

## The growth of shopping ethically and locally



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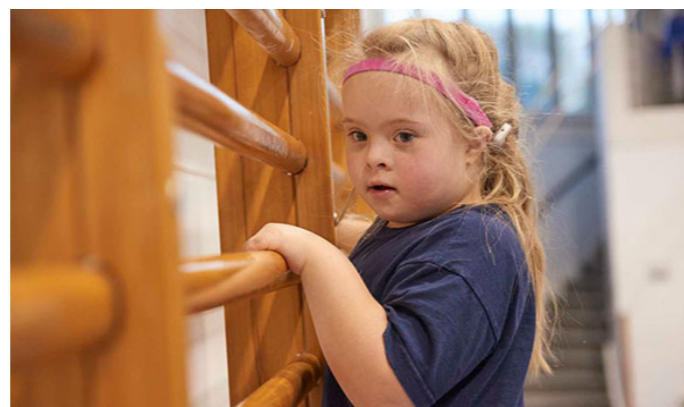
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# Strategy to stop violence against women

By Logan Forbes

Wandsworth Council has announced its new three-year strategy to help prevent violence against women and girls.

The Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (VAWG) aims to bring about a long-term change to men's attitudes, ensure agencies are able to identify and respond to abuse, provide suitable safety and support for victims and tackle offenders in Wandsworth.

The strategy is a culmination of more than two years worth of discussions with borough residents and groups and advised by the experiences of survivors.

Wandsworth Council's community safety spokesman and chairman of the Safer Neighbourhood Board, Councillor Jonathan Cook, said: "This new plan is very ambitious, and we have engaged very widely with victims, public sector

partners and local people to ensure we get as full a picture as possible of what help is needed and by whom.

"Now it is time to deliver, and we are determined to work closely with our partners to achieve our goals.

"Through our strategy and action plan we will work hard to ensure the people who live in Wandsworth feel safe, listened-to and supported and that we take actions against physical and psychological violence."

A needs assessment conducted by Wandsworth Council back in 2019 showed that:

- \* Domestic abuse is generally under-reported, especially amongst people over 65

- \* The demand for services is likely to grow

- \* Young women and girls are over-represented as victims of domestic abuse

- \* There is a gap in



**WANDSWORTH COUNCIL:** The council have implemented a three-year plan to prevent violence against women and girls. Credit: Eugene Regis via Wikimedia Commons under CC BY 2.0 license

knowledge around the experiences of the LGBTQ+ community

- \* There is a need to improve our understanding of harmful traditional practices

- \* More targeted services are needed to reach black and ethnic minority communities

The strategy also includes plans to work closer with schools and colleges and ensure that there are pathways to practical and emotional support for survivors.



**VIOLENCE:** The demand for services from victims of violence is likely to rise.

# The issue of institutional racism in the police in the UK

By [Rahima Miah](#)

Institutional racism in the police has existed in the UK for a century and cases like Child Q show that it is still an issue today.

There are multiple cases where the police acted in a racist way towards members of the public, especially Black people.

It was first accepted that there is institutional racism in the UK following the Macpherson report in 1999 on the police response to the murder of the Black teenager Stephen Lawrence.

On 22 April 1993, Stephen Lawrence, aged 18, was stabbed to death by a gang of white youths while he waited at a bus stop



**VICTIM:** Murdered teenager Stephen Lawrence. Credit: 4WardEverUK via Flickr under

in Eltham, South East London.

The Lawrence family grew frustrated at the police's attempt to catch the murderers as the police did not act quickly to investigate or prosecute the five suspects.

Two of the suspects, Gary Dobson and David Norris, were found guilty of the murder in January 2012 and the Macpherson report, published in 1999, accused the Metropolitan Police of institutional racism.

## Causes of Institutional Racism in the Police

Maurice McLeod, Wandsworth council-

lor and director of the anti-racism organisation Race On The Agenda, said: "The whole problem with institutional racism is that it's really hard to unpick.

"It's not about individual incidents or in the sort of stuff that's quite easy to pick out, the bad apples.

"When you talk about institutional stuff, you're talking about how an organisation is set up and what it's there to do."

He said that historically the police was set up to protect the wealthy, protect the status quo, defend property and defend those in status.

The police's role has certainