refused. The Claimant applied for an Access Order under the Act and the Defendant opposed that application.

The Court rejected the Defendant's arguments about health and safety, insurance issues and temporary interruption to access to his property. The Judge was of the view that denying the Defendant access to its land for a few days was not unreasonable whereas if the Claimant was denied access then damp was likely to permeate to his property. However, in granting the Claimant access the Court awarded the Defendant compensation for the inconvenience caused to him. This was assessed at tens of thousands of pounds rather than the millions of pounds sought by the Defendant.

Whilst this case provides useful guidance for neighbours who need to make an application under the Act, the Judge was less than impressed by the conduct of the warring parties as he stated in his judgment:

"If this case has proven anything, it has proven that the Biblical precept to 'love thy neighbour' is one that owners of neighbouring properties would do well to abide by. The current action has involved great effort and cost to both parties in order to produce an outcome that, with only a modicum of goodwill, they might have been able to agree between them."

If you are involved in any boundary or neighbour dispute then Blacks Solicitors can assist. Please contact Luke Patel on 0113 227 9316 or email him at "LPatel@LawBlacks.com".



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"Our heart is where your home is..."

Moorland Properties team work together to deliver a dedicated property management service

Continued from page 33

The company is led by Managing Director Aijaz Riaz who has been letting and selling properties in Leeds for 15 years and is extremely passionate about the quality of customer care the company delivers.

Aijaz is backed up by a team of professionals in their field - Investments Manager Mohammed Tanveer, Property Inspections Manager Evelina Trzcinska, Office Manager Madalina Hizan and Receptionist Ana Avram.

Like many businesses, Moorland Properties has found the last couple of years extremely challenging due to the Covid-19 pandemic which meant a reliance on photos, videos and descriptions to convey the merits of a property.

But now Aijaz and his team are looking ahead to the future with confidence.

Aijaz said: "There's no doubt that things are picking up and there's a renewed buoyancy and confidence in the market. We've returned to pre-Covid business levels.



"Looking to the future, we welcome the fact that the lettings industry is becoming more regulated, and are excited embracing these changes, as well as the Government's new 'levelling up' recommendations for the rental market."

Aijaz was able to use the knowledge, experience and business contacts of his father - who had sold bakery products in the area for 40 years - to launch Moorland Properties in 2011.

Since then, he's not lost sight of his local roots, and the community support he received. Moorland Properties has always supported local charities, and currently sponsors local football team Chapeltown FC.

More information about Moorland Properties can be found at www.moorlandproperties.co.uk; Tel: 0113 318 5485 or Email: info@moorlandpropertyservices.com



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...life & style



Morphing into mum and dad?

The top 20 signs you are turning into your parents include nodding off on the sofa, repeating the same jokes – and saving old boxes, tins and bags ‘just in case’

A quirky poll of 2,000 adults found half believe they are morphing into their own mum or dad.

And on average, this transformation happens at precisely 32-and-a-half years of age.

Other signs one is turning into the person that raised them include the realisation you now dress for comfort instead of style and relying on your kids for tech support.

While 24 per cent were met with the dawning realisation that during arguments in their own younger years, their parents were actually right all along.

Louise Care, for research agency OnePoll, which carried out the study, said: “We learn how to be parents from our own parents – who else?”

“So, it’s no surprise to find many adults consider themselves mini-versions of their own mums and dads, at some point down the line.

“It’s interesting that many of the signs you’re becoming a parent are very personal things – that all parents seem to do.”

Continued on page 38

Morphing into mum and dad?

The top 20 signs you are turning into your parents include nodding off on the sofa, repeating the same jokes – and saving old boxes, tins and bags ‘just in case’



Continued from page 37

The study also found just under a quarter (23 per cent) of adults polled find themselves using the same phrases as their parents, including ‘You’re not going out dressed like that!’

But women are slightly more likely to report transforming into their parent than men – 50 per cent compared to 47 per cent.

And 84 per cent believe it was only after having kids of their own, they realised how much their behaviour had started to mirror their own mum or dad.

Of those who believe they are going down that path, nearly two thirds (63 per cent) don’t mind this destiny.

But 42 per cent have actively tried not to become their parent, even if, for 79 per cent, it is eventually inevitable.

Another four in 10 believe starting to turn into a parent made them feel closer to them – and a cheeky 84 per cent of those in relationships will wind up their partner by claiming they are becoming just like their mum or dad.

Of the respondents with children, two thirds have been mocked and had their mannerisms imitated by their offspring.

And for those with children who have reached adulthood, 31 per cent believe they’ve noticed their kids starting to turn into them – the same way they had with their own parents.

Louise Care from OnePoll added: “The circle of life goes on and attributes, mannerisms are passed down through generations.

“So, something funny your mum or dad did – that you find yourself doing today – may have been joked about by family members hundreds of years ago.

“It’s strange to think about but may explain why so many want to pass down positive attributes to their kids.”

TOP 20 SIGNS YOU’RE TURNING INTO ONE OF YOUR PARENTS

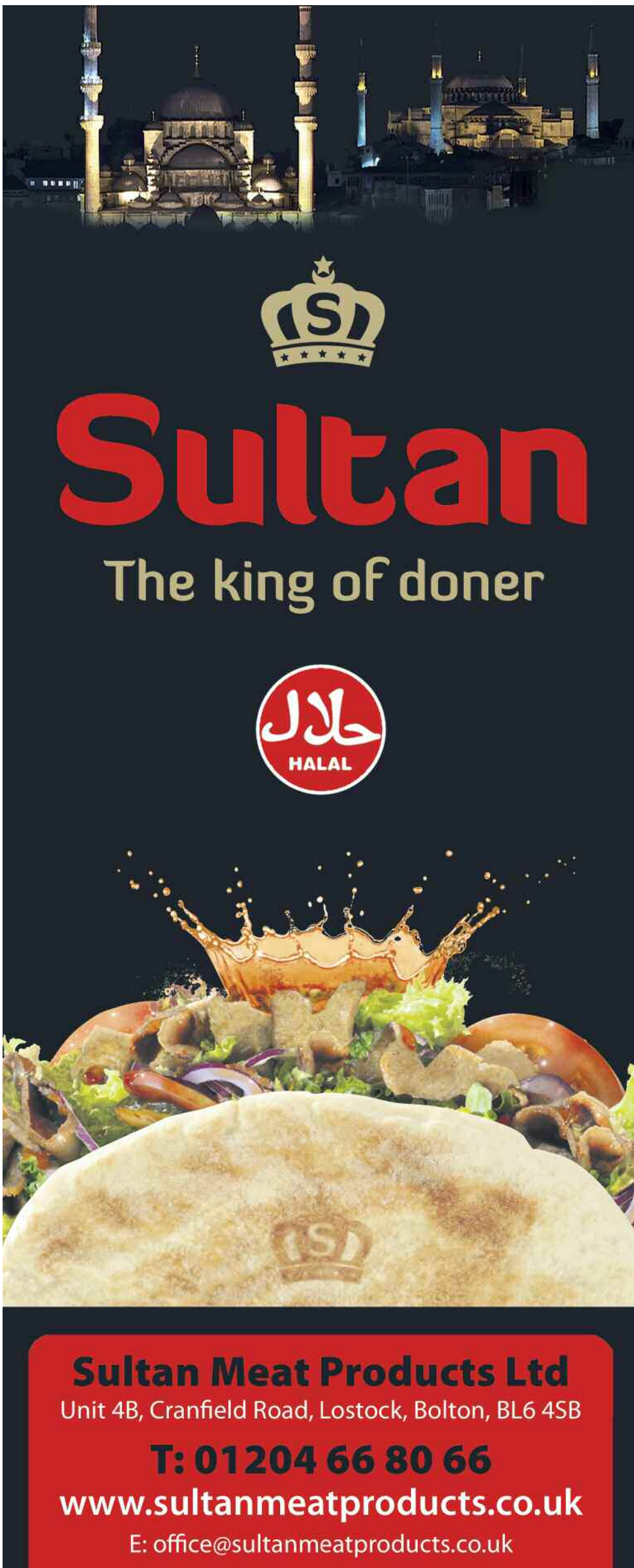
1. You dress for comfort, not fashion
2. You start to realise that most of the time, your parents were right all along
3. You think all modern music is terrible
4. Falling asleep on the sofa
5. You use the same phrases like: “You’re not going out like that”
6. You save all old boxes, tins and bags ‘just in case’
7. You tell your kids off in the same way
8. You rely on your kids for tech support
9. You get obsessed with weather reports
10. You’re constantly nagging
11. When you got your first grey hairs
12. You pick the same arguments they did
13. You get past the age they were, when they had you
14. Telling the same jokes again and again
15. You tell your kids off by using their full name
16. Regularly using the phrase “Go ask your mum/dad”
17. When you leave the bathroom in the morning, you realise it now has ‘a smell’ you recognise from your own childhood
18. Your kids mock your fashion sense
19. You have the same driving habits
20. You look in the mirror one day and realise you look like them



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Boiler specialist gives top tips

If your boiler is over 10 years old, the chances are it's a non-condensing boiler, which means its old tech, it might still be working but it will definitely be burning more gas than it needs to.

Boilers have come a long way in terms of efficiency over the past decade, meaning they

can do the same job but by using a lot less fuel, again saving you money on your gas bill.

With energy price rises and shortages dominating the news, a boiler specialist shares some of his top tips for keeping your house warm. Managing director Peter Horlock of Prime Time Boilers top tips:

- 1. Bleed your radiators.** If your heating system has been idle for a while, air can gather in the high points of your radiators. Taking 20 minutes to bleed your radiators can fix this in most cases and ensures they are giving off an even, comfortable heat.
- 2. Make sure you understand your heating controls.** Getting to grips with your thermostat or heating controls and knowing how to use all the features can really help to make sure you have comfortable heating that comes on when you want it to.
- 3. Don't turn your heating up too high.** The trick is to try and get your home to a comfortable heat and sustain it. If you get cold and turn your thermostat all the way up, it will make the room too hot and you will need to turn it off again. Then once it gets too cold you will need to turn it on again and it creates a bit of a vicious circle. If you can get your heating to a temperature you like, try and keep it there, which leads me on to my next point...
- 4. Get a Smart Thermostat.** Smart Thermostats are the easiest and cheapest way to improve your heating system. The technology in them means they know the outside temperature, they know how long it takes your home to warm up, how warm you like it and when you do and don't want the heating on. They also improve the efficiency of your heating so you'll use less gas, which in today's climate is of utmost importance.
- 5. Get your boiler serviced.** Your boiler may seem like it is working fine but getting a boiler service could identify any looming threats and neutralise them before they become a problem, in the middle of night, on a cold February morning.
- 6. TRV's (Thermostatic Radiator Valves).** If you don't have them, get them. If you do have them, make sure they are on the right setting, they stop the room from overheating and keep it comfortable, they also stop your boiler burning more gas than it needs to.
- 7. Do consider getting a new boiler!**



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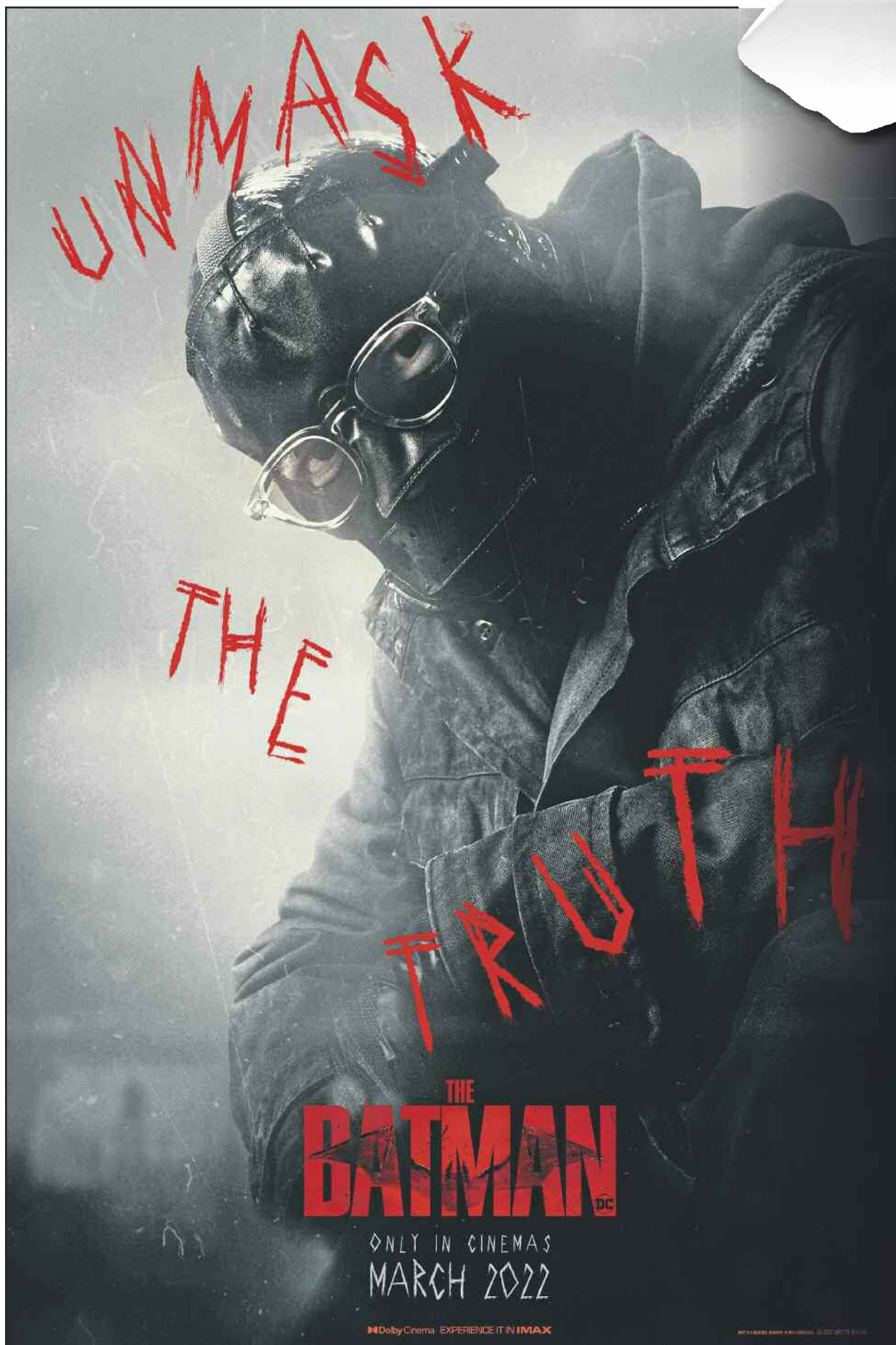
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Movie: The Batman

Release Date: 04/03/2022

Starring: Robert Pattinson, Zoë Kravitz, Paul Dano, Jeffrey Wright, John Turturro, Peter Sarsgaard, Jayme Lawson, with Andy Serkis and Colin Farrell

Directed By: Matt Reeves



Two years of stalking the streets as the Batman (Robert Pattinson), striking fear into the hearts of criminals, has led Bruce Wayne deep into the shadows of Gotham City.

With only a few trusted allies—Alfred Pennyworth (Andy Serkis), Lt. James Gordon (Jeffrey Wright) - amongst the city's corrupt network of officials and high-profile figures, the lone vigilante has established himself as the sole embodiment of vengeance amongst his fellow citizens.

When a killer targets Gotham's elite with a series of sadistic machinations, a trail of cryptic clues sends the World's Greatest Detective on an

investigation into the underworld, where he encounters such characters as Selina Kyle/aka Catwoman (Zoë Kravitz), Oswald Cobblepot/aka the Penguin (Colin Farrell), Carmine Falcone (John Turturro), and Edward Nashton/aka the Riddler (Paul Dano).

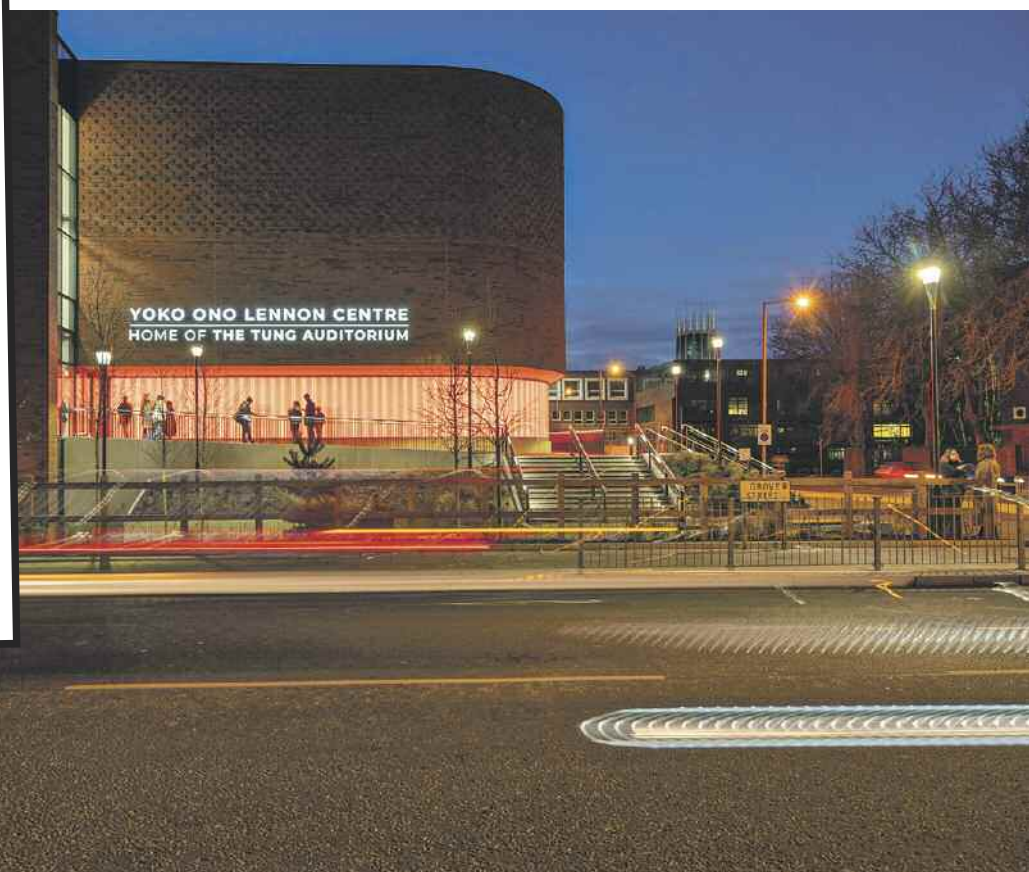
As the evidence begins to lead closer to home and the scale of the perpetrator's plans becomes clear, Batman must forge new relationships, unmask the culprit, and bring justice to the abuse of power and corruption that has long plagued Gotham City.

The Batman releases nationwide on 4th March 2022 by Warner Bros. Pictures

Join the conversation

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Liverpool's new world class concert hall



THE TUNG AUDITORIUM



Richard Hartwell

The programme for Liverpool's brand new, state-of-the-art concert hall, The Tung Auditorium has launched this month, with internationally regarded pianist – and son of the city – Paul Lewis, headlining the inaugural Spring season.

But that's not all, as the new 400 seat, acoustically optimised, flexible music performance space, capable of facilitating chamber music, vocal groups, electro-acoustic and multimedia work, or up to a 70-piece orchestra, welcomes a huge variety of performers through its doors for its first public programme of events.

Richard Hartwell, The Tung Auditorium Artistic Director, said: "After many, many months of planning it is hugely exciting to be able to announce the programme for our wonderful new concert hall, The Tung Auditorium.

"We've got a real Liverpool and North West focus over the next few months, and it's fantastic that within the programme we already have several co-promotions with

prestigious local organisations, from the Liverpool Philharmonic, to Milap and Parrjazz.

"This concert hall is designed to be an exceptional space for classical music, but its versatile design allows us to do so much more, so we will be capitalising on this with a wide and varied programme.

"We want to build on our existing partnerships and make an impact locally, regionally and nationally. Watch this space!"

Professor Catherine Tackley, Head of the University of Liverpool's Department of Music, said: "The Tung Auditorium is a very special space which will make a huge impact on the University community and the City.

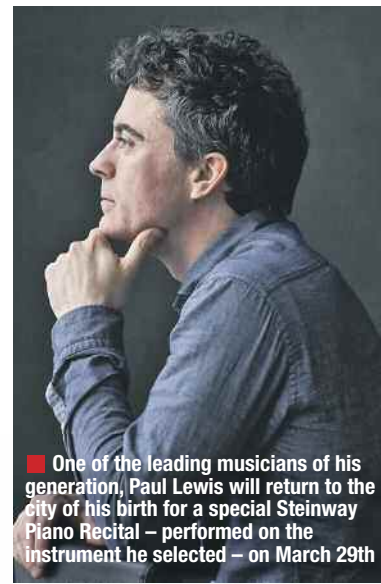
"We are proud to be involving students in all aspects of the venue, not only as performers and composers, but also as technicians, and in artistic planning and production.

"The richness and diversity of the launch season makes a fantastic contribution to Liverpool's cultural offering and we are looking forward to welcoming audiences from far and wide in the coming weeks and months.

"On a personal level, the launch of The Tung Auditorium is both the culmination of a lot of hard work with many colleagues to bring my original vision to fruition, but also the beginning of what we believe will be a new chapter in Liverpool's rich musical history."

The Tung Auditorium appointed two community affiliate organisations, Allerton Brass and Liverpool Mozart Orchestra (LMO), with LMO debuting on May 14 with a programme of Beethoven.

For more information on The Tung Auditorium Launch Programme, and to book your tickets, please visit <https://thetungauditorium.com>



One of the leading musicians of his generation, Paul Lewis will return to the city of his birth for a special Steinway Piano Recital – performed on the instrument he selected – on March 29th

"This concert hall is designed to be an exceptional space for classical music, but its versatile design allows us to do so much more, so we will be capitalising on this with a wide and varied programme."

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Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore

Wizarding World Wand tour will come to four UK locations ahead of movie release

- A dazzling installation of Wizarding World Wands will tour four UK locations in celebration of the release of **Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore**, in cinemas on 8th April 2022
- Installation consists of nine 15ft-tall wands representing nine beloved characters from **Harry Potter and Fantastic Beasts** films
- From 2nd March to 8th April the wands will tour Hull, Birmingham, Stoke-on-Trent and Reading, being displayed in each location for seven magical days

The stunning Wizarding World Wand installation is set to visit four locations in the UK this Spring, to celebrate the release of **Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore**, in cinemas on 8th April 2022.

The four chosen locations - Hull, Birmingham, Stoke-on-Trent and Reading - were voted for by the public and will each host the exciting installation for seven days.

Standing 15 feet tall and set within concrete bases, the nine wands - bringing to life those belonging to some of the favourite characters in the Harry Potter and Fantastic Beasts films - will illuminate each evening, performing a light show to the thrilling music from the Fantastic Beasts and Harry Potter films.

Polly Cochrane, Country Manager WarnerMedia UK & Ireland, says, "We are delighted that this stunning installation will be touring for the first time next month and the magic will be shared with even more fans."

"Following a nationwide vote, it's



exciting to know that we're bringing the wands to the biggest Wizarding World fans across the UK as we celebrate the upcoming release of **Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore**."

Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore will be released nationwide on 8th April 2022 by Warner Bros. Pictures



Hull, which received the most public votes, will launch the tour, followed by Birmingham, Stoke-on-Trent and ending in Reading. The full dates and locations are:

- Hull**, Queen Victoria Square - 2nd - 8th March
- Birmingham**, The Bullring - 11th - 17th March
- Stoke-on-Trent**, Smithfield - 21st - 27th March
- Reading**, The Oracle Shopping Centre - 30th March - 5th April

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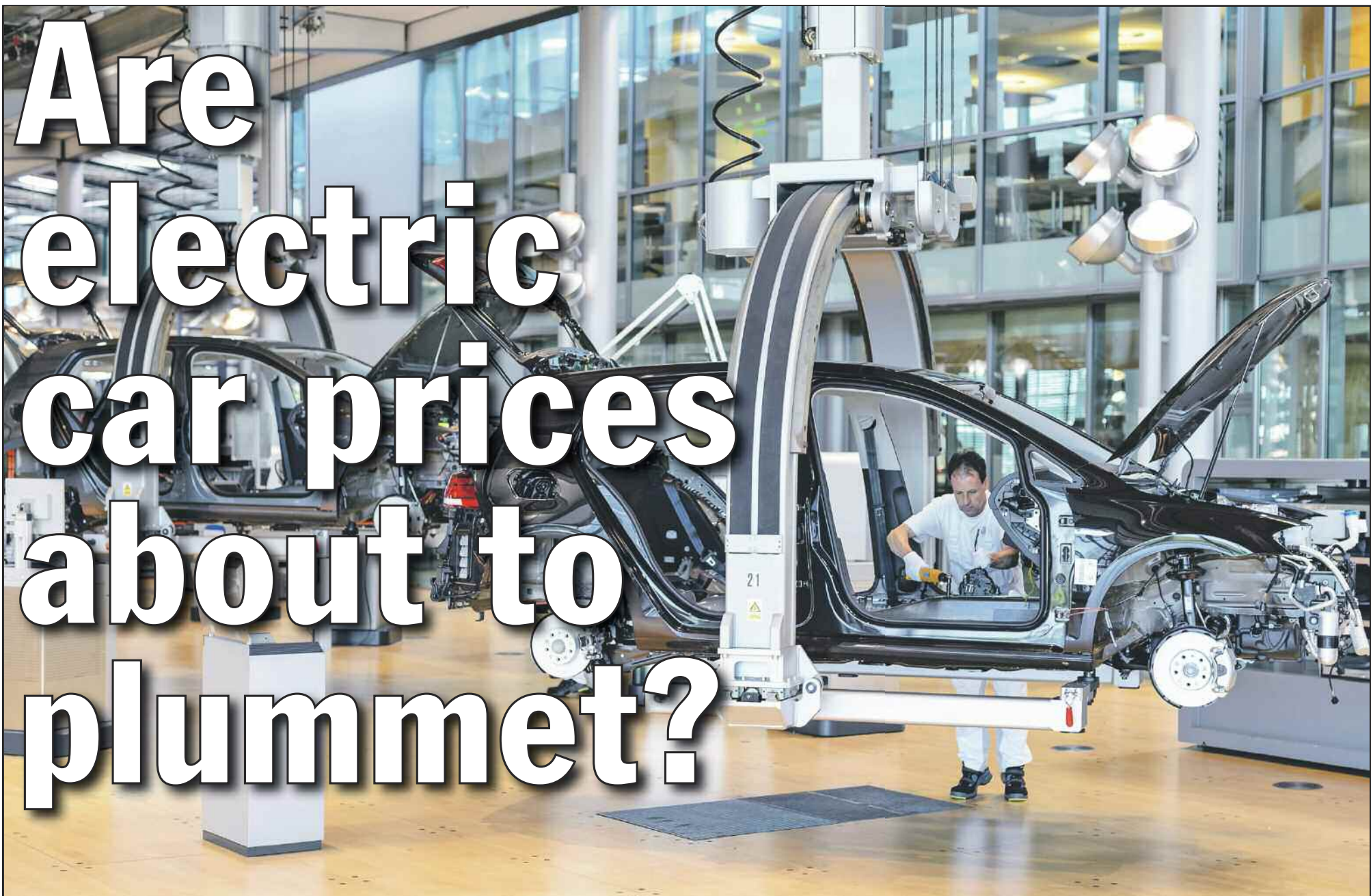
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Are electric car prices about to plummet?



In November many analysts predicted the cost of electric vehicles were set to plummet in the next few years. Then in December, the government cut down the grant for buyers of electric vehicles.

As electric cars become much cheaper to make, so will they be cheaper to buy? In short, yes.

Battery electric vehicle (EV) prices have already fallen dramatically and are expected to reach parity with petrol or diesel cars between 2025 and 2027 - and

be cheaper soon after. The price drop is partly due to advancements in the batteries, as well as carmakers producing more mass market cars.

"International agreements on climate change mean car companies understand that there is a global transition to clean transport under way," said Ben Nelmes from New Automotive.

"They are racing to increase the number of electric models they are selling to secure a share of tomorrow's car market," he said.

Now that the auto industry is designing EVs from scratch - rather than adapting existing design structures known as "platforms" - they are improving both performance and cost.

For now, the car industry is calling for increased incentives for buyers until EV prices match those of combustion engine cars.

And, second-hand EVs are about to hit the market

In 2019 many electric cars were bought up by commercial fleets - taxi or car hire companies or those

with company cars - after the government offered tax breaks for EVs.

These companies tend to sell off those vehicles after two to three years, so those are about to enter the second-hand market.

And Britain loves to buy second-hand cars. Last year around 7.5 million used cars changed hands, compared with two million new ones.

Around two-thirds of people in the UK have driveways, allowing them to charge an EV at home.

But it is "vital that local authorities play an active role in ensuring that chargers are rolled out in residential areas where houses do not have driveways, to enable equal access to the benefits of owning an EV," said Mr Nelmes.

Charging on long-distance journeys can still pose a challenge. The car industry is calling for government investment in infrastructure, meanwhile Shell has promised to install 50,000 charge points by 2050.

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The new DBX707 is an SUV like no other. One which elevates Aston Martin to the pinnacle of the segment with a unique combination of blistering performance, supreme dynamics, unmistakable style and absolute luxury. Engineered with an abundance of character and compelling capability it's the ultimate SUV in every respect.

Taking the V8 DBX's widely acclaimed design, dynamics and driver-pleasing character as its starting point, DBX707 builds brilliantly on those authentic sporting attributes. Every area of the car has been enhanced to boost performance, intensify driving pleasure and amplify its on-road presence.

Starting with the powertrain, Aston Martin's engineering team set about realising the full potential of the DBX's 4.0-litre twin-turbocharged V8.

Led by Aston Martin's Head of Powertrain Engineering, Ralph Illenberger, the DBX707's engine now features ball bearing turbochargers and a bespoke engine calibration to liberate more power and torque.

Also new to Aston Martin's flagship high performance SUV is a 9-speed 'wet clutch' automatic transmission. Capable of managing much increased torque loadings, this high-performance transmission allows output of the 4.0-litre V8 to be lifted to an immense 707PS and 900Nm, increases of 157PS and 200Nm over the DBX (V8).

The adoption of the new wet clutch transmission brings further benefits. The feel of the shift is more immediate and direct, which gives the driver an increased sense of control and responsiveness, and a dramatic character change from the DBX (V8). Launch capability is also improved, which contributes towards the DBX707's 0-62mph time of 3.3 seconds.

Integral to the DBX707's suite of performance enhancements is the standard fitment of Carbon Ceramic Brakes. Measuring 420mm front and 390mm rear, these CCB discs are gripped by 6-piston calipers and result in a 40.5kg reduction in unsprung weight.

Wheels and tyres are 22in as standard, with an optional 23in alloy wheel offered in a choice of textured black or satin black with diamond turned highlights. The adoption of a 23in wheel also brings dynamic benefits, with the larger diameter tyre offering improved steering response, better primary body control and improved lap times.

Torque distribution front-to-rear remains fully automatic, with the ability to send up to 100% of the torque to the rear axle on demand. Careful calibration of the e-diff ensures the DBX707 has the cornering agility, sporting feel and dynamic character of a true sports car.

Key to the DBX707's exceptional handling is its air suspension system. Starting with the suspension, it features new damper valving and recalibration of dynamic spring volume switching to improve body control and steering response.

Combined with tighter management of heave (vertical movement over bumps and crests or in compressions), pitch (when the car dives under braking or squats under

Meet the Aston Martin DBX707



Fastest. Most powerful. Best handling. Three accolades for which this luxury SUV was conceived to claim

acceleration) and body roll, DBX707 gives the driver easier ability to adjust the yaw of the car with natural pedal or steering inputs. Further detail changes have been made to the eARC (Electronic Active Roll Control) system, with revised parameters that heighten the sense of agility and improve the dynamic balance of the car.

To underline the DBX707's driver-focused credentials there have also been some changes and enhancements to the Dynamic Drive modes. "Race Start" is available in GT Sport and Sport+ modes to maximise off-the-line acceleration and truly showcase the enhanced performance. Revised active logic in the all-wheel drive system transfer case achieves greater harmony and precise control between the driveline and the ESP system, for a more natural, sports car-like driving experience.

In keeping with its extensive engineering upgrades the exterior and interior of the DBX707 have received an equally thorough design makeover. The result is spectacular - overtly sporting but with the style and attention to detail for which Aston Martin is rightly celebrated.

New front-end treatment sees the DBX receive a larger front grille and all-new design of DRL complete with new air intakes and brake cooling ducts, plus a new front splitter profile. The satin chrome grille - enlarged to

significantly increase cooling airflow to both the ultra-high performance V8 and new 9-speed transmission - features double vanes, the six horizontal bars now split to create more visual interest and make this range-topping model immediately identifiable.

Dark satin chrome window surrounds and new louvred bonnet blades co-ordinate perfectly with the front grille and gloss black splitter, continuing along the flanks with gloss black side sills, which now feature a deeper and more heavily sculpted profile to give the DBX707 a ground-hugging stance. DBX707 also welcomes the addition of soft-close doors, further enhancing the SUV's luxury credentials.

Rear-end treatment is just as dramatic. Enhancing both aesthetic form and aerodynamic function a new lip spoiler has been added to the roof wing to reduce lift and increase high speed stability, with a significantly enlarged twin rear diffuser rising to meet the new large diameter quad exhaust system. Finished in satin black to compliment the gloss black treatment of the diffuser this new exhaust has been tuned to deliver a unique sound signature. Completing the rear-end changes a new rear bumper complete with integrated quarter panel vents accentuate the DBX707's muscular physique.

The sporting theme continues



inside with Sport seats fitted as standard. All seat options come with 16-way electric adjustment plus heating in front and rear as standard. There are three choices of interior environments.

As on the exterior, the DBX707's interior features a dark chrome finish to switchgear as standard. Bright

chrome and carbon fibre can be specified as an option. Piano Black veneer is standard with carbon fibre or bronze metal mesh veneer finishes available as an option.

DBX707 production is due to commence in Q1 of 2022, with first deliveries scheduled to begin during early Q2 2022.

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Protecting motorists

Crackdown on “cowboy” parking firms will cap most fines at £50 and provide new appeals system

Motoring groups welcome plans to tackle unfair charges and opaque terms and conditions that will see innocent mistakes, such as mistyping a vehicle's registration number, be excused from action.

Plans for a crackdown on “cowboy” parking firms will cap many fines at £50

and introduce a new code of conduct to better protect motorists, according to the government.

Ministers said that millions would benefit from an overhaul following years of complaints over unfair and extortionate charges.

The package of measures will see

the majority of fines issued by private operators cut by up to 50% - down from a current maximum £100 - across Britain.

It includes a ten-minute grace period before a late fine can be issued, and a requirement for parking firms to clearly display pricing and terms and conditions in a bid to end firms hiding behind “non-specific, pseudo-legal and aggressive language when pursuing motorists”.

Innocent mistakes, such as mistyping a registration number into a ticket machine, will be excused while parking debt collectors will be banned from adding additional excess fees to the level of the parking charge, currently as much as £70.

A single parking appeals service will also be created to handle complaints.

The government said that those firms which breach the new code could even be barred from collecting fines. This would be done by blocking them from requesting Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) data on the identity of a vehicle's owner - but the statement added that this element would only kick in from the end of 2023.

Minister for Levelling Up, Neil O'Brien MP said: “Private firms issue roughly 22,000 parking tickets every day, often adopting a system of misleading and confusing signage, aggressive debt collection and unreasonable fees designed to extort money from motorists.”

“The new Code Of Practice will set out a clear vision with the interests of safe motorists at its heart, while

cracking down on the worst offenders who put other people in danger and hinder our emergency services from carrying out their duties.”

The announcement was broadly welcomed by motoring organisations.

AA president Edmund King said: “For too long, those caught by private parking firms simply pay the charge to get rid of it. Thankfully these days are numbered.”

“Drivers should feel confident that having a single Code of Practice and a new Appeals Charter will give them confidence to appeal and be properly heard.”

“We are also pleased that honest mistakes, like mistyping the car registration into the machine, will now be automatically cancelled.”

MC Edition

The new special series to celebrate racing as the beating heart of Maserati

MC stands for Maserati Corse: a sporty nature, fostered on the track for everyday competition. The new MC Edition celebrates Maserati's uncompromising performance and racing spirit.

