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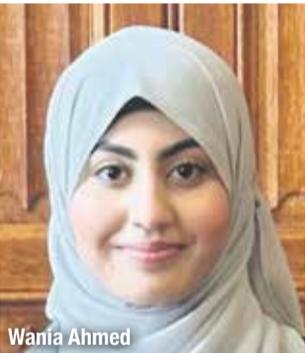
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SPECIAL FEATURE

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2026

“Give to Gain”: Why women supporting women is the most powerful force for change

From boardrooms to community spaces, women across Yorkshire are proving that when knowledge, mentorship and opportunity are shared, everyone moves forward. At the heart of this movement is a growing network of female leaders known as the BPA Lionesses. Every year, International

Women's Day (IWD) offers a moment to celebrate progress. But it is also a reminder that meaningful change rarely happens alone.

Across Yorkshire, women are building powerful networks designed not just to celebrate success, but to share it. One of the most influential emerging networks is the BPA Lionesses, created through the 'Business Power Awards' and the 'BPA Empowering Women Awards'.

The two awards platforms bring together accomplished

female leaders committed to mentorship, collaboration and community impact.

The BPA Lionesses Winner's Circle includes entrepreneurs, executives, public servants and community leaders who understand that leadership comes with responsibility. Their focus is simple: open doors for others. A perfect fit for IWD2026's theme - "Give to Gain".

What started as a celebration of women's achievements has evolved into a powerful

support network designed to connect experienced leaders with emerging voices across business, public life and community work.

Through initiatives such as "Coffee & Collaborations" the BPA Lionesses are delivering peer-to-peer support, work-life balance and wellbeing sessions, and the upcoming Breaking Barriers leadership event. Their objective: creating safe spaces where women can exchange experience, guidance.

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Editor's Note - By Andleeb Hanif

International Women's Day reminds us that progress has never been achieved in isolation. Success becomes meaningful when it is shared. Leadership becomes powerful when it lifts others. Across our region, and beyond, remarkable women are doing exactly that - mentoring, guiding and championing the next generation. The BPA Lionesses came together with that spirit in mind. A circle of women who recognise that the real legacy of leadership is not titles or awards, but the impact we have on those who follow. Because when women support women, we don't just create success stories. We create movements.

BPA Lionesses Voices



Dr Saira Ali FLI

On resilience: Losing my father at 18 forced me to learn resilience not as a concept, but as a necessity. That experience shaped my strength, my empathy, and the way I lead today.

On leadership: Empathy, collaboration and care aren't weaknesses - they're leadership strengths, especially when the stakes are high.

Advice to young women: Don't wait to feel ready. You grow into leadership by stepping forward, not by standing back.

Describe the 'BPA Lionesses' spirit: Fearless. Supportive. Transformational.

Describe the 'BPA Lionesses' spirit: Fearless. Supportive. Transformational.



Samreen Akhtar

On purpose: "Qualifying as a barrister opened the door to a career that not only challenges me intellectually, but allows me to stand up for some of the most vulnerable in our society."

On success: Success is never effortless. Behind every achievement are sleepless nights, doubts, fears and sacrifices that few people see.

Advice to young women: Do not fear failure. Every loss carries a lesson - even if you only recognise it later.

Describe the 'BPA Lionesses' spirit: Inspirational. Uplifting. Resilient.



Sarah Khan-Bashir MBE

On inspiration: Reading 'To Kill a Mockingbird' shaped my understanding of justice and inspired my path into law.

On purpose: Opening my own firm, SKB Law, allowed me to deliver legal services in the way I truly believed people needed.

Advice to young women: Listen to your inner voice and trust your instincts - they will guide you more than you realise.

Describe the 'BPA Lionesses' spirit: Supportive. Empowering. Inspiring.



Sobiya Jawaid

On representation: Winning my European kickboxing medal wearing my hijab and draped in the Union Jack was a moment that proved you never have to compromise who you are to succeed.

On leadership: Strong leadership isn't about compromising your values - it's about standing firmer in them.

Advice to young women: Never let fear or the judgement of others stop you from pursuing what truly matters to you.

Describe the 'BPA Lionesses' spirit: Connection. Inspiration. Legacy.



Noor Ali OBE

On leadership: Women are often told we're not decisive - yet women make tough decisions every day, often while managing more complexity than we're ever credited for.

On success: Success is rarely a straight line. Behind every achievement are failures, doubts and challenges people rarely see.

Advice to young women: Work hard and pursue your goals - but never at the expense of your wellbeing. True success means lifting others as you rise.

Describe the 'BPA Lionesses' spirit: Tenacious. Fearless. Inspiring.



Aqsa Mushtaq

On representation: When I stepped onto the football pitch, I realised I wasn't just playing for myself - I was playing for every young girl who looked like me and wondered if she belonged.

On success: The difference is that those who succeed push through the setbacks and use criticism as fuel to keep going.

Advice to young women: Your dreams are not unrealistic. Walk into every room knowing you belong there and be confident in your abilities.

Describe the 'BPA Lionesses' spirit: Inspirational. Resilient. United.



Nazreen Ahmed

On resilience: Being pulled out of school at 16 meant I had to rebuild my education from the beginning - but determination carried me through.

On achievement: Graduating with ACCA at 40 while working full time, raising children and building a business showed me that it is never too late to achieve your goals.

Advice to young women: Believe in your capability and stay determined - success comes through persistence, not overnight.

Describe the 'BPA Lionesses' spirit: Courageous. Ambitious. Determined.



Rukhsana Siddique

On resilience: In the hardest year of my life - losing my brother during Covid while rebuilding our business - I learned what true resilience really means.

On purpose: Continuing the business my brother started is his legacy. Every time I see a Crossleys car on the road, it fills me with pride.

Advice to young women: Follow your dream and don't let anyone stand in your way. If you have a vision, go for it 100%.

Describe the 'BPA Lionesses' spirit: Bonded. Experienced. Genuine.



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Afghanistan-Pakistan border clashes force 66,000 to flee

Aid agencies warn a fragile humanitarian system is being pushed to breaking point as fighting along the Durand Line forces nearly 66,000 people to flee and threatens already overwhelmed border communities.

Mounting hostilities along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border are driving a fresh wave of displacement, with humanitarian organisations warning that an already fragile crisis in Afghanistan risks spiralling further out of control.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) says nearly 66,000 people have been displaced in eastern and south-eastern Afghanistan following an escalation in cross-border military activity along the Durand Line.

Reports from the region point to civilian casualties, damaged infrastructure and disrupted humanitarian operations, deepening hardship in communities already grappling with poverty, disaster recovery and large-scale population returns.

The development comes as Afghanistan faces one of the world's largest returnee-related displacement crises. More than five million Afghans have returned to the country in the past two years, including 2.6 million during 2025 alone, placing immense pressure on housing, healthcare and local services.

Humanitarian officials say the renewed violence risks triggering a dangerous chain reaction - more displacement within Afghanistan, sudden returns from neighbouring

countries, and mounting pressure on border provinces struggling to absorb large numbers of people.

The fighting has also begun to affect humanitarian infrastructure directly. IOM confirmed that one of its transit centres in Nangarhar province sustained significant damage during recent hostilities, while border crossings at Torkham and Bahramcha have been suspended because of security concerns.

The closures have severely restricted the movement of aid workers and relief supplies at a moment when demand for assistance is rapidly rising.

Even in calmer periods, Afghans returning through these crossings often arrive with little more than what they can carry, requiring emergency shelter, medical support and protection services. During periods of conflict, those needs grow sharply.

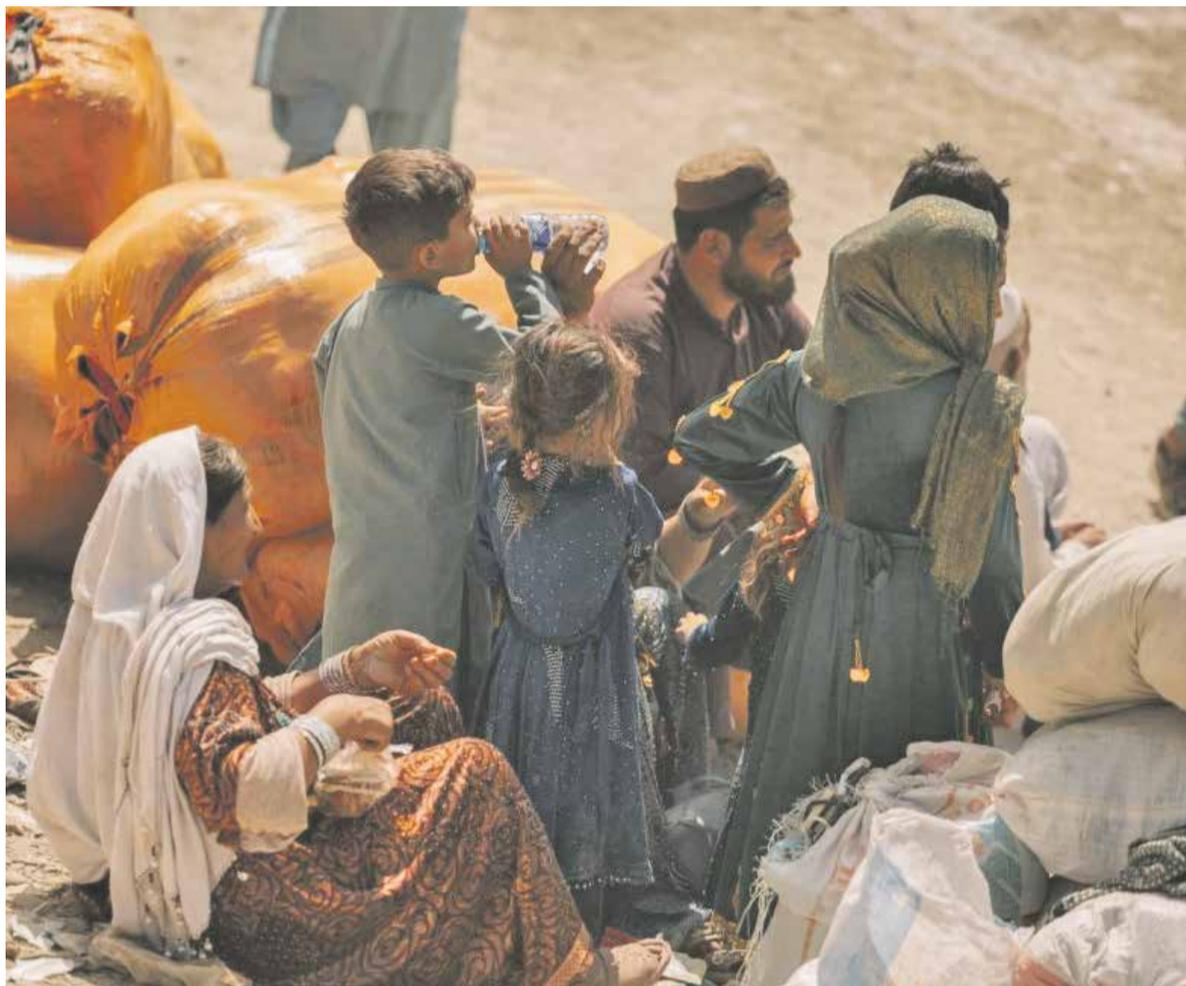
The escalation is particularly devastating for families in Kunar province, where many residents were already displaced by a recent earthquake and living in temporary settlements.

Aid agencies warn that cross-border shelling, evacuation orders and restricted humanitarian access are now forcing some of those families to move yet again, creating the risk of further displacement.

For many, there are few safe places left to go.

The situation is especially precarious for women and girls, who face heightened risks when communities are repeatedly uprooted and humanitarian services are disrupted.

Humanitarian organisations are



urging all parties involved in the confrontation to respect international humanitarian law and ensure the protection of civilians.

They warn that safe and sustained

access for aid workers is essential if life-saving assistance is to reach those affected.

For now, aid agencies say their priority remains supporting displaced

families and returnees wherever security conditions allow, but without de-escalation the humanitarian toll is likely to grow rapidly on both sides of the border.

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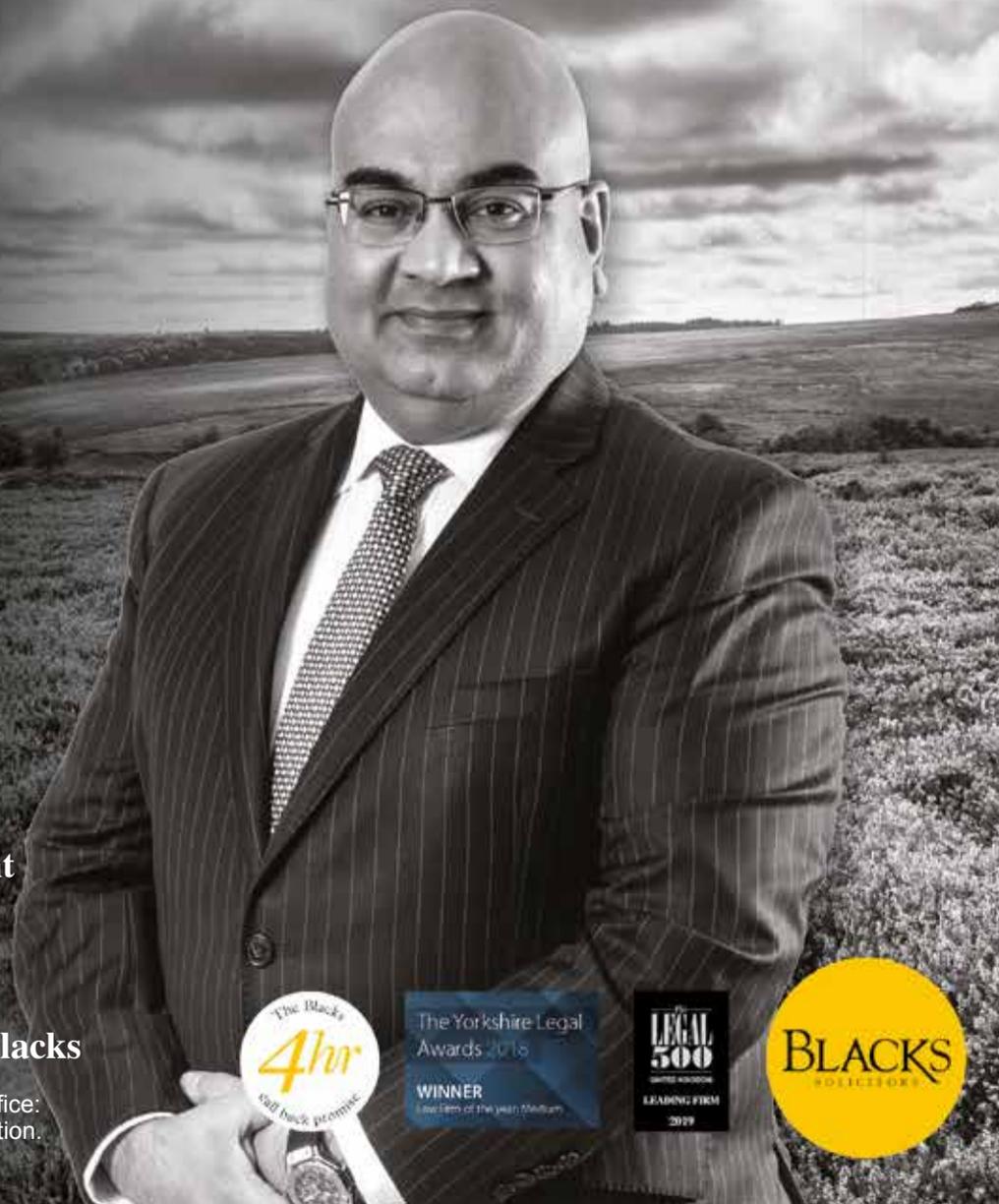
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Study reveals scale of school bullying among teenagers

A major UK study examining the experiences of young people has revealed that nearly three in ten teenagers report being bullied at school, highlighting a continuing challenge for both education and health systems.

The findings come from the Born in Bradford Age of Wonder study - one of Britain's most comprehensive and diverse adolescent research programmes - which surveyed more than 8,400 secondary school pupils aged 12-15 across the city.

Researchers found that 29% of teenagers said they had been bullied at school in recent months,

while 14% reported experiencing online bullying. Girls were more likely to report in-person bullying, with 32% affected compared with 26% of boys.

The research provides insight into the pressures young people face in modern urban Britain, with many describing the intense social expectations that shape school life. For some girls, appearance and presentation were closely linked to peer acceptance.

One 13-year-old South Asian British girl told researchers that not following certain expectations around clothing, hair or make-up

could lead to bullying. "You get the looks. And then within the looks you might get bullied," she said.

Professor Louise Arseneault, professor of developmental psychology at King's College London, said the findings challenge assumptions that online bullying dominates young people's experiences.

"This study offers a timely reminder that bullying remains a significant part of many young people's lives, with in-person experiences occurring more frequently than their online counterparts," she said.

Researchers also found important differences in experiences between ethnic groups. Teenagers from smaller ethnic minority communities reported the highest levels of discrimination, including verbal abuse and negative assumptions about their abilities.

Some young people described incidents where their racial identity was misidentified or mocked by peers. Verbal discrimination was commonly reported, although physical incidents were rare.

Many pupils also said that when bullying was reported to schools, action was often limited. Some

said they had moved schools or switched to home education as a result.

Martha Boateng, director of the Anti-Bullying Alliance, said the research should act as a "clear call to action", urging schools and policymakers to strengthen prevention efforts and listen more closely to young people.

The study forms part of a seven-year project tracking the lives of Bradford's secondary school students across areas including mental health, nutrition, gaming, technology and environmental factors.

Huddersfield is UK's leading university in two key categories

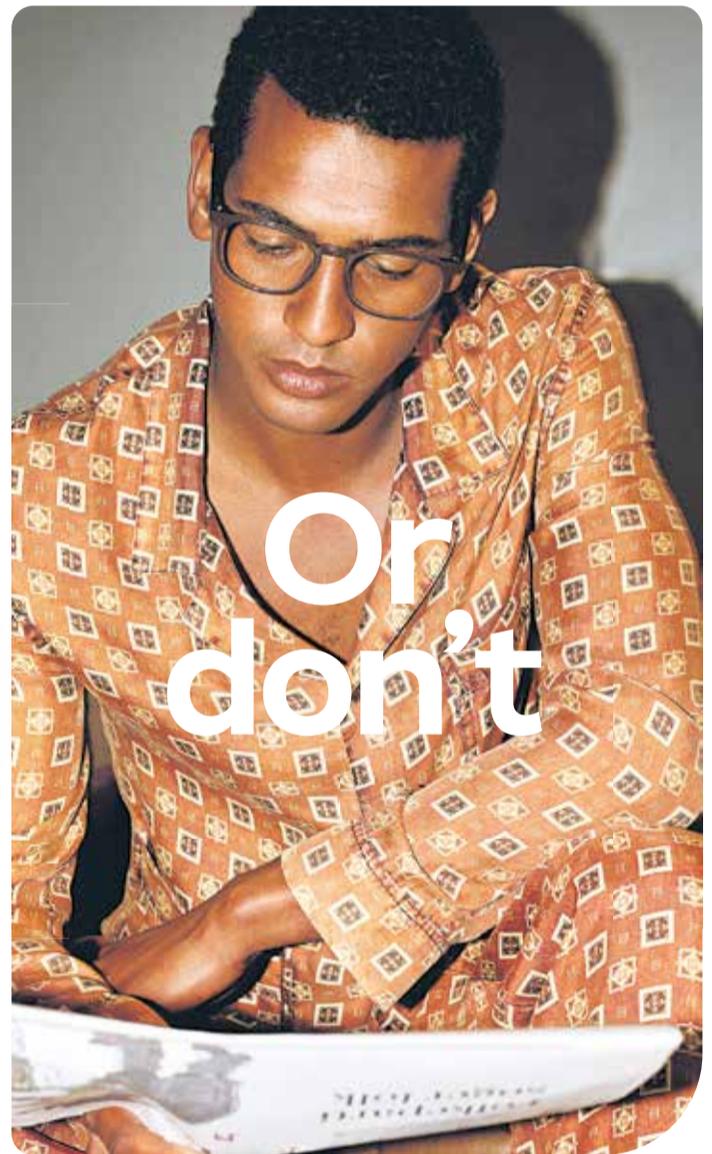
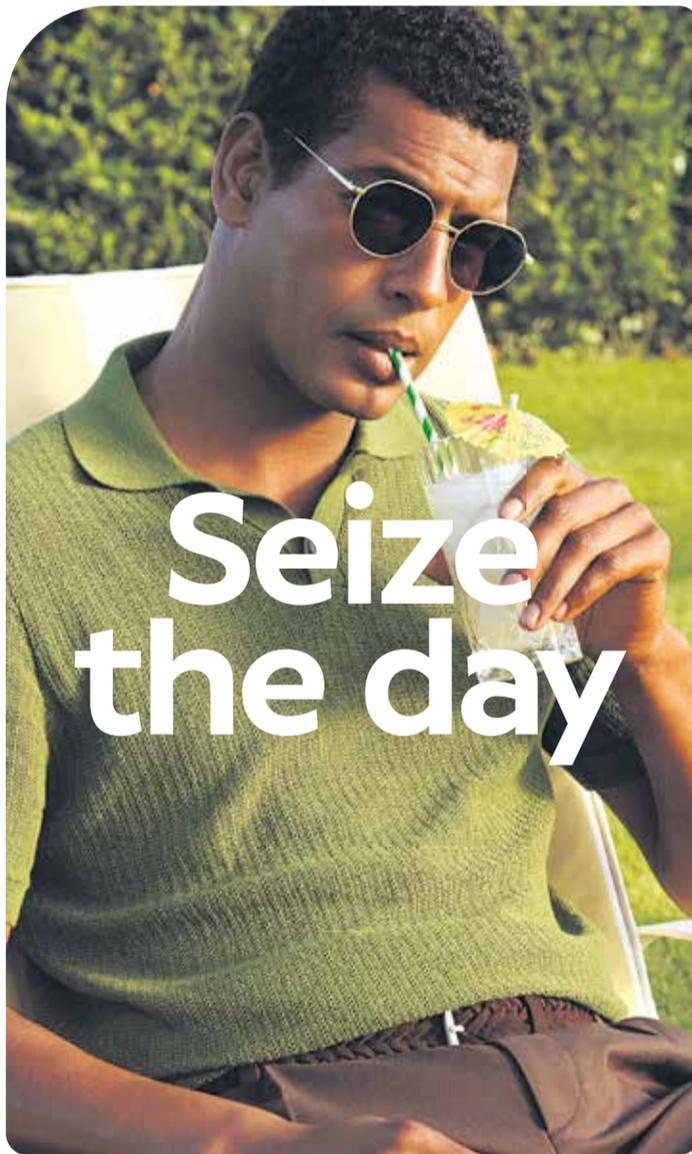
The University of Huddersfield is the leading university in the country for two key teaching qualification metrics in new figures released by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

The new HESA figures show that the university has 96 per cent of its teaching staff holding higher degrees - Master's or above - and 95 per cent holding teaching qualifications, meaning that Huddersfield is the number one ranked mainstream university* in the UK in both categories.

The University has also recorded an excellent performance in the figures for academic staff holding a doctorate, with its proportion of 74 per cent placing it inside the top 10 mainstream universities in the country.

The figures are part of the latest date release from HESA which covers the academic year that concluded in 2025.

Commenting on the latest HESA figures the University of Huddersfield's Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Tim Thornton, said: "These new official statistics once again show that University of Huddersfield colleagues are the best qualified in the country, with an unparalleled record for topping the national listings for both teaching qualifications and higher degrees, ranking as the leading university once again in both categories."



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National recognition for Bronte Girls' and Feversham Girls' as pupils excel

Bronte Girls' Secondary Academy and Feversham Girls' Secondary Academy have been formally recognised by the Secretary of State for delivering exceptional outcomes for disadvantaged pupils - a moment of pride not just for the schools, but for the communities they serve.

Both academies, part of the iExel Education Trust, received letters from Bridget Phillipson, congratulating staff and students on their outstanding performance during the 2024/25 academic year.

Their results place them among the highest-performing schools in the country for disadvantaged learners.

Disadvantaged pupils often face structural barriers - from financial pressures to limited access to enrichment opportunities - yet these schools have demonstrated that background does not determine destiny.

In her message, Phillipson praised the dedication of teachers, the ambition of pupils and the culture of high expectations that underpins success in both schools.

She also encouraged leaders to share their effective practice nationally and to play a leading role in school improvement through collaboration, professional networks and the Department for Education's Regional Improvement for Standards

and Excellence programme.

Dr Tim Coulson, Director General for the Department for Education's Regions Group, confirmed that both academies were included in a select group of schools within the Trust singled out for their impact.

For many families across Bradford, this recognition carries particular weight.

Disadvantaged pupils often face structural barriers - from financial pressures to limited access to enrichment opportunities - yet these schools have demonstrated that background does not determine destiny.

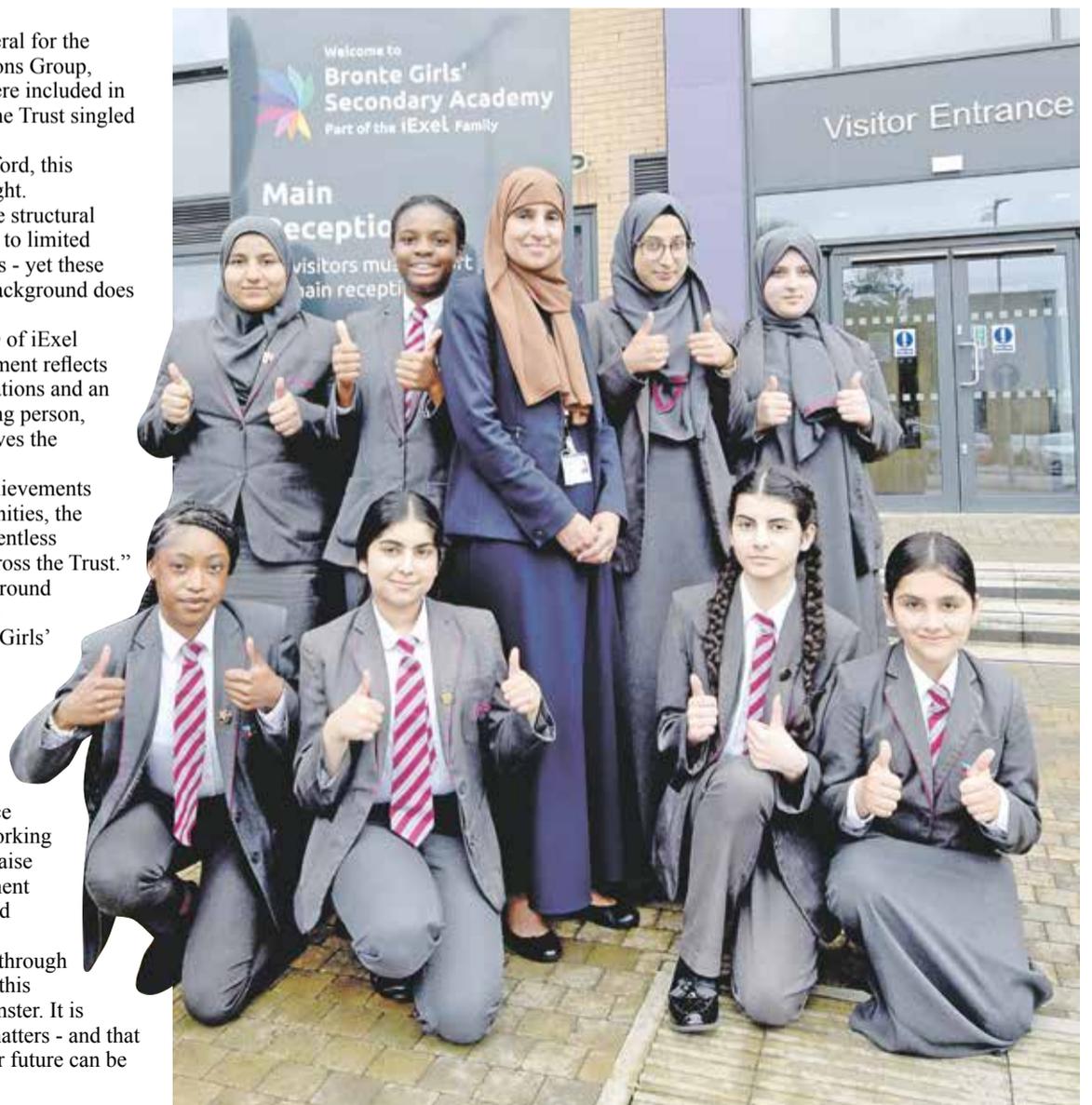
Professor Khurshid Khan, CEO of iExel Education Trust, said the achievement reflects "years of dedication, high expectations and an unwavering belief that every young person, whatever their background, deserves the opportunity to succeed."

He added: "These excellent achievements reflect the strength of our communities, the ambition of our pupils and the relentless commitment of our colleagues across the Trust."

At a time when conversations around educational inequality continue to dominate national debate, Bronte Girls' and Feversham Girls' are offering something powerful - proof that sustained investment in people, purpose and partnership delivers real change.

The Trust says it remains committed to sustaining excellence for disadvantaged pupils while working closely with regional partners to raise standards for all through engagement with professional communities and cross-sector collaboration.

For the young women walking through those school gates each morning, this is more than a letter from Westminster. It is affirmation that their hard work matters - and that no matter their starting point, their future can be bright.





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'Doctors Without Borders' rushes aid to Lebanon as airstrikes force mass displacement



Thousands of families are continuing to flee their homes across southern Lebanon this week as Israeli airstrikes intensify, forcing humanitarian organisations to rapidly expand emergency aid operations across the country.

Medical charity Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has launched an emergency response to support tens of thousands of displaced civilians arriving in already overcrowded shelters and host communities.

The charity says people are

arriving with little more than the clothes they are wearing, after evacuation orders and repeated bombardments forced entire neighbourhoods to leave at short notice.

MSF teams have deployed mobile medical clinics in the southern city of Sidon where shelters have already exceeded their intended capacity.

At the same time, aid workers have begun distributing clean water to emergency shelters in Beirut while assessing further needs in regions including Rashaya.

Medical teams are also continuing healthcare activities in northern and eastern areas including Tripoli, Akkar and Aarsal to ensure routine care for local communities is not disrupted.

Aid workers say displacement is accelerating as continued airstrikes hit towns and villages across southern Lebanon.

Entire communities have received evacuation warnings, forcing families to leave homes, schools and businesses behind — often with no clear destination.

Overcrowded shelters are now struggling to cope as more people arrive each day.

Psychological toll on communities Healthcare workers say the crisis is also creating a growing mental-health emergency.

Many families arriving in shelters have experienced repeated displacement and the trauma of sudden bombardments.

MSF teams are therefore providing psychological first aid alongside medical treatment to help children and adults cope with the immediate

shock of displacement.

Humanitarian organisations say the coming days will be critical.

If bombardment continues and evacuation orders expand further north, aid agencies warn the number of displaced people could increase rapidly, placing even greater strain on Lebanon's fragile humanitarian infrastructure.

Relief teams are now racing to expand mobile clinics, distribute essential supplies and prepare additional emergency support as the situation evolves.



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Leeds Civic Hall hosts powerful show of unity at Ramadan Iftar

Leeds' Civic Hall opened its doors to the spirit of Ramadan this week, as civic leaders, faith representatives and community guests gathered for a special Iftar hosted by the city's Lord Mayor.

Held in the Banqueting Suite on Wednesday evening, the event marked one of only a handful of civic Iftars ever hosted at Civic Hall - a growing tradition that reflects Leeds' diverse communities and shared commitment to dialogue and understanding.

The evening was hosted by the Lord Mayor of Leeds, Councillor Dan Cohen, and attended by the Leader of Leeds City Council, Councillor James Lewis, alongside a range of community and faith leaders including Imam Qari Asim MBE, the Bishop of Kirkstall, Reverend Arun Arora, and the Lord Mayor's chaplain, Rabbi Anthony Gilbert.



Among the guests were HM Lord Lieutenant of West Yorkshire, Professor Adeeba Malik CBE, the Children's Mayor of Leeds, Sienna Silva-Farber, and representatives from across the

city's multi-faith community.

The gathering also raised awareness for the Lord Mayor's chosen charity, Leeds Mencap.

As the sun set, Imam Qari Asim MBE of Makkah Mosque led the call to prayer, marking the moment Muslims break their daily fast during the holy month of Ramadan. In keeping with tradition, guests began the evening with dates and water before sharing a buffet meal together.

“The civic Iftar meal, which is quickly becoming a fantastic tradition here in Leeds, is an opportunity to bring together all the communities the office of the Lord Mayor represents around our city, and build harmony, trust, and understanding between our cultures.”

The civic Iftar also recognised the dedication of foster carers working with Muslim children across the city. A group of carers from Foster4Leeds were invited by the Lord Mayor in acknowledgement of their work supporting young people and families.

Proceedings were led by Councillor Asghar Khan, Leeds City Council's executive member for communities, customer services and community safety, who served as master of ceremonies, supported by Councillor Abdul Hannan.

Councillor Dan Cohen said the event had quickly become a meaningful civic tradition.

“The civic Iftar meal, which is quickly becoming a fantastic tradition here in Leeds, is an opportunity to bring together all the communities the office of the Lord Mayor represents around our city, and build harmony, trust, and

understanding between our cultures,” he said.

“The holy month of Ramadan is not only a time of abstinence. It is a time of reflection, of coming together and of charity. I hope that by sharing this meal, we brought our multi-faith communities in Leeds a little closer and built on our understanding of each other.”

Councillor James Lewis said the occasion also served as an opportunity to reaffirm the city's stance against

discrimination.

“It is always an honour to attend the civic Iftar and take the opportunity to underline the Council's full commitment to doing all we can to tackle discrimination of all types, including anti-Muslim prejudice in Leeds,” he said.

“This includes our adoption in 2022 of the Anti-Muslim Prejudice definition as something that is direct or indirect hatred and discrimination against anyone of Islamic faith on grounds of their belief and practice.

“We undertake regular engagement work with various groups in communities across Leeds, and we run awareness raising campaigns on how to report Islamophobic hate and the support available to victims, as well as highlighting the many positive contributions British Muslims make every day to life in Leeds.”





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The woman helping Bradford's hidden heroes finally get heard

Across Bradford, hundreds of small community organisations are quietly changing lives every day.

They run breakfast clubs, mentor young people, support struggling families and create safe spaces where none existed before. Yet many operate on the edge - underfunded, overstretched and often invisible to those with the power to help.

For Fozia Naseem, Partnerships Manager at GiveBradford, making sure those organisations are seen, heard and supported has become a personal mission.

Her journey into the role did not begin in boardrooms or funding bodies. It started on the frontline.

Several years ago, Fozia co-founded Hop On Yorkshire Ltd, a social enterprise delivering cycling, yoga, walking and eco-coaching programmes across Bradford and Kirklees. Working directly with communities transformed how she understood the sector.

"You see the passion people bring to their communities," she says. "But you also see the reality - organisations trying to survive with very little support while doing work that genuinely changes lives."

Like many grassroots leaders, Fozia experienced the strain herself. Running a community organisation with limited resources can be isolating, uncertain and emotionally demanding.

During a particularly difficult period in her life, she began to notice a wider pattern.

"So many organisations are doing incredible work," she explains.

"But they're often overlooked simply because they don't have the right connections or the confidence to navigate funding systems."

That realisation gave her a sense of purpose. Today, at GiveBradford, Fozia works to shift that imbalance.

"I want to be a voice for organisations in spaces they're rarely invited into," she says. "These groups are the heartbeat of our communities."

Where grassroots voices meet opportunity

Fozia's role is as much about listening as it is about funding.

Each day she meets community leaders, volunteers, businesses and donors - people who care deeply about Bradford but may never have crossed paths before. She helps grassroots organisations access funding, build partnerships and gain the confidence to grow their work.

At the same time, she works with businesses and philanthropists who want to invest in the city. "It's about helping people understand what's happening on the ground," she says.

"And showing them how their support can create real, lasting change."

GiveBradford has already distributed millions of pounds in grants to local organisations tackling some of the district's most pressing issues, from youth services and mental health to poverty and unemployment.

But numbers alone do not tell the story.

"For me, impact is the difference it makes in someone's life," Fozia adds.



One project that left a lasting impression on her is Café South, run by Saif Space CIC in Buttershaw. The initiative offers young people a safe space before school, with breakfast, mentoring and wellbeing support.

She recalls hearing about one young person who began attending after struggling to engage at school. "They were arriving tired and disconnected," she says.

"But through something as simple as a warm breakfast and trusted adults who showed up every day, their confidence started to grow."

Attendance improved. Behaviour changed. The young person began engaging with school again.

"It shows how something small on the surface can completely change the

direction of someone's life."

Protecting stories, building pride

Another project close to Naseem's heart is the Bradford South Asian Festival, which created space for communities to share migration stories and explore identity and belonging.

The work resonated deeply with her own family history.

"My parents were just nine and ten years old during the Indian partition," she says.

"Some of the stories they shared about what they witnessed were horrific."

Those memories were never fully recorded before her father passed away and her mother later developed Alzheimer's.

"So much of that history disappears

unless communities preserve it themselves."

Projects like this, she believes, do more than celebrate culture. They help young people understand their roots and build pride in who they are.

They also highlight something Bradford has always been known for - resilience.

Investing in Bradford's future - born and raised in the city, Fozia speaks about Bradford with unmistakable affection.

"I'm a Bradford girl - or maybe a Bradford woman," she says with a smile.

"This city shaped me."

Its diversity, creativity and strong community spirit continue to inspire her work.

But she also believes Bradford deserves greater investment.

While many people generously support charitable causes overseas, Fozia encourages donors to look closer to home as well.

"A lot of money goes abroad, which is important," she says. "But we also need to support communities here."

Grassroots organisations, she argues, understand local needs better than anyone.

"They're rooted in the communities they serve. They understand the culture, the challenges and the lived experiences."

Supporting them means strengthening the foundations of the city itself.

For Fozia, success is not measured simply by how much funding is distributed, but by the strength of the communities that grow from it. "My vision is simple," she says. "To make a positive difference in the world, one person at a time."





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Cllr Alex Ross-Shaw Bradford Council's Executive Member for Regeneration at Solly's Fruit and Vegetables stall at Darley Street Market



Bradford's Darley Street Market crowned 'Britain's Best Food Market'

Bradford's Darley Street Market has been named Britain's Best Food Market, just six months after opening - and traders like Solly's Fruit and Vegetables are a big reason why it's thriving.

The city centre venue scooped the top prize at the Great British Market Awards, with judges calling it "truly impressive" and praising the market as "a bold, modern food destination that blends culture, community and quality".

For many shoppers, it's businesses like Solly's that give the market its soul.

Solly's Fruit and Vegetables is a fourth-generation Bradford family business, which began life as a fruit, veg and halal meat shop on Oak Lane in the early 1970s. Now, its presence inside Darley Street Market reflects exactly what the venue has become - a modern space rooted in the city's

independent trading heritage.

Since the three-floor Bradford Council flagship opened in July 2025, shoppers and diners have flocked to Darley Street Market as part of the wider regeneration of the city centre.

The market has already built a strong reputation, with visitors rating it 4.4 out of 5 stars on both TripAdvisor and Google Reviews.

It has also become one of Bradford's liveliest new cultural spaces, hosting live music, workshops, exhibitions and community events throughout the building and its Courtyard area.

Highlights over the last six months have included Bradford2025 City of Culture activity, the European Festival of Latvian Culture, BD: Festival, Courtyard Clash wrestling, crafting and cooking workshops, big-screen film nights, Halloween celebrations and monthly Real Markets pop-ups.

Many traders reported record sales over the festive period, including Roswitha's Deli, Taplin's Butchers and Priestley's Fishmongers, while Darley Street Kitchen also performed strongly with workplace bookings and parties.

Alongside the food and footfall, Darley Street Market has introduced weekly community initiatives such as the Tuesday Chatty Café, run with Age UK Bradford District to help reduce loneliness and social isolation.

A packed programme is already planned for 2026, with celebrations for Valentine's Day, Chinese New Year, Pancake Day, International Women's Day, February half-term activities including the Yorkshire Games Festival, and events for Easter, Eid and the summer months.

Councillor Alex Ross-Shaw, Bradford's Executive Member for Regeneration, said the award was a proud moment for the city.



"Darley Street Market has been a phenomenal part of our regeneration plans for Bradford city centre, so we're delighted we've been named Britain's Best Food Market," he said.

"Along with being a great place for shopping and eating, we designed the market to be a space for music, art, heritage and culture."

Traders across the market say the move has helped businesses grow,

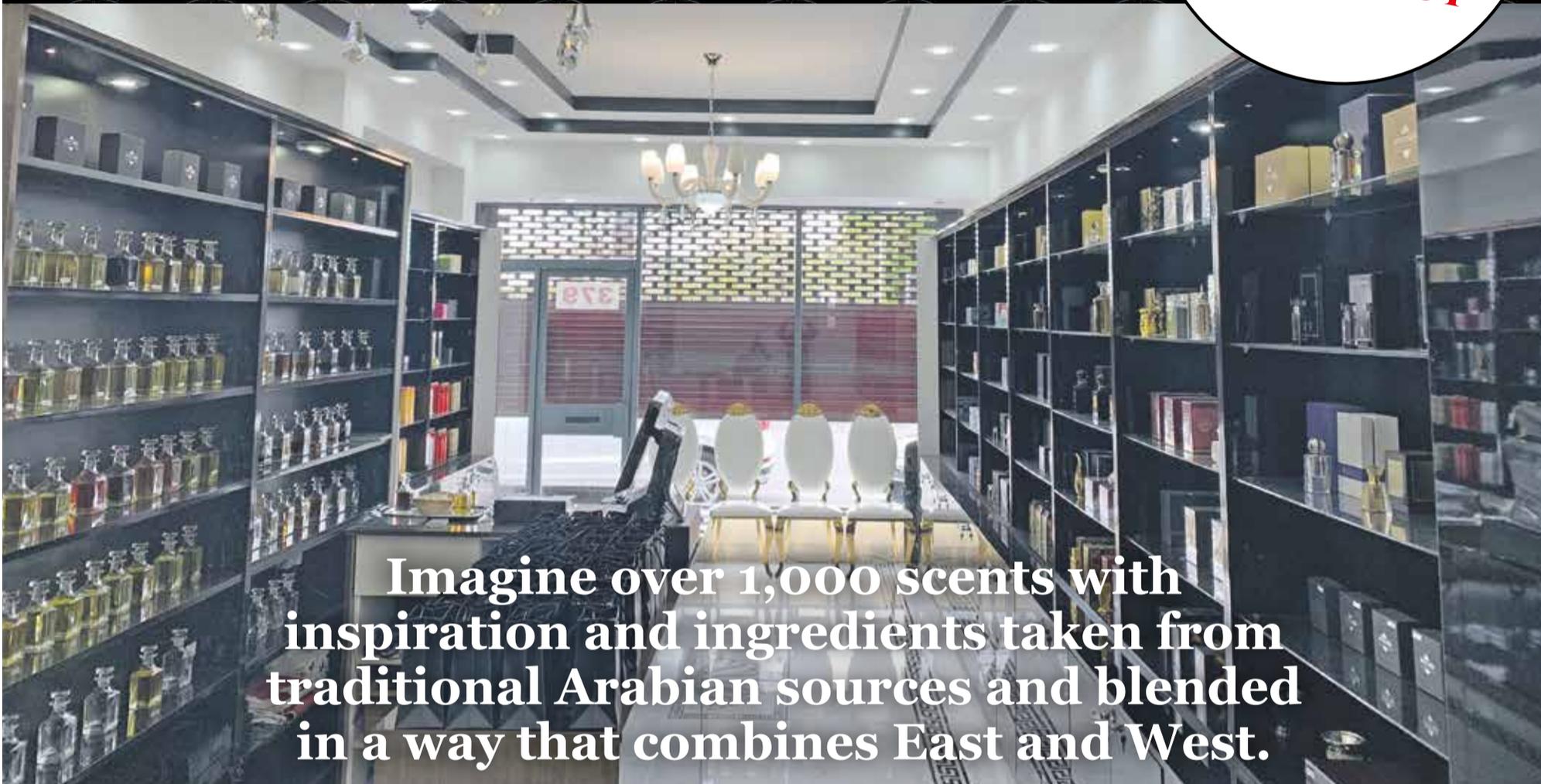
with Taplin's Butchers describing it as a catalyst for expansion, and Caffè Brigante praising the collective effort behind the award win.

And with long-standing Bradford names like Solly's Fruit and Vegetables - serving local families since the 1970s - continuing to draw loyal customers into the city centre, Darley Street Market's success story is only just getting started.

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From cartoons to coding: the scholarship student inspiring more women in tech

A University of Bradford student is hoping to inspire a new generation of women to pursue careers in technology after receiving a scholarship supported by the University's Chancellor, broadcaster Anita Rani.

Anum Ayub, 22, a second-year Computer Science student, is among the latest recipients of the Rani Scholarship - a programme designed to support women who may not otherwise be able to access higher education, particularly in subjects where women remain under-represented.

Originally from Pakistan, Ayub is the first in her family to attend university.

"I want to give back to the community in a positive way," she said.

"I want to encourage other young women that they can have a career in tech and achieve their goals. They just need to get out there and ask for help."

Launched in the 2024-25 academic year and now returning for its third year, the Rani Scholarship is supported in part by TechnologyOne, a London-based software company working across government, business and education.

The scholarship offers financial support through bursaries, tuition fee reductions and cost-of-living help for students



After moving to the UK in 2019, she learned English by watching Horrid Henry cartoons

After moving to the UK in 2019, she learned English by watching Horrid Henry cartoons and relied on online resources to study for her GCSEs.

She says the scholarship has been life-changing.

"The scholarship has had a really big impact on my life. It's opened doors and new opportunities for me," she said. "It gives me independence and motivation to face my studies."

Anum hopes to use her experience to encourage other young women from diverse backgrounds to consider careers in technology.

facing the greatest barriers, including refugees and asylum seekers, disabled students, care leavers, and those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.

For Anum, the impact is personal - and powerful.

"When I found out I had received the scholarship, I was really happy and emotional," she said. "It has been incredibly empowering to be truly seen and valued as someone with potential."



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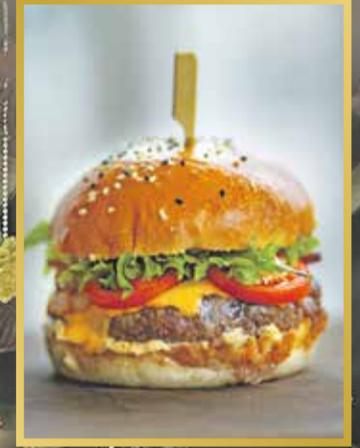
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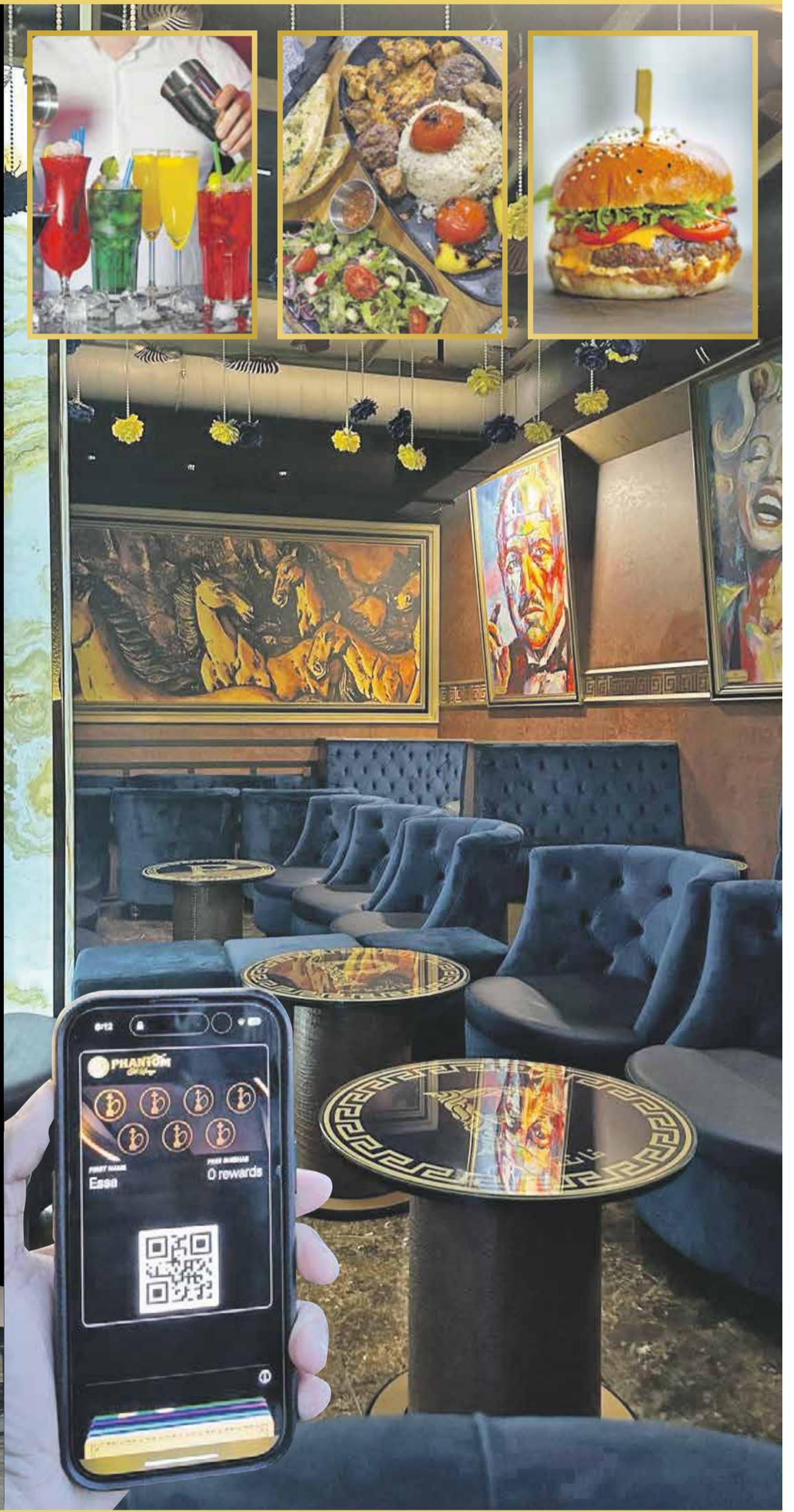
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SOARING

Belle Vue Girls' Academy delivers one of Yorkshire's strongest education success stories

Belle Vue Girls' Academy in Bradford has been praised by Ofsted for creating a school culture where inclusion, equality and personal development sit at the centre of daily life - with inspectors awarding the academy the coveted 'Strong' standard for 'Personal Development and Well-being'.

The judgement, reserved for schools that go beyond expectations, recognises "excellent and consistent work that makes a real difference for children and learners", placing Belle Vue Girls' among those delivering not only academic progress but a wider, deeply supportive experience for young people.

Inspectors said the Heaton-based secondary school was "committed to enriching pupils' lives", highlighting an ethos where diversity is celebrated and respect shapes relationships throughout the school.

"A respect for equality spreads

through all aspects of the school's work," the report noted, praising high standards of behaviour and the way pupils support one another and engage positively with staff.

While Belle Vue Girls' was previously rated Good in all areas in 2021, the latest inspection also confirmed that the academy securely met the 'Expected' standard across every other category, including Achievement, Curriculum and Teaching, Attendance and Behaviour, Leadership and Governance, Inclusion, and Post-16 Provision.

Inspectors described a calm and focused learning environment where pupils value both their education and the support they receive.

"Pupils achieve well... acquiring valuable knowledge and skills across many areas of the curriculum," the report stated. "They secure foundations that prepare them effectively for GCSE study."

Inclusion - a newly expanded focus in the 2025 Ofsted framework - was identified as a priority for school leaders, with inspectors noting that staff understand the barriers some pupils face and ensure vulnerable learners receive targeted support.

Safeguarding was also judged to be securely met, with Ofsted describing an "open culture" in which responsibility is shared across the school community and pupils feel safe.

The inspection took place in November 2025, during the first week of Ofsted's revised national framework - a more demanding model introduced to raise expectations across England's schools. Belle Vue Girls' was one of only three schools in Yorkshire inspected in that opening week.

Deborah Anness, headteacher at Belle Vue Girls' Academy, said the outcome reflected years of dedication from staff and students.

"Ofsted has made clear this framework raises the bar. I'm proud Belle Vue not only met these standards but did so in a way that reflects its essence as an ambitious, inclusive school."

"The new Ofsted framework sets very high standards," she said. "To meet the expected standards in all areas, with personal development recognised as a significant strength, provides real assurance to parents that we are offering a high-quality education."

Carol Dewhurst OBE, chief executive of Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust, said being among the first schools inspected under the new system added to the significance

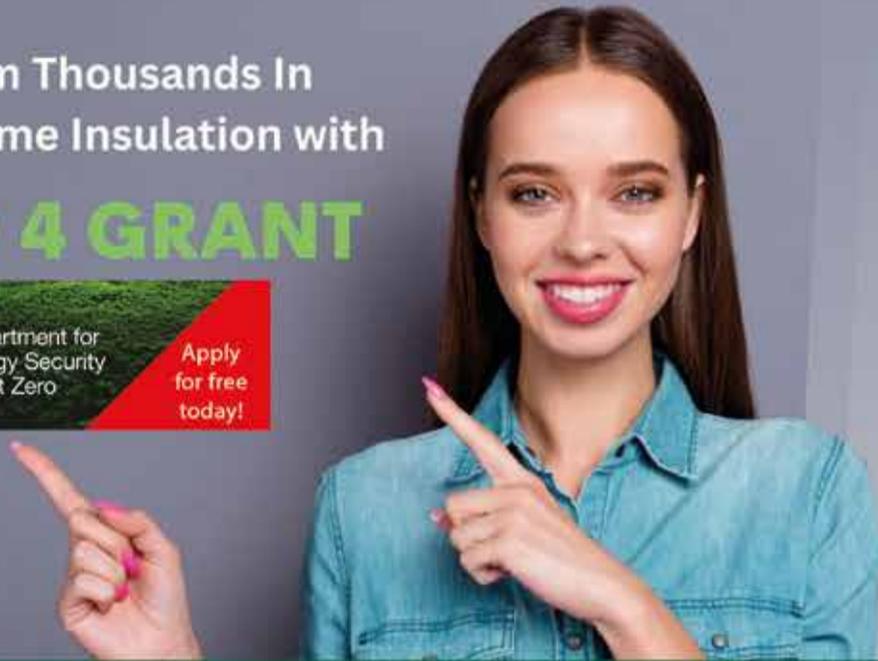
of the result.

"Ofsted has made clear this framework raises the bar," she said. "I'm proud Belle Vue not only met these standards but did so in a way that reflects its essence as an ambitious, inclusive school."

Belle Vue Girls' Academy is part of Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust, a regional family of 21 schools supporting pupils across Bradford and beyond, with a mission to ensure every child has the chance to flourish.

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Khidma Core Team



Community kitchen marks two years of feeding those in need

A Bradford community kitchen that began as a simple act of service has now provided more than 16,000 warm meals to people in need, as volunteers gathered this week to celebrate its second anniversary.

The Khidma Community Kitchen, run by the Nazim Ali Foundation, marked the milestone at the Millan Centre in Manningham on Tuesday 3rd March, continuing its weekly mission to ensure no one in the community goes hungry.

More than 129 meals were served on the night, including rice, chicken curry, lentil curry, roti, cake and water. For many

who attend, the kitchen offers not just food but warmth, dignity and a sense of belonging.

Since launching two years ago, the initiative has delivered 16,570 meals in total - averaging more than 150 meals each week.

Founder Nazim Ali, a long-standing Bradford community volunteer, said the project was created to fill a gap in food provision in the district.

"Before we launched, there was nothing available on a Tuesday evening for people struggling with food poverty," he said.

"Over the years I've seen first-hand how important community

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kitchens are for people facing hardship. This work is about service to others - and that is a blessing."

The kitchen runs every Tuesday from 4:30pm to 5:30pm and welcomes anyone who needs a meal, regardless of background, faith or circumstance.

Nazim said the service reflects the diverse nature of Bradford itself. "Every week we see people from at least a dozen different nationalities," he explains.

"Food poverty does not affect just one group - it affects everyone."

A key part of the project's success has been its volunteers. Over the past two years, 108 volunteers have supported the kitchen, with young people playing a particularly significant role.

Around 63% of volunteers have been under the age of 18, something organisers say is helping to inspire a new generation of community leaders.

Among them are siblings Amiyah Khurram, aged 10, and her nine-year-old brother Noah, who regularly volunteer alongside their father.

Mr Ali said seeing young people step forward has been one of the most uplifting aspects of the initiative.

"They are the future, and it's inspiring to see them giving their time to help others," he says.

Volunteers have continued to support the kitchen even during challenging times, including during the holy month of Ramadan, when many have helped serve meals while fasting.

The project is made possible through sponsorship from Bradford-based Saveco Cash & Carry, whose chief executive Haji Shiraz Ahmed has supported the initiative from the start.

"As a Bradford business, we believe in giving back to the community," he said.

"Nazim Ali does fantastic work across the city, whether it's providing food for those in need or supporting poorly children in hospital. We are proud to support this important initiative."

Saveco also backs the foundation's Creating Smiles Gifts Initiative, which delivers toys to children in hospital wards. The programme has been running for 13 years and has made 50 visits to children's wards at Bradford Royal Infirmary and Airedale Hospital.

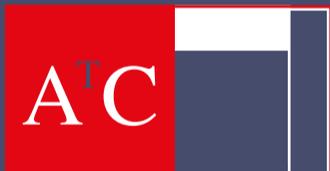
Nazim adds: "As a Muslim, I believe we have a duty to help those in need. This kitchen is for everyone - it's about kindness, dignity and serving our fellow citizens."

The Khidma Community Kitchen continues to operate weekly at the Millan Centre on Victor Road in Manningham, offering a warm meal - and a welcoming space - for anyone who needs it.

Siblings, 10-year-old Amiyah Khurram and her 9-year-old brother Noah Khurram volunteer most weeks with their father, Khurram Aziz



More than 16,000 meals served as volunteers and young people step up to support families during the cost of living crisis



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How one mother turned grief into a lifeline for the world's poorest families

In the quiet moments, Nasreen Karim still wakes believing everything is normal. For a split second, the world feels intact. Then reality rushes back in.

"The first few months were like Groundhog Day," she says.

"I would wake up thinking everything was normal and then realise that he was no longer here."

Her son, her only child, Dhanyal Karim, is gone. And with that loss, everything else fell away too. Sleep. Work. Appetite. Purpose.

"I couldn't sleep, work, eat. My friends and family stayed with me 24 hours a day for several months just to ensure I was ok. But I wasn't. My heart hurt and my brain had exploded."

Dhanyal was 32. A physics student. A gentle, gifted soul with a mind that never stopped searching. "He was the kindest of souls," Nasreen says.

“ Sensitive and gifted. He loved cats, nature, and had a real zest for science. He taught himself to play the guitar and the piano. He didn't say much, but he was an incredibly deep thinker.”

"Sensitive and gifted. He loved cats, nature, and had a real zest for science. He taught himself to play the guitar and the piano. He didn't say much, but he was an incredibly deep thinker."

He needed his intellect to be challenged. Small talk bored him. Most of his friends were older. He gravitated towards ideas, not noise. He had a passion for physics and was building a future shaped by curiosity.

When he died, her world collapsed. Nasreen, a lawyer, could not return to work. She felt restless, suspended between grief and survival. She knew she had to do something, anything, that would have made sense to him.

"I thought about planting trees," she says. "I wanted to build a garden where I could visualise him sitting."

Then a conversation changed everything.

While speaking to HMD Charity, which works across West Africa, she was introduced to communities in The Gambia. Villages where homes are made from mud and straw. Where beds are broken frames or bare wooden planks. Where animals roam because there is no fenced land, no



Nasreen Karim and her son Dhanyal, who passed away at 32

infrastructure, no stability.

What she saw there stunned her.

Nasreen decided to visit HMD in Gambia to see for herself, she booked her tickets and flew out on 4th January. "I couldn't actually believe what I was witnessing. The poorest people I had ever seen - and despite this, the children were smiling."

"These were families living in daily survival. Not a temporary crisis, but a permanent absence of opportunity. Yet there was warmth. Dignity. Humanity."

"They don't want charity," Nasreen

says. "They want a way to earn a living."

The solution emerged from the HMD charity: community farms. Shared land. Shared work. Shared futures.

With HMD Charity, Nasreen began raising funds to build animal farms owned by entire villages. Fenced land. Livestock. A way for families to feed themselves and earn an income.

"This is my 'sadqa jaria' (ongoing charity) project for Dhanyal," she says. "The poorest of the poor will have farms that provide food and income."

In Islam, sadqa jaria is a form of ongoing charity - a gift that continues to give long after the donor is gone. For Nasreen, it is a way to keep her son's presence alive in the world.

"Dhanyal would have loved this," she says quietly. "I know he would be happy to see his memory honoured this way."

"All the rewards for this project will be sent to him. That's all I want."

One farm can transform one village. Hundreds could change a region. Each fence erected, each animal purchased,

becomes part of a legacy built not from wealth, but from love.

Nasreen did not choose this path. Grief forced her onto it. But in turning unbearable loss into something that feeds others, she has created a living bridge between her son and children who will never know his name, yet will grow because of it.

If you are moved by Nasreen's story and would like to support her, please visit www.justgiving.com and search for 'Nasreen Karim HMD Empowerment Programme'.



“They don't want charity, they want a way to earn a living.”

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Nominations now open for BPA Empowering Women Awards 2026

Know a woman who is leading, lifting others or changing lives?
Nominate her. Because when women are seen, they step forward. And when they step forward together, change follows.

Nominations are now open for the BPA Empowering Women Awards 2026, with organisers urging entries from across all sectors and backgrounds. Nominees do not need formal titles or senior roles. Impact, influence and commitment remain the core criteria.

The awards gala dinner event, which takes place on 25 June 2026 at the Cedar Court Hotel in Bradford, is an Asian Express Newspaper initiative, launched last year to mark the publication's 25th anniversary.

What began as a moment of celebration has since developed into a wider movement focused on visibility, leadership and long-term support for women across Yorkshire.

This year's nominations open against the backdrop of a growing legacy.

Since the 2025 ceremony, the awards have become directly linked to mentoring and peer support through the launch of BPA Lionesses - a network formed from last year's winners and finalists. The initiative is now delivering mentoring and networking sessions

for women across the region, turning recognition into sustained action.

The Lionesses bring together women from business, health, education, culture, law, sport and the voluntary sector. Their focus is practical and forward-looking: sharing experience, widening access to networks and supporting women at different stages of their careers.

Organisers say the model reflects a clear shift away from one-off applause towards long-term investment in women's leadership.

The current cohort of BPA

Lionesses includes Rizwana Mahmood MBE, Dr Saira Ali, Sarah Khan Bashir MBE, Rifhat Malik MBE, Noor Ali BEM, Aqsa Mushtaq, Fatima Khan Shah, Humma Nizami, Lois Monks, Naheed Akhtar, Nazreen Ahmed, Prity Farooq, Rukhsana Siddique, Dr Saghira Sharif, Samreen Akhtar, Shanaz Gulzar, Sobiya Jawaid, Usha Parmar and Wania Ahmed, led by

Andleeb Hanif - chairperson of the Business Power Awards.

The 'BPA Empowering Women Awards' programme sits within the wider Business Power Awards framework and is coordinated by its founders, Nadim and Andleeb Hanif.

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Squatters' Rights

Adverse possession, commonly known as "squatters' rights", is the legal principle which enables an individual to claim ownership of land that does not belong to them. But how would a squatter claim adverse possession?

Although the occupation of the land by the squatter is a key feature, there are other factors which must also be established in order for the squatter to acquire title to the land by adverse possession; these include:

1. Factual possession – the land must have been in the squatter's factual possession for a continuous uninterrupted period of at least 10 years for registered land and 12 years for unregistered land. The squatter must have physical and exclusive control of the land; this could involve fencing off the land so that they have exclusive possession.

2. Intention to possess – the squatter must establish that they intended to possess the land during the period of possession to the exclusion of all others including the true owner. This is generally established by the acts of factual possession.

3. Possession must be without consent – for possession to be adverse, a squatter must acquire possession without the consent of the owner of the land. If the owner gives the squatter permission to occupy the land, either expressed or implied, then the squatter is not adversely possessing the land but is simply occupying it under a licence from the owner.

Applications for adverse possession are made to the Land Registry. In cases involving registered land, the Land Registry will notify the registered owner of the land who will then be given the opportunity to oppose the application and to prevent the land from being adversely possessed. If no objection is received, the Land Registry will grant the squatter adverse possession. Each application will be decided upon its own facts and merits and therefore there is no guarantee that the squatter will be granted adverse possession.

For owners of land, to protect themselves from losing land to adverse possession they should register any unregistered land which belongs to them. Adverse possession can have severe consequences for landowners, particularly for owners where the boundary of their land is unclear or uncertain.

If you have any issues relating to land or disputes involving boundaries, the Real Estate Litigation Team at Blacks Solicitors will be able to assist.

Please contact Luke Patel on 0113 227 9316 or by email at "L.Patel@LawBlacks.com"



Leeds children's charity seeks new Chair to drive growth and reform

Leeds Children's Charity at Lineham Farm has begun the search for a new Chair of Trustees as it prepares to enter a pivotal new phase of growth and transformation.

The Leeds-based charity, which supports vulnerable and disadvantaged children from across the region, is reshaping its Board following a comprehensive governance review.

Several new Trustee roles are being introduced to strengthen oversight, build long-term sustainability and expand the charity's reach to even more young people.

The move comes as the organisation progresses a wider programme of reform, including a full rebrand and significant investment in new fundraising and community engagement roles.

Together, the changes are designed to futureproof the charity and ensure it continues to meet rising demand for its services.

The Board is now seeking an inclusive,

values-driven leader to help steer the next chapter. Strengthening equity, diversity and inclusion at Board level is a central priority, with the charity keen to better reflect and represent the communities it serves across Leeds and West Yorkshire.

Chief Executive Sharon Milner said the organisation was entering the next stage of its journey with renewed confidence.

"We look ahead with confidence and optimism, united by a shared purpose - to give more children the chance to learn, grow and thrive," she said.

"If you share our commitment to inclusive leadership and creating lasting positive change, we would be delighted to hear from you."

The Chair recruitment pack is now available. For further information about the Chair and wider trustee opportunities, or to request the full recruitment pack, contact info@leedschildrenscharity.org.uk.



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Bradford's Link AP Academy is redefining Alternative Provision - with precision, partnership and purpose

In an education system under mounting pressure - rising exclusions, overstretched staff and increasingly complex pupil needs - 'Alternative Provision' (AP) has become one of the most important, yet misunderstood, parts of the school landscape.

Too often viewed as a last resort, AP settings can carry stigma or suffer from inconsistency. But in Bradford, one specialist provision is quietly reshaping that narrative.

Link AP Academy is proving that Alternative Provision can be rigorous, restorative and results-driven - without compromising on standards.

Designed as a part-time AM/PM placement, Link AP Academy works in close partnership with mainstream schools to stabilise, re-engage and reintegrate students over short, purposeful placements.

This is not a permanent move away from school. It is a structured intervention.

and embedded into daily practice. Monitoring tools such as CPOMS are used not as box-ticking exercises, but as meaningful frameworks for transparency and accountability with partner schools.

Visiting school leaders and oversight teams have identified operational rigour as a defining strength. Expectations are explicit. Communication is frequent. Progress is evidenced. In short, this is Alternative Provision run with the same seriousness as any high-performing school environment.

The curriculum model is intentionally focused. Students are assessed on entry to pinpoint precise areas of need. Teaching is clear, structured and aligned to GCSE pathways where appropriate. Progress is tracked and reassessed to ensure measurable impact.

Alongside academic learning, enrichment and relational work play a central role in rebuilding confidence and restoring routine. For students who may have felt overlooked or misunderstood

Students remain on roll with their mainstream setting, while receiving targeted support that addresses academic gaps, social and emotional development, and behavioural barriers simultaneously. From day one, reintegration is the goal.

Students remain on roll with their mainstream setting, while receiving targeted support that addresses academic gaps, social and emotional development, and behavioural barriers simultaneously. From day one, reintegration is the goal.

For many young people who have experienced fractured routines or repeated setbacks, that clarity of purpose is transformative.

What sets Link AP Academy apart is its insistence on high professional standards.

Lessons are delivered by qualified staff. Safeguarding systems are robust

elsewhere, small-group teaching and structured pastoral support can make the difference between disengagement and renewed ambition.

A spokesperson From Link AP Said: "We operate on a simple belief: every student's journey matters, and every voice counts. But belief alone is not enough. It is matched by systems, standards and a refusal to dilute expectations - for pupils or professionals."

For further information, please visit www.linkapacademy.co.uk.



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Trouble falling asleep?

... Try this 89p trick that experts swear by

Falling asleep isn't always easy; we spend almost one third of our lives asleep, and yet many of us still struggle. Luckily, experts at Meditopia have revealed five hacks to can help you transition into sleep, while also improving your sleep quality.

Continued on page 31

Ease your mind into sleep

Now that you feel clean, calm, and rested, you may notice your mind wandering among thoughts, plans, hypothetical arguments, and so on. You're not alone, as that's something many of us experience.

One thing that can help with this is meditation. There are lots of sleep meditations online to guide you on your way to a peaceful, rest-filled sleep. Alternatively, try listening to calming music or sleep stories.

Another way to relax is by trying some low-impact stretching. Our bodies and minds are interconnected, which is why moving your body if you feel tired or anxious can be helpful. You can try moving your head gently side to side, rolling your shoulders while taking deep breaths, and stretching your hamstrings and hips by reaching for your toes in bed.

Breathing exercises go hand in hand with stretching. Breathing connects your body and mind, helping you to stay present. With each breath, let go of intrusive thoughts and allow your body to get heavier on your bed.



The biggest hair mistake women make after 50

There comes a point in life when your hair starts to feel... different.

The style you've worn for years suddenly won't sit the same way. The shine isn't quite there. The texture feels unfamiliar. And what used to be "wash and go" becomes a daily battle with frizz, flatness or breakage.

If you've ever looked in the mirror and thought, why is my hair being so difficult now? - you're not alone.

According to celebrity hairstylist Edward James, whose clients include Dame Joanna Lumley and members of the royal circle, the biggest mistake women make after 50 is surprisingly simple: Trying to style your hair the way you always have.

Edward says midlife hair changes are completely natural, influenced by hormones, lifestyle, colouring, and ageing. "The biggest mistake is styling it like you did years ago and feeling frustrated when it doesn't behave the same way," he explains.

Instead of fighting every strand, he encourages women to lean into softer, more modern texture. Sometimes, hair that looks slightly "undone" is actually healthier - and far more flattering.

Before spending a fortune on treatments and miracle products, Edward says the most powerful changes are often the simplest. Here are his top habits for healthier, more manageable hair after 50:

1. Brush better - not harder

Your scalp produces natural oils that condition the hair, and brushing helps distribute them. Edward recommends brushing gently every night before bed using a soft bristle mix brush.

Top tip: Always start from the ends and work upwards to avoid breakage.

2. Wash less often

As hair matures, the scalp often produces less oil. Over-washing can leave hair dry, frizzy and dull. Try spacing washes out by an extra day and refreshing in between instead of stripping hair back to zero.

3. Massage your scalp when shampooing

Healthy hair starts at the scalp. A one-minute fingertip massage boosts circulation, supports growth and removes build-up that can make hair feel heavy or lifeless.

Small circular movements - then rinse thoroughly.

4. Finish with a cool rinse

A final cool rinse after conditioning helps the cuticle lie flat, instantly improving shine and reducing frizz. It also means less reliance on straighteners.

5. Be extra gentle when hair is wet

Wet hair is fragile. Avoid rough towel-drying or aggressive brushing.

Instead: Squeeze out water gently. Use a wide-tooth comb. Detangle slowly.

6. Regular trims matter more than ever

Split ends don't stay at the bottom - they travel upwards. A light trim every 6-8 weeks keeps hair looking fresh, bouncy and healthy.

7. Air-dry whenever you can

Heat weakens hair over time. Letting hair dry naturally whenever possible preserves strength and softness. Even swapping one blow dry a week can make a difference.

8. Blow dry with lift, not flatness

Hair often becomes finer with age, so technique matters.

Top Tip: Lift sections away from the scalp as you dry the roots, then direct airflow down the hair shaft for smoothness and shine.

9. Let hair cool before touching it

This is a game-changer. Heat reshapes hair, but cooling is what sets it. Touching or brushing too soon makes styles drop faster - leading to more heat, more damage, more frustration. Style, pause, cool... then loosen gently with your fingers.

10. The real secret? Letting go a little

Edward's final advice is reassuring: "Midlife hair isn't about perfection. It's about working with your hair, not against it. Sometimes, the healthiest and most youthful look comes from softness, movement, and a little less control.

Because hair after 50 doesn't need to be "fixed". It just needs a new kind of care."



Swap coffee for chamomile

If you're a coffee person and are having difficulty falling asleep, you may have been drinking too much caffeine during the day.

Try not to drink more than 2 cups, especially later in the day. To keep your energy up during the day, try getting some fresh air, or doing some stretches rather than refilling your coffee cup. Caffeine can disrupt your sleep cycle, making it harder for you to fall asleep.

Chamomile tea, which can be found for as little as 89p in shops like Aldi, is a great alternative hot drink that will help you wind down and relax at bedtime. In the evening, make the switch from coffee to chamomile and see the difference in your sleep.



Blue light and sleep

Many of us want to watch something on TV or spend some time scrolling through social media in the evening. However, research shows that devices that emit blue light aren't good for our eyes or our sleep.

A study found that individuals who use blue light filtering lenses compared to regular lenses two hours before sleep show fewer symptoms of insomnia and have better sleep quality.

In light of these findings, it's best for you not to look at your phone, computer, or television at least one hour before bed. Instead, you can try listening to the radio, or a podcast, or a sleep story.

There are lots of alternatives, but if you need to use screens, it's best to turn on the night screen mode in order to help filter the blue light.



Sleep environment

Technological devices carry lots of stimuli, which can make us anxious. It's better to limit those stimuli as it gets closer to bedtime to give your mind time to relax after a long day.

Try dimming the lights during the evening, putting on a chilled melody in the background, or reading a book.



Sleep hygiene

Take a warm shower, allowing your body to release the tension with the help of some hot water. Change your sheets and pyjamas. Clean fabric with a soft smell can help create a good environment for a restful sleep.

Put a few drops of soothing and relaxing lavender oil on your pillow. You can massage your head, neck, hands, or shoulders with lavender oil as well, letting the smell calm you down.

Open your window for a little while to allow fresh air to circulate into your room.



Get help Sleeping is essential to our daily routines, and it's important to find something that helps you. Last but not least, don't hesitate to seek out professional help for your sleep struggles. You can visit your doctor or see a therapist about any difficulties you're having.

Bradford salon owner challenges stigma around men and skincare in South Asian Communities

By Prity Farooq

Prity Beauty & Aesthetic, Bradford

A Bradford beauty salon owner has sparked an important conversation about masculinity and self-care after posting a video challenging the stigma men, particularly South Asian men, face when seeking skincare treatments.

Prity Farooq, who runs a beauty salon in Bradford, used her latest weekly video diary to address the uncomfortable reality that men are often questioned about their sexual identity simply for wanting facials or skincare treatments.

In the video, shared with her growing online audience, Prity speaks candidly about how some male clients feel embarrassed or hesitant to book treatments, fearing judgement from friends, family or the wider community. She highlights how outdated stereotypes continue to frame skincare as something "only for women", leaving men — especially from South Asian backgrounds — reluctant to prioritise their skin health.

"Looking after your skin has nothing to do with your masculinity," Prity says in the video. "Men shouldn't be made to feel uncomfortable or questioned about who they are just because they want healthy skin."

Prity's comments have resonated widely, prompting discussion around how cultural expectations and rigid ideas of masculinity can discourage men from engaging in basic self-care.

She notes that while attitudes are slowly changing, many men still face subtle ridicule or invasive assumptions when they step into a beauty salon.

The salon owner has become known for using her platform to open up conversations that are often avoided. Her weekly video diary series regularly blends personal reflections with wider social issues, drawing on real experiences from her work and life.

Previous topics have included bullying and beauty standards, including a video about being teased for her eyebrows, a post that struck a chord with many followers who shared similar experiences of being judged for their appearance from a young age.

By addressing these issues openly, Prity says she hopes to normalise conversations around self-image and wellbeing, particularly within communities where such discussions are still seen as taboo.

Skin experts have long stressed that facials and skincare treatments are not cosmetic luxuries but can help manage issues such as acne, pigmentation, shaving irritation and premature ageing, concerns that affect men as much as women.

Prity believes that changing attitudes starts with visibility and honest dialogue. "If we don't talk about it, nothing changes," she says. "Men deserve the same freedom to look after themselves without shame."

Her message has been welcomed by many viewers, with male followers thanking her for addressing an issue they say is rarely acknowledged publicly.

As conversations around mental health, masculinity and self-care continue to evolve, Prity Farooq's voice is adding a local, grassroots perspective, one that challenges stereotypes and encourages a more inclusive understanding of wellbeing. She offers free Counselling for ladies on Wednesdays.



Free Counselling Appointments – Every Wednesday

Call **01274 307 040** to book your session

Prity Beauty & Aesthetic,
4 Central Place, Clayton, Bradford, BD14 6AZ

The volunteers bringing South Asian stories to life

Coventry-based volunteers have shared their stories of British South Asian culture as part of a major exhibition at the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum.

'Stories That Made Us - Roots, Resilience, Representation' traces more than 50 years of South Asian life in the UK through four immersive rooms inspired by the real experiences of one Coventry family. Since opening in November, it has welcomed thousands of visitors.

A team of seven South Asian Cultural Ambassadors have contributed their voices and personal histories to the exhibition as part of a partnership between Herbert Art Gallery & Museum and Coventry Archives, which aims to bring stories of identity, belonging and migration to life.

The group, which has been meeting monthly to share and record oral histories which appear in the exhibition, includes Prashant Kansara, Priti Kansara, Ayisha Abraham, as well as Jitey Samra, Mehru Fitter MBE, Suminder Virk and Kauser Husain.

Visitors can hear their voices in key parts of the show, including the "passport control" room setting, where people describe what it felt like arriving in Britain, and in sound installations exploring what it means to be British South Asian across generations.

The ambassadors' stories reflect the diversity of Coventry's South Asian communities, with roots spanning India, Kenya, other parts of Africa and South Asia and the wider diaspora. Together, they explore migration

journeys, first impressions of Britain, and how language and attitudes around belonging often repeat across decades.

Jitey Samra, who has worked in mental health services in Coventry, said sharing lived experiences can help create understanding.

She said: "I grew up thinking many of the struggles I heard about in my family were in the past. But listening to people's stories made me realise how much prejudice and inequality was still happening, often quietly, behind closed doors. When people hear these experiences, it creates empathy and helps explain behaviour, trauma and identity in a much deeper way."

Ayisha Abraham, who was born in London in the 1960s and later left Britain with her family following Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of Blood'

speech, said the exhibition feels especially relevant now.

She said: "There's something uncanny about how these stories repeat themselves. The language around who belongs and who doesn't, feels uncomfortably familiar. What this exhibition does so powerfully is place an intimate family story inside a much bigger historical framework, making global forces human and emotional.

"There is so much that will resonate with you in unexpected ways. That's why it's an unmissable exhibition for people regardless of their background, and why I think so many people feel compelled to speak about it after seeing it."

Coventry-born visual artist Prashant Kansara said being involved had changed how he understood his own

memories of growing up in the city.

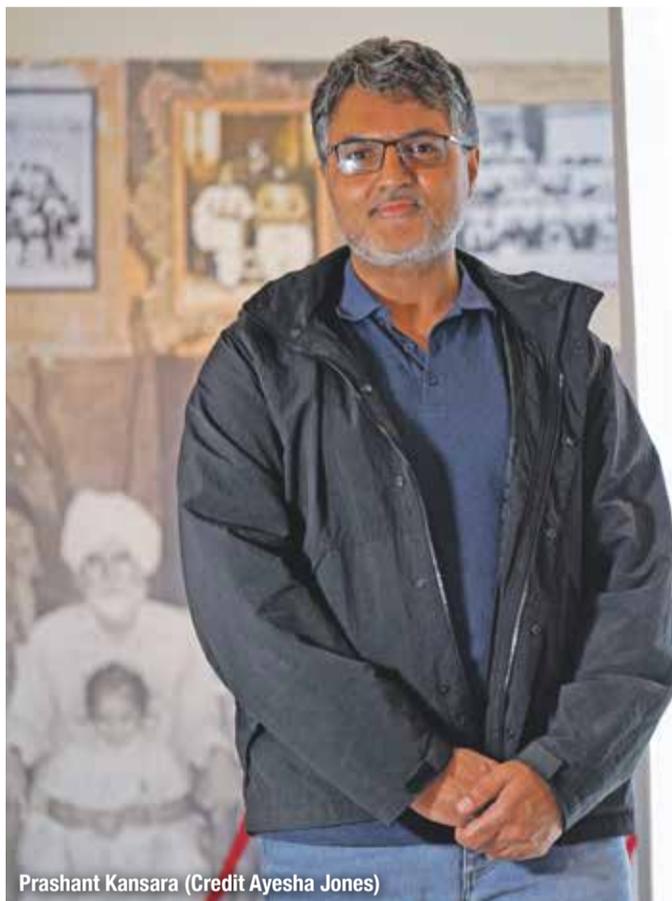
He said: "This exhibition gives value to memories many of us thought were just everyday incidents, and shows they were part of something much bigger. It's an incredible platform to build connection and I can't wait to see what other people make of it."

The programme is hosted by Coventry Archives as part of the 'Stories That Made Us - Roots, Resilience, Representation' exhibition, conceived and co-curated by artist and curator Hardish Virk in partnership with the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, with support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

'Stories That Made Us - Roots, Resilience, Representation' is on display at the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum until 25 May 2026.



Ayisha Abraham (Credit Ayesha Jones)



Prashant Kansara (Credit Ayesha Jones)

STORIES MADE FROM MEMORIES



Ayisha Abraham, Shaniece Martin and Jitey Samra (Credit Ayesha Jones)



Jitey Samra (Credit Ayesha Jones)

GILIT

Entertainment

THE LATEST ENTERTAINMENT AND CELEBRITY NEWS FROM BOLLYWOOD & HOLLYWOOD

A vibrant new theatre production inspired by the real-life story of three hijab-wearing skateboarders is set to tour the UK this spring - bringing a powerful message of representation, resilience and sisterhood to family audiences.

Sisters360, written by award-winning playwright Asif Khan and produced by Turtle Key Arts, is a fast-paced, high-energy play that places Muslim girls at the heart of an uplifting story about friendship, ambition and breaking stereotypes.

The production, which begins its UK tour in March,

follows step-sisters Fatima and Salima - a determined skateboarding duo from Bradford whose sights are firmly set on winning the "Tiny is Mighty" competition and following in the footsteps of their hero, Olympic medallist Sky Brown.

But as the sisters chase their dreams, life off the skate ramp becomes increasingly complicated. When their parents begin discussing separation and the possibility of living in different cities, the girls find their world shifting beneath their feet. Through it all, skateboarding becomes the one constant binding them together.

Continued on page 34

The true story of hope, resilience and skateboarding sisters rolls out on UK tour

SISTERS360



SISTERS360

The true story of hope, resilience and skateboarding sisters rolls out on UK tour

Continued from page 33

Funny, energetic and heartfelt, the play explores the emotional turbulence of teenage life while celebrating the power of sisterhood and determination.

A story inspired by real life

At the heart of Sisters360 lies the remarkable real-life story of Layna, Maysa and Amaya - widely known as the "Hijabi Sisters" from Hull.

Their passion for skateboarding while wearing hijabs captured national attention and challenged assumptions about who belongs in skate culture.

Inspired by their story, Khan set out to address the lack of diverse representation in children's theatre.

Working closely with the sisters and drawing inspiration from his own family life, the playwright crafted a story that celebrates contemporary British Muslim identity while delivering a universal message about family and belonging.

"As a parent you worry about the challenges our children face, which we ourselves faced when we were kids," Khan said.

"One of which I only fully understood as an adult was the effects of never seeing myself represented. All the 'cool' people on television, sport, music, films and plays never

included anyone who looked like me.

"This led me to believe that being 'brown' and being a 'Muslim' was not cool.

Because there is a lack of stories for children involving British Muslim characters, I thought - why not write some myself?"

Representation at centre stage

The production places hijab-wearing girls front and centre - something rarely seen in mainstream children's theatre.

Actors Sara Abanur and Farah Ashraf bring Fatima and Salima to life as fearless, funny and fiercely ambitious young characters determined to succeed on their own terms.

Costume designer Erin C Guan has worked to authentically capture the identity of the original sisters, ensuring the hijab remains an integral part of the characters' story rather than a background detail.

The result is a vibrant and contemporary stage production that allows Muslim children to see themselves reflected in a positive and empowering light.

At its core, Sisters360 is about far more than skateboarding. It is a story about family, resilience and the unbreakable bond between sisters - reminding audiences that dreams can flourish even when life takes unexpected turns.

Sisters360 is a Polka Theatre and Turtle Key Arts co-production, presented in association with Leeds Playhouse.



Pixar's **Hoppers** hops into cinemas with wild adventure and heart

A beaver, a bold environmental message, and a technology that lets humans live as animals - Pixar's latest animated adventure is anything but ordinary.

Hoppers, directed by Daniel Chong, arrives in cinemas on 6 March 2026, bringing a quirky blend of sci-fi imagination, comedy and family-friendly storytelling to the big screen.

With a runtime of 1 hour 44 minutes and a U certificate, the film is designed for audiences of all ages, though it contains some very mild threat, brief violence and a dose of playful humour. The voice cast includes Piper Curda, Bobby Moynihan and Jon Hamm, alongside a wider ensemble of comedic talent.

At the heart of the story is Mabel Tanaka, a passionate young animal lover who dreams of protecting the forest she grew up exploring. When scientists develop groundbreaking technology that allows humans to "hop" their consciousness into robotic animals, Mabel sees a chance to experience wildlife from the inside - literally.

Curious and fearless, she uploads her mind into a robotic beaver and plunges into the hidden society of the forest. But what begins as an experiment quickly turns into a chaotic adventure when the animals mistake her for one of their own.

Suddenly, Mabel is navigating the strange politics of the woodland, meeting eccentric characters including King George, a proud beaver leader voiced by Moynihan, and confronting the looming threat of human development.

The story's main conflict centres on a plan by local mayor Jerry Generazzo (Jon Hamm) to build a freeway that would destroy the animals' habitat.

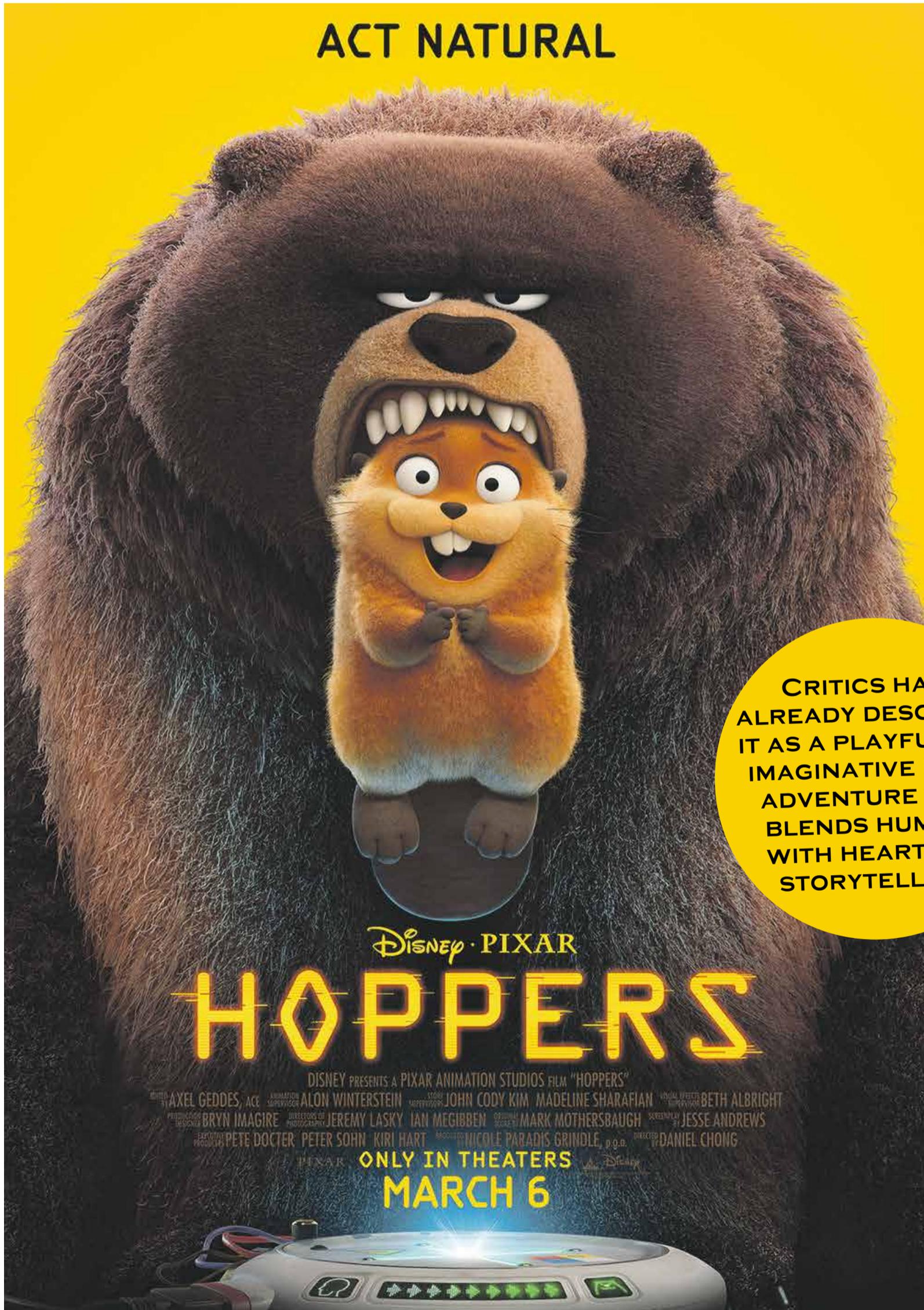
Determined to save the forest, Mabel rallies the creatures together, learning along the way that understanding nature means more than simply loving it.

Directed by Chong, best known for creating the hit animated series *We Bare Bears*, Hoppers mixes slapstick comedy with bigger themes about empathy, technology and the environment. Critics have already described it as a playful and imaginative Pixar adventure that blends humour with heartfelt storytelling.

Visually, the film explores two perspectives: the human world and the animal kingdom. This dual viewpoint gives audiences a glimpse into how wildlife might perceive humans - and why the balance of nature is so fragile.

Packed with action, jokes and a surprisingly emotional core, Hoppers asks a simple question with big implications: what if we could truly understand the animals we share our world with?

For families heading to the cinema this week, Pixar's latest adventure promises laughs, chaos - and one unforgettable robotic beaver.



CRITICS HAVE ALREADY DESCRIBED IT AS A PLAYFUL AND IMAGINATIVE PIXAR ADVENTURE THAT BLENDS HUMOUR WITH HEARTFELT STORYTELLING.

DISNEY PRESENTS A PIXAR ANIMATION STUDIOS FILM "HOPPERS"
 DIRECTED BY AXEL GEDDES, ACE ANIMATION SUPERVISOR ALON WINTERSTEIN STORY BY JOHN CODY KIM MADELINE SHARAFIAN VISUAL EFFECTS SUPERVISOR BETH ALBRIGHT
 PRODUCED BY BRYN IMAGIRE DIRECTED BY JEREMY LASKY IAN MEGIBBEN EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS MARK MOTHERSBAUGH SCREENPLAY BY JESSE ANDREWS
 EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS PETE DOCTER PETER SOHN KIRI HART PRODUCED BY NICOLE PARADIS GRINDLE, P.G.A. DIRECTED BY DANIEL CHONG

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WHAT'S ON

in cinemas this month



Crime 101

Starring: Chris Hemsworth, Mark Ruffalo, Barry Keoghan, Monica Barbaro, Corey Hawkins, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Nick Nolte, Halle Berry, Tate Donovan

Director: Bart Layton

Cert: 15 **Genre:** Crime/Thriller

Release Date: 13/2/2026

Set against the sun-bleached grit of Los Angeles, *Crime 101* weaves the tale of an elusive jewel thief (Chris Hemsworth) whose string of daring heists along the 101 freeway have left police baffled and bruised.

Smooth, meticulous, and always one step ahead, he has built a reputation as a ghost in the city's criminal underworld.

But when he sets his sights on the score of a lifetime, his carefully controlled world begins to fracture. His path collides with that of a disillusioned insurance broker (Halle Berry), a woman standing at her own crossroads, drawn into the danger - and temptation - of reinvention.

Meanwhile, a relentless detective (Mark Ruffalo), convinced he's uncovered the thief's pattern, closes in with mounting obsession. As the net tightens and the heist approaches, the line between hunter and hunted begins to blur, pushing all three toward life-defining choices - and the chilling realisation that there can be no turning back.

Adapted from Don Winslow's acclaimed novella, the film is written and directed by Bart Layton (*American Animals*, *The Imposter*). Barry Keoghan, Monica Barbaro, Corey Hawkins, Jennifer Jason Leigh, and Nick Nolte round out a stellar cast in this slick, high-stakes crime thriller.

One Battle After Another

Starring: Leonardo DiCaprio, Benicio Del Toro, Sean Penn, Wood Harris, Regina Hall, Alana Haim, Teyana Taylo

Director: Paul Thomas Anderson

Cert: 15 **Genre:** Drama

Release Date: 20/2/2026

Leonardo DiCaprio is back - and this time, the fight is personal.

One Battle After Another, the latest film from acclaimed director Paul Thomas Anderson, is shaping up to be one of the most talked-about releases of the year: a genre-bending black comedy action-thriller that blends political chaos, dark humour, and high-stakes emotion into one relentless cinematic ride.

Starring an all-star cast including DiCaprio, Sean Penn, Benicio del Toro, Regina Hall, Teyana Taylor and newcomer Chase Infiniti, the film marks a striking new chapter for Anderson, known for prestige dramas like *There Will Be Blood* and *Licorice Pizza*. Here, he pivots into sharper action territory - without losing his signature depth.

At the heart of the story is Bob (DiCaprio), a former revolutionary who has retreated from the world, living off-grid with his spirited daughter Willa. But the past, as always, has unfinished business.

When an old enemy resurfaces and Willa suddenly goes missing, Bob is forced back into the world he tried to leave behind. What follows is a tense

and unpredictable journey that propels him through violence, memory, and a reckoning with everything he once stood for.

The film's title isn't subtle: once the battle begins, it doesn't stop.

Set against a backdrop of political unrest and fractured loyalties, *One Battle After Another* explores themes of generational divide, the consequences of rebellion, and the fierce bond between parent and child.

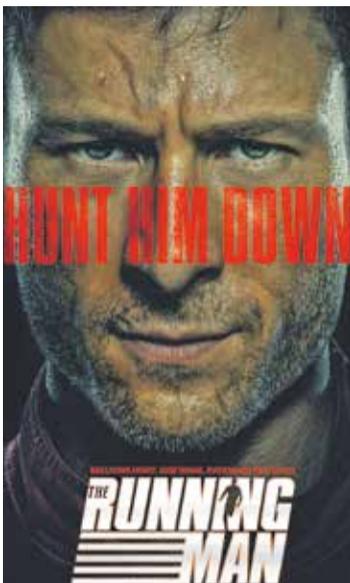
While there are action-packed set pieces and moments of biting humour, critics have noted that the emotional core lies in Bob's desperate attempt to save his daughter - and perhaps redeem himself along the way.

DiCaprio's performance has already been singled out as one of his most intense in years, while Chase Infiniti, in her film debut, is being praised as the film's beating heart.

With its combustible cast, daring tone, and Anderson's bold direction, *One Battle After Another* isn't just another action film - it's a cinematic collision of spectacle and soul.

One thing's certain: this is a battle audiences won't forget.





The Running Man

Starring: Glen Powell, William H. Macy, Lee Pace, Emilia Jones, Michael Cera, Daniel Ezra, Colman Domingo, Josh Brolin

Director: Edgar Wright **Cert:** 15 **Genre:** Action/Sci-Fi **Release Date:** 27/2/2026

In a near-future society where entertainment has turned brutally real, *The Running Man* is the most watched show on television - a deadly, high-stakes competition in which contestants, known as Runners, must survive for 30 days while being hunted by professional assassins. Every step, every breath, every moment of fear is broadcast live to a bloodthirsty audience, with cash rewards rising each day the Runner stays alive.

For working-class Ben Richards (Glen Powell),

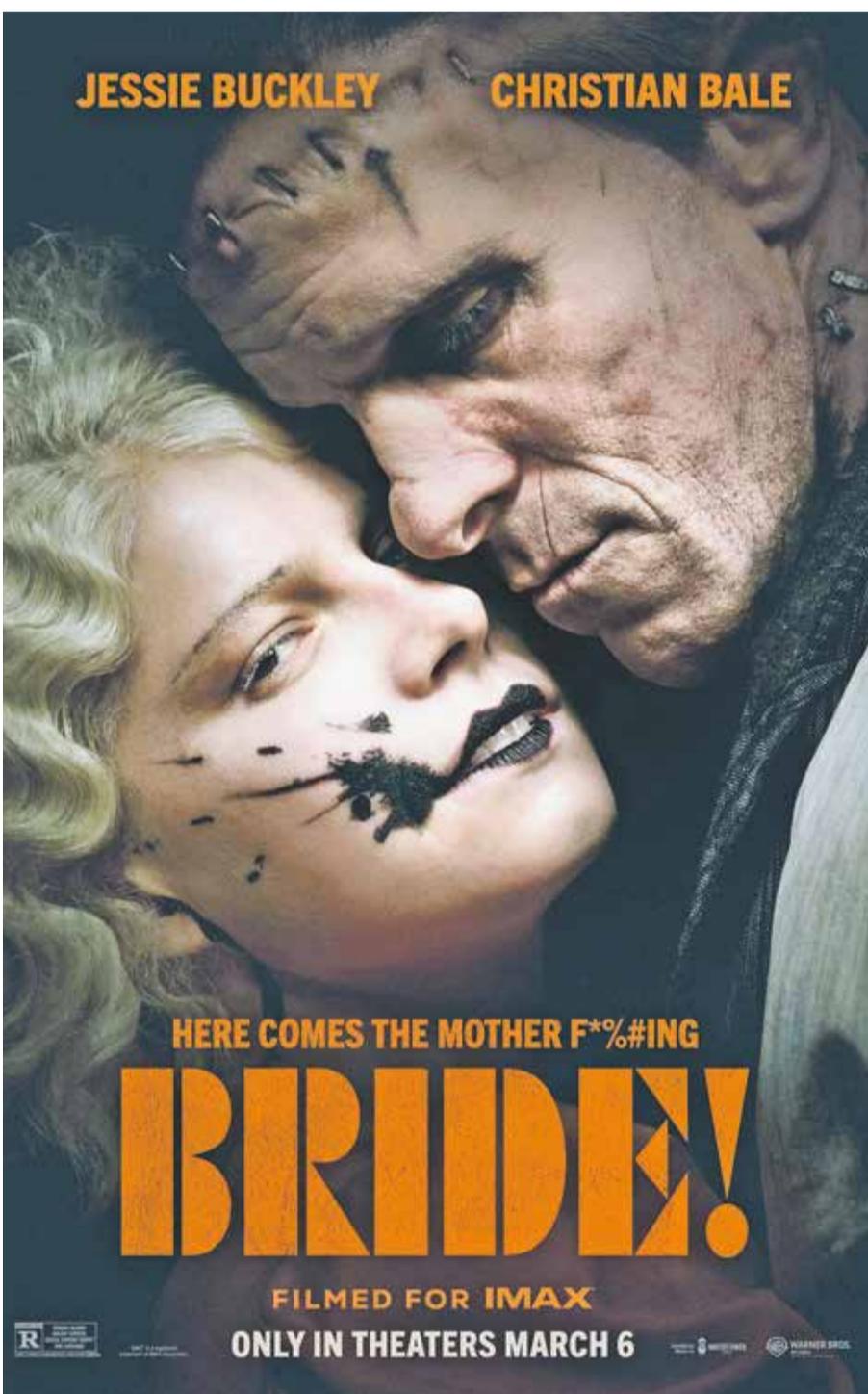
the decision to enter isn't about fame - it's about desperation. With his daughter gravely ill and no other way out, Ben is persuaded by the show's charming but merciless producer, Dan Killian (Josh Brolin), to join the game as a last, impossible resort.

But Ben is no ordinary contestant. His defiance, sharp instincts, and sheer grit quickly turn him into an unexpected fan favourite - and something far more dangerous: a symbol of resistance. As ratings soar, so does the violence, and the system

begins to panic.

Now Ben must outwit not only the relentless Hunters sent to kill him, but an entire nation addicted to watching him fall. In a world where survival is spectacle, *The Running Man* becomes a pulse-pounding fight for life - and a showdown that could bring the whole machine crashing down.

A slick, adrenaline-fuelled thriller with bite, this is dystopian blockbuster entertainment at full speed.



The Bride

Starring: Jessie Buckley, Christian Bale, Peter Sarsgaard, Annette Bening, Jake Gyllenhaal, Penélope Cruz

Director: Maggie Gyllenhaal **Cert:** 15 **Genre:** Drama/Horror **Release Date:** 6/3/2026

One of the most unusual and daring films landing in cinemas this week, *The Bride!* arrives on 6 March 2026 with a bold reimagining of one of horror's most iconic legends. Directed by Maggie Gyllenhaal, the film transforms the classic Frankenstein myth into a dark, operatic tale of obsession, identity and forbidden love.

The film blends horror, romance and psychological drama into something

far stranger than a traditional monster movie.

At its centre is a lonely and tormented Frankenstein's monster, played by Christian Bale, who wanders through the industrial shadows of 1930s Chicago searching for companionship in a world that fears and rejects him. Desperate to end his isolation, he turns to brilliant but controversial scientist Dr.

Euphronious, portrayed by Annette Bening.

Together they attempt the impossible: resurrecting a murdered young woman to create a companion for the monster.

The result is *The Bride*, brought to life by Jessie Buckley. But instead of becoming the obedient partner they envisioned, she awakens with her own fierce will, desires and rage. What

follows is a volatile chain reaction of violence, rebellion and chaotic romance that spirals far beyond the scientists' control.

As *The Bride* begins carving out her own identity, the story expands into a darkly glamorous world of underground clubs, radical movements and outlaw lovers. The film's supporting cast adds further star power, with appearances from

Peter Sarsgaard, Jake Gyllenhaal, and Penélope Cruz, each bringing a distinctive edge to the film's twisted universe.

At its core, *The Bride!* asks a provocative question: what happens when a woman created to belong to someone else refuses to play the role she was designed for?

The answer, it seems, is explosive.

Wuthering Heights

Starring: Margot Robbie, Jacob Elordi, Hong Chau, Shazad Latif, Alison Oliver, Martin Clunes, Ewan Mitchell

Director: Emerald Fennell **Genre:** Drama/Romance

Release Date: 12/2/2026

Few love stories in literature burn as fiercely as *Wuthering Heights*, and director Emerald Fennell brings a bold new vision of the classic to cinemas this year.

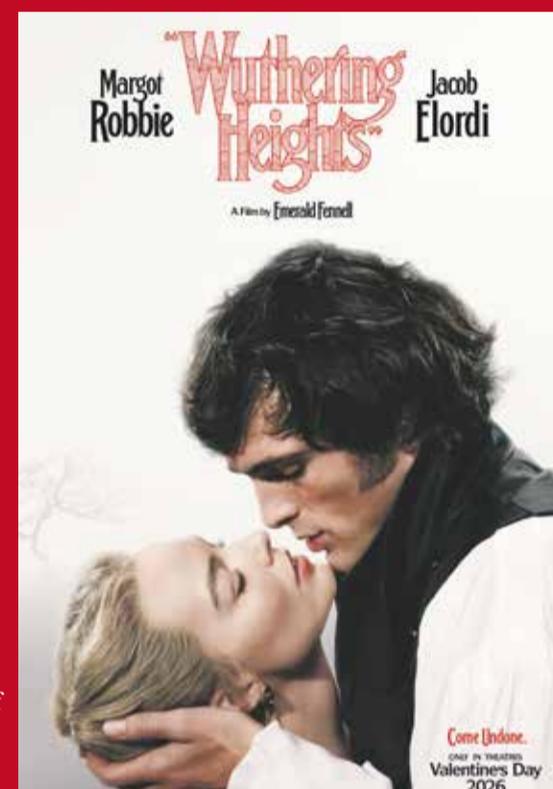
The film reimagines Emily Brontë's iconic gothic romance for a modern audience, blending sweeping passion with darker themes of obsession, revenge and destructive love.

Leading the cast are Margot Robbie as the wild and headstrong Catherine Earnshaw and Jacob Elordi as the brooding outsider Heathcliff - a pairing that gives new intensity to one of literature's most volatile relationships.

Set against the bleak beauty of the Yorkshire moors, the story follows Heathcliff, an orphan brought into the Earnshaw household as a child. Raised alongside Catherine, the two form a powerful and complicated bond that blurs the lines between love, loyalty and emotional destruction.

But when social expectations and family pressures pull them apart, the consequences ripple through generations.

Emerald Fennell's version leans heavily into the story's gothic atmosphere while pushing its emotional intensity even further. Known



for her sharp, provocative filmmaking style in *Promising Young Woman* and *Saltburn*, Fennell reframes the novel as a darker exploration of desire, power and class.

Rather than a traditional period romance, the film explores how obsession can shape identity and ruin lives.

The supporting cast adds depth to the haunting world of the moors, including Hong Chau, Shazad Latif, Alison Oliver, Martin Clunes, and Ewan Mitchell, each bringing new shades to the story's complex family drama.

Visually, the film contrasts the raw, windswept landscapes of the moors with the suffocating expectations of society, creating a cinematic world that mirrors the turbulent emotions at its centre.

At its heart, *Wuthering Heights* remains one of the most haunting love stories ever written - not a gentle romance, but a tale of passion so powerful it borders on destruction.

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BMW unleashes a track-ready M2 - and it's road legal



If you've ever taken your car to a track day and thought, this still isn't quite enough, BMW has just answered your prayers.

The German performance division has revealed a new M Performance Track Kit for the BMW M2 - a proper motorsport-inspired upgrade designed to sharpen the car's already ferocious abilities on circuit. And here's the key detail: it's fully road legal.

In other words, you can drive to the track, terrorise it, and drive home again.

Exactly the sort of thing we like.

The current BMW M2 already sits at the entry point to the brand's high-performance M

line-up, but BMW's engineers clearly decided "entry level" shouldn't mean "mild".

The new Track Kit pushes the coupe far closer to a racing machine, with aerodynamic upgrades that look like they've been pinched straight off a GT racer.

Up front there's a manually adjustable splitter integrated with a front diffuser, plus wheel arch diffusers and a scoop feeding the engine oil cooler. All of it works together to increase front-end downforce and give the M2 more bite when you're leaning hard on the front tyres through fast corners.

Continued on pages 40 & 41



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SHOCKED? YOU SHOULD BE.

One in four cars thought
to be running on a
weakening battery

More than 8.6 million cars on Britain's roads could be running low on power.

With 34.49 million licensed cars in the UK, new analysis suggests that if one in four is affected, a staggering 8.62 million vehicles could be driving around with a weakening 12-volt battery – leaving owners exposed to sudden non-start dramas, security glitches and unwanted repair bills.

The findings from automotive diagnostics specialist Carly – based on data from more than 550,000 UK vehicles analysed between 1 January 2025 and 1 January 2026 – reveal that across most car brands, around 25 per cent of vehicles could be operating with a 12-volt battery in poor condition. In the worst-affected cases, that figure climbs to more than 40 per cent – meaning two in five cars could be at risk.

Unlike major mechanical failures, 12-volt battery decline is a slow burn, often giving little to no warning. For many drivers, the first sign of trouble is a car that simply won't start – frequently at the most inconvenient moment. Carly's data shows failing 12-volt batteries remain one of the leading causes of roadside breakdowns across the UK's car parks.

In modern vehicles, the impact of a weakened 12-volt battery extends well beyond inconvenience. Low battery voltage can affect vehicle reliability, compromise personal safety and disrupt security systems, particularly if a breakdown occurs on high-speed roads, at night or in remote locations. As the 12-volt battery powers essential 'body' electronics such as central locking, alarms and keyless entry, degradation can also cause locking systems to behave unpredictably or leave vehicles temporarily unresponsive.

Although battery degradation can affect vehicles of all fuel types and ages, Carly's data suggests the risk increases for older vehicles, cars used mainly for short urban journeys, vehicles equipped with start-stop systems and models with high electrical demand from infotainment and driver assistance features. Vehicles left parked for extended periods can also be more

vulnerable, particularly during colder conditions, increasing the likelihood that early symptoms go unnoticed before a failure occurs.

Carly's diagnostics show that many drivers may experience subtle warning signs long before a breakdown occurs.

These commonly include sluggish or hesitant engine starts, headlights briefly dimming during ignition, start-stop systems disabling themselves without a clear fault message, intermittent warning lights after a vehicle has been left unused, and power steering feeling briefly heavy immediately after start-up.

When these signs are ignored, the likelihood of a sudden and disruptive failure increases significantly.

While the immediate cost of addressing a battery issue is often relatively modest, the financial impact can escalate quickly when degradation is left untreated. Based on Carly's Repair & Maintenance Cost Estimator and UK pricing benchmarks, replacing a 12-volt battery typically costs £150–£330, including parts and fitting.

However, if a reported 'battery issue' is actually linked to the charging or starting system, costs can rise significantly, with starter motor repairs averaging around £330 and alternator repairs typically ranging from £250 to £800, depending on the vehicle.

Taken together, Carly's findings suggest that many drivers are unknowingly operating vehicles with weakened 12-volt batteries, increasing the likelihood of breakdowns, safety concerns and avoidable repair costs. Identifying battery-related issues earlier can help prevent minor faults from escalating into more disruptive and expensive problems later on.

Carly's OBD2 Scanner and App plug-in diagnostic solution is designed to support that early identification, allowing drivers to assess battery condition, understand fault codes in plain English and view typical repair costs before visiting a garage. The system connects via a vehicle's OBD port and is available in Basic and Premium packages, with prices starting from around £40.

BMW unleashes a track-ready M2 - and it's road legal

Continued from page 39

Then there's the real headline act: a swan-neck rear wing.

Yes, the same style used on BMW's M4 GT3 and M4 GT4 race cars.

And it's not just for show.

Race mode? Yes please.

BMW has given the rear wing two personalities.

In Street Mode, it sits neatly within road regulations. Everything remains perfectly legal for everyday driving.

Switch to Race Mode, though, and the wing slides 50mm further back, dramatically increasing aerodynamic effectiveness. You can also tweak the angle of attack depending on the circuit layout, helping dial in maximum rear grip.

Oh, and because this thing has genuine motorsport DNA, there's even a brake light integrated into the rear wing. Subtle? Not really.

Cool? Absolutely.

Motorsport suspension - but legal

Aero is only half the story. The Track Kit also delivers a serious chassis upgrade.

BMW has fitted a threaded suspension setup with four-way adjustable damping, allowing drivers to fine-tune rebound and compression settings for different tracks and driving styles.

Even more impressive: it's the first motorsport damper system developed by BMW that's still road legal.

Ride height can also be dropped by up to 20mm, with infinitely adjustable settings to get the stance and balance

exactly right.

The whole setup was honed by BMW M engineers using the brand's wind tunnel and motorsport expertise. Final chassis tuning was handled by BMW M test engineer and record-setting driver Jörg Weidinger - the sort of name you want involved when your car's heading for the apex at speed.

Price for the Track Kit? €23,500 before tax and installation, with availability from July 2026.

Track day addicts may want to start saving.

And then there's the noise

BMW hasn't stopped at aero and suspension.

The BMW M2 CS also gets a new M Performance exhaust system designed to make the already outrageous straight-six



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sound even more dramatic.

The M2 CS packs a 530hp turbocharged inline-six, and the new exhaust reworks gas flow to deliver a louder, sharper soundtrack depending on the driving mode selected.

But the system isn't just about noise.

The exhaust tips are made from carbon fibre and titanium, materials lifted straight from the motorsport world, and the entire system weighs around 8kg less than the standard setup.

Which means you get more sound and less weight - a win-win in anyone's book. Cost? From €8,343.50 before installation.

Our verdict

BMW's M division clearly knows its audience.

Track days are exploding in popularity, and the M2 has already built a reputation as one of the most entertaining driver's cars in the brand's line-up.

This new Track Kit doesn't turn the M2 into a race car.

But it gets very, very close.

And the fact you can still drive it to the shops afterwards?

That's exactly the kind of madness we approve of.



America's biggest SUVs just landed in Britain

Britain has always had a fascination with American cars - the noise, the size, the sheer don't-care attitude to fuel economy.

But actually owning one here has usually meant complicated imports, patchy warranties and a mountain of paperwork.

That's now changed.

For the first time, General Motors is officially selling some of its most iconic North American SUVs and pickup trucks in the UK, thanks to the launch of GM Specialty Vehicles (GMSV). It means buyers can now order machines like the Cadillac Escalade, GMC Yukon Denali, and Chevrolet Silverado directly from the manufacturer with full UK homologation, warranty, finance options and nationwide servicing.

album of American automotive excess.

Cadillac's offering centres on the mighty Escalade, including the stretched Escalade ESV and the outrageous Escalade-V, a supercharged luxury SUV that combines limousine levels of comfort with muscle-car aggression.

GMC brings the enormous Yukon Denali alongside the Sierra 1500 Denali and off-road-focused Sierra 1500 AT4 pickups.

From Chevrolet comes the Tahoe, the even longer Suburban, and the legendary Silverado pickup truck - a staple of American roads that's rarely been seen officially on this side of the Atlantic.

Crucially, these aren't grey imports. Every vehicle arrives with full UK homologation and a three-year unlimited-mileage warranty, with the option to extend cover for a further two years. Customers will also have access to finance packages, nationwide servicing and the ability to commission bespoke

Vehicles can be ordered immediately through the GMSV website, with deliveries expected to begin this spring.

Yes, the proper dealership experience - just for vehicles normally seen cruising down American highways.

The move comes through a partnership with luxury performance dealer Clive Sutton, whose North West London facility will act as the first UK base for GM Specialty Vehicles before a wider retailer network rolls out nationwide.

For UK buyers who've long admired America's most extravagant SUVs and pickups, it's the most straightforward route yet. Vehicles can be ordered immediately through the GMSV website, with deliveries expected to begin this spring.

The line-up reads like a greatest-hits

builds or purchase vehicles from available stock.

Retailers will offer a full range of accessories and upgrades, from paint protection film and specialist finishes to security systems and tailored customisation packages.

Let's be honest: Britain's narrow roads and medieval town centres probably weren't designed with vehicles like the Escalade or Silverado in mind.

But that's precisely the appeal.

They're enormous, unapologetic and unmistakably American - and now, for the first time, you can buy one in Britain without jumping through import hoops.



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For full details and to view a copy of the application please contact the Entertainment Licensing Section on 0113 378 5029 or email entertainment.licensing@leeds.gov.uk

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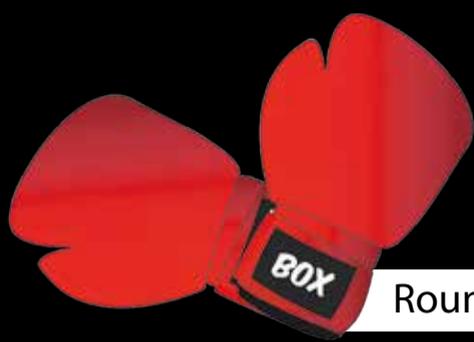
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“This gap is costing lives”

Asian transplant waiting list has risen by more than 90% in four years

“If you’re of Asian ethnicity then you’re half as likely to say yes to donation, but around twice as likely to need a transplant – and that’s the health inequality we are facing.”

Mahmud Nawaz, chair of Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, speaks with the force of lived grief. He became an organ donation ambassador after his wife’s donated organs saved four lives.

Now, as Sheffield prepares to host the Westfield Health British Transplant Games next

summer, Mahmud says the latest figures expose a crisis that Britain can no longer afford to ignore.

New figures from NHS Blood and Transplant reveal a brutal surge: the number of Asian patients on the UK organ transplant waiting list has rocketed by 92% in just four years, from 759 in 2020-21 to 1,460 in 2024-25. The national waiting list has now crossed 8,000 for the first time.

The imbalance is stark. People of Asian ethnicity are far more likely to need a transplant, yet far less likely to become donors.

Continued on page 46



Asian Express

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Round up of all your local, national and international sporting news



“This gap is costing lives”

Asian transplant waiting list has risen by more than 90% in four years

Continued from page 45

Only 3.9% of deceased organ donors in the UK are Asian. Family consent rates stand at 32.9%, compared with 63% among white donors.

Nearly two-thirds of Asian patients placed on the waiting list wait at least a year for a transplant.

Into this emergency steps Sheffield, which will host the British Transplant Games from 6th to 9th August 2026, welcoming more than 2,500 competitors, including over 1,000 transplant recipients, across 26 sports.

Organisers hope the multi-sport event will become a catalyst for change, particularly within Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, where overall donation rates are estimated at just 7%.

“The Westfield Health British Transplant Games has a powerful role to play in bringing together diverse communities,” Mahmud said.

“People can see the benefits of organ donation first-hand and be inspired to support it, regardless of faith.

“That support means signing the NHS Organ Donor Register and having the conversation with loved ones. If you were to die, the consent to donate your organs passes on to them. A simple conversation, or a quick signing of the register, could save up to nine lives.”

The Games will showcase the healthy, fulfilling lives that transplant recipients can lead, while also providing a moment to thank live donors and donor families for their life-changing generosity. At the official launch event in Sheffield, recipients and donors shared their own stories of survival, resilience and second chances.

Now in its 48th year, the British Transplant Games is the flagship event of Transplant Active, a charity that promotes active recovery after transplantation and raises awareness of

organ donation nationwide.

Dr Paul Harden, chair of Transplant Active, said the rising waiting list underlined the urgency of the message. “One person can save up to nine lives,” he said.

“That becomes real when you hear first-hand from recipients about how a transplant has allowed them to live healthy lives, and when you meet the donors and families who made that possible.

“We also face the heartbreaking reality that around 1,000 people die each year while waiting for a transplant. That’s why it’s vital people sign the NHS Organ Donor Register and follow it up with a conversation with loved ones.”

Many of the Games’ events will take place in and around Sheffield’s Olympic Legacy Park, with organisers hoping the city will become a national focal point for dialogue around donation.

Steve Purdham, chairman of Westfield Health, said the Games were about more than sport. “Next August, we’re not just hosting an event - we’re igniting a movement,” he said.

“The gift of life begins with a conversation. Telling your loved ones you want to be a donor is what turns intention into action.”

Councillor Mohammed Mahroof, chair of economic development, skills and culture at Sheffield City Council, said hosting the Games again, having last welcomed them in 2013, was both an honour and a responsibility.

“They are a celebration of life, resilience and community,” he said.

“We are looking forward to welcoming thousands of athletes and supporters from across the UK.”

For Mahmud, the message is simple and urgent. “This gap is costing lives,” he said. “And it can be closed by ordinary people taking one small, powerful step.”

Major new £15m sports hub to be given final green light

Continued from page 48

“It will provide affordable and accessible quality sports pitches, providing more opportunities for physical activity and play and spaces to meet up and connect.

“We are also working towards an agreement with a GP practice so that the area can benefit from new high-quality healthcare provision to meet the needs of the community.”

The new hub will be built on the site of the former Matthew Murray High School, with plans also exploring the potential for a new GP surgery as part of the wider development.

The project aims to deliver wide-ranging health and wellbeing benefits for local residents, with additional features including a children’s play area and walking and running routes through the surrounding green space off Brown Lane East and Ingram Road.

The all-weather pitches are designed to provide sustainable, high-quality training facilities that will help reduce pressure on grass pitches and address the current shortfall of more than 20 all-weather pitches across Leeds.

Holbeck will become the third sports hub in Leeds delivered in partnership with the Football Foundation as part of its national Parklife programme.

It follows the Woodhall hub in Calverley, which is expected to be completed for the 2026/27 playing

season, and Green Park in Temple Newsam where construction is due to begin this year.

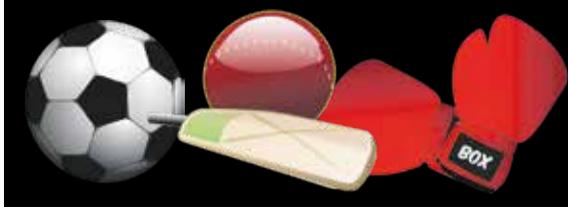
All three hubs will be managed by the National Football Trust, with any surplus income reinvested into council-owned and third-party outdoor sports facilities across the city.

The programme is jointly funded by the Football Foundation and Leeds City Council through its capital investment programme.



At a glance - the numbers behind the crisis

- **92%** rise in Asian patients on the UK transplant waiting list in four years
- **8,000+** people now waiting for an organ transplant in the UK
- Only **3.9%** of deceased organ donors are Asian
- Family consent rates: Asian families - **32.9%** - White families - **63%**
- Nearly **63%** of Asian patients wait at least one year for a transplant
- Donation rates among Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities - just **7%**
- Around **1,000** people die each year while waiting for a transplant
- One donor can save up to **nine** lives



Round up of all your local, national and international sporting news

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Major new £15m sports hub to be given final green light

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Councillor Salma Arif has welcomed plans for a major new £15 million sports hub in Holbeck, with final approval expected from senior councillors later this month.

Leeds City Council's executive board is set to give the final go-ahead for work to begin on the new facility, with councillors expected to approve the appointment of a contractor to deliver the development.

With construction anticipated to start in August 2026, the Holbeck Sports Hub will feature three full-size artificial grass football pitches, two multi-use games areas, and a community building complete with changing rooms and a café.

Councillor Salma Arif said: "We look forward to the work starting on the Holbeck Sports Hub, which will be a significant asset to the local community and residents in south Leeds."

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