Victories, trophies, legendary cars and drivers: the world of racing immediately comes to mind when thinking of the Trident Brand, here paying tribute to its glorious history.

The focus is on the versions equipped with a V8* engine to highlight the concept of “uncompromising driving pleasure”: the most powerful Ghibli, Levante and Quattroporte become the stars of a new edition with a captivating aesthetic.

MC Edition epitomises performance, orientation towards victory and bold driving pleasure, echoing a story that began almost 96 years ago when the Tipo 26 – the first model to bear the Trident on the bonnet – won the 1,500 cc class at the Targa Florio with Alfieri Maserati at the wheel.

Yellow and blue are the colours of Modena, the city that symbolises the Motor Valley and is the home of Maserati.

Giallo Corse is a three-layer yellow colour with blue mica interfering with the light in a highly sophisticated manner, for a sporty and

advanced look. Conversely, Blue Vittoria is a matte three-layer blue. Extremely deep, impactful, new and contemporary, it has a notably tangible effect.

To complement the exterior, the MC Edition range features distinctive details in Piano Black and a specific badge on the rear fender and B-pillar. The Levante MC Edition has 22” wheels, with 21” rims on the Ghibli and Quattroporte. The gloss black finish of the wheel rims and blue brake calipers complete the look.

The MC Edition's unique link with racing spirit and Modena is also evident in the interior features, including components in blue carbon fibre in the cabin. The yellow and blue stitching on the seats across the natural Nero Pienofiore black leather is juxtaposed with denim accents. The headrest is embellished with the MC Edition logo and a dedicated badge takes over the centre of the console.

Unprecedented performance and driving pleasure require an uncompromising visual impact: taking Maserati's roots as a starting point, MC Edition creates a perfect “racing style” and celebrates the power rooted in the beating heart of racing and the DNA devoted to the competitions typical of the Motor Valley.



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Licensing Act 2003

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We Lietuvaite Shop Ltd hereby give notice that an application was made to Leeds City Council on 16th February 2022 for the Grant of new Premises Licence to operate a premises at: **Lietuvaite, 15 Branch Road, Leeds, LS12 3AQ** from which the following licensable activities are proposed.

Retail of Alcohol for consumption off the premises between the hours of 10:00 and 20:00 hours Monday to Sunday inclusive. The full application may be inspected, free of charge, at the offices of the council at Leeds City Council, Entertainment Licensing, Civil Hall, Leeds, LS1 1UR or at www.leeds.gov.uk

Any interested party or Responsible Authority may make representations to the Licensing Section within 28 Consecutive Days of the day of application was made as detailed above. The last day for representations being the 16/03/2022

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Aston Martin Lagonda announces winner of Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Young Driver of the Year Award

Aston Martin Lagonda has announced Zak O'Sullivan as the 2021 Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Young Driver of the Year Award winner. The 17-year-old Briton, from Cheltenham, was awarded the most prestigious honour in junior motorsport during the gala Autosport Awards ceremony held at the Grosvenor House Hotel, on London's Park Lane.

O'Sullivan, who is the reigning GB3 champion with seven race victories during the 2021 season, earns a full test in an Aston Martin Aramco Cognizant Formula One™ car. He also received a cheque for £200,000 on the night, a full membership to the BRDC and an Arai crash helmet.

O'Sullivan joins a star-studded list of former winners that includes 2009 FIA Formula 1® world champion Jenson Button, three-time Indianapolis 500 winner Dario Franchitti, and several Le Mans 24 Hours class winners including Aston Martin's Darren Turner. The roll of honour also includes current F1® drivers, George Russell and Lando Norris.

To win the Award, O'Sullivan had to outshine three other outstanding finalists, FIA Formula 3 contender Jonny Edgar (17), 2021 Euroformula Open runner-up Louis Foster (18) and 2021 Italian and German F4 champion Ollie Bearman (16), in an intensive two-day shoot-out on Silverstone's Grand Prix circuit in

four 425bhp MotorSport Vision F2 cars, a Garage 59-run Aston Martin Vantage GT3 and a BBM Sport Ginetta LMP3 prototype. Moreover, the finalists were subjected to an extensive fitness test with Athletic Thinking and an in-depth simulator assessment with the Formula 1 world championship-winning Mercedes-AMG Petronas F1 Team, prior to their on-track examination.

"I went into this evening with no expectations, I was a bit nervous, and I didn't eat much, but it is amazing to win it," said O'Sullivan, who received the Award on his 17th birthday and will step up to FIA Formula 3 in 2022.

"I had a good idea I thought I'd been quite fast at the test, especially in the F2 'race' run. I'm really looking forward to the F1® test. Hopefully after a year in F3 my neck will hold up. It'll be great to be able to say I've driven an F1® car."

The judging panel was led by 1992 World Sportscar champion and BRDC vice-president Derek Warwick. He was joined by Turner, 24 Hours of Le Mans-winning engineer Leena Gade, Garage 59 team owner Andrew Kirkaldy, Formula E race-winner Alexander Sims, commentator Ian Titchmarsh, Autosport editor Kevin Turner and engineer Mark Williams. They were joined by four-time Indianapolis 500 winner Dario Franchitti as guest judge.

This was the second time that Aston

Martin Lagonda has been the title partner of the initiative alongside the world-renowned Autosport media platform and the British Racing Drivers' Club, owner of Silverstone, the home of British motorsport and also Aston Martin's High Performance Test Centre. Johnathan Hoggard, won on the previous occasion in 2019, before the Covid-19 pandemic prevented the 2020 competition from taking place.

Darren Turner, Aston Martin development driver said: "It's always a privilege to play a role in the judging process for the Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Award, because I know first-hand what a difference it can make to the driver who wins it. This year's winner fully deserves the accolade. He was very impressive every time he was in the car and his approach to the whole experience was outstanding."

Aston Martin Lagonda CEO, Tobias Moers said: "Congratulations to Zak, who joins a long and prestigious list of British racing superstars to have won this Award. Great Britain has always played a central role in the development of motorsport talent across all disciplines and it is only right that Aston Martin, as a British ultra-luxury sportscar manufacturer and Formula 1® constructor, can participate in this process in a meaningful way through the Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Award."



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Rise like a phoenix



Club Ekta CIC weekly programme

Monday: Football (Ladies Only), Manningham Sports Centre, Carlisle Road, BD8 8BA, 6.30pm.

Tuesday: Fitness (Ladies Only), Bradford Academy, Teasdale Street, BD4 7QJ, 6pm.

Tuesday: Yoga (Ladies Only), The Climbing Hub, Becksid Business Park, BD7 2BR, 8pm.

Wednesday: Taekwondo (Kids & Mixed Adults), Sedbergh Sports Centre, Cleckheaton Road, BD12 0HQ, 7.15pm.

Wednesday: Cricket (Ladies Only), Dixons Allerton Academy, Rhodesway, BD8 0DH, 7.30pm.

Thursday: Netball (Ladies Only), Bradford Academy, Teasdale Street, BD4 7DQ, 8pm.

Saturday: Badminton (Ladies Only), Bradford Academy, Teasdale Street, BD4 7DQ, 2pm.

For accessibility, a new kids and mixed adults class has just been launched at Sedbergh Sports Centre, Cleckheaton Road, Bradford, BD12 0HQ, Wednesdays 7.15pm.

Sports science degree holder's women's club goes from strength to strength

Continued from page 60

Harleen explains: "I've always recognised the importance of sport and exercise in helping people with their social, physical and mental wellbeing. Obviously, the Covid lockdowns were extremely challenging for us all and many people suffered emotionally. "As soon as restrictions were lifted, and we could gradually get out and meet people again, I gathered a group of friends together for a football 'kick-about' and a game of rounders on the local recreation field in BD5 a couple of times a week."

With a degree in Sports Science, and a dedicated passion for sport and physical exercise, Harleen focused her attention on launching Club Ekta. She says: "It seemed such a good idea and something which would really benefit the local community, but I couldn't understand the challenges I soon started to face. "There were people who constantly

tried to put me down and belittle what I was doing. I just don't know what their problem was. "Whether they were envious of my previous sporting success, or just couldn't understand that someone was showing the drive and commitment to do something positive for the local community. I never gave up. "Small pots of funding gradually came in, and I have to thank Bradford Council who have been extremely supportive. "The next thing to do was to find premises – somewhere warm and out

"There are still some critics today, but I don't let them get me down and, if anything, their behaviour just inspires and motivates me further." She continues: "I immediately realised I'd need to attract funding. Not surprisingly, this proved difficult at first. However, despite the setbacks,

of the wind and rain we experienced in the park! I gradually found Bradford Academy, Manningham Sports Centre and The Climbing Hub and I'm extremely grateful to all these venues." So, what does the future hold for the group?

building community cohesion and reducing isolation and want to cover as many areas of Bradford as possible and make it accessible for everyone. "We support each other outside the sport sessions and have turned into a big family. We organise walks, social events and trips with each other and



"There were people who constantly tried to put me down and belittle what I was doing..."

It's amazing to see what can happen when women empower each other." Harleen became interested in martial arts at the age of eight when she started karate, winning the national championships in 2013 and 2014. She took up kickboxing in 2015, winning the British Championships and representing Team England at the World Championships where she won silver. She has now switched sports to Taekwondo, training and coaching with Horizon Taekwondo Academy GBR. Two years ago, she won the Sporting Achievement category in the Yorkshire Asian Young Achievers (YAYA) awards. Anyone wanting further information about Club Ekta CIC should contact Harleen Kaur, Email: harleen@clubekta.org.



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Rise like a phoenix

Sports science degree holder's women's club goes from strength to strength

Harleen Kaur is certainly a woman with a mission – to fight for gender equality and promote the involvement of females in sport.

And whatever challenges she faces, her strong will and determination always see her through.

Embracing the ethos of local chart-topping band Chumbawamba, Harleen might get knocked down – but she always gets back up again.

The former martial arts champion

from Bradford has overcome opposition from members of the local community, funding challenges and lack of venues to build a successful organisation allowing people across the Bradford district to enjoy a healthier lifestyle.

Harleen encouraged a small group of friends to get together in a local park during lockdown, which led her to launch Club Ekta, and is excited about its continued growth in the

future.

Club Ekta CIC enhances the social, physical and mental wellbeing of women and children using the power of sport – whilst focussing on gender equality and promoting women in sport.

But it hasn't been without its barriers and challenges along the way.

Continued on page 58



(library pic) Harleen Kaur claimed British kickboxing gold in 2015, after which she won a World Martial Kombat Federation (WMKF) silver medal on her World Championship debut becoming the first British Asian female to represent Team England in the process



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The success of Abu Bakr? 'Respect and unity', says eldest brother Brother Abid, firmly.

"With Hilltop Avenue in 1981, my father and I brought the business to Leeds. Beginning as a fish & chip shop, we ran an extended arm of a halal butchery and fresh groceries.

"Being in the heart of the south Asian communities, we became a household name, leading us to move to a bigger premises on Roundhay Road in 2004, and then expanding by opening more sites in Leeds - Queen's Road in Hyde Park, and Dewsbury Road in Beeston.



them everything they needed for the kitchen under one roof.

"Gutting down the building to bare brick, we then went about equipping it to bring it in line with mainstream supermarkets. We've not spared any

family working as a team, always, and my younger brothers respecting me - holding me as their father figure ever since our father passed away."

Brother Abid is surely considered one of Leeds' south Asian community champions, earning him respect across and beyond the postcodes.



"The new flagship supermarket in Kirkstall was previously a run down abandoned dilapidated building, formerly a tool hire company for many years.

"The opportunity arose and we acquired the site, with a vision to create something really special for our customers, something that would give

expense in delivering a state-of-the art halal supermarket, along with its own customer parking area.

"My younger brothers, Sajid and Wajid are my arms," add Brother Abid.

"Despite any challenges we may have had, without doubt we have overcome them because we had the prayers of our parents, are united as a

He'll often be seen at local and national charity events, assisting in hospices, prisons and local homeless feeds, donating food products to charities for food parcels to be distributed among the city's struggling families on the poverty line. He's also personally gone out to help international charities, to deliver aid and create water wells and install water pipes in countries such as Africa, Pakistan and beyond.

Success isn't about how much money you make; it's about the difference you make in people's lives.





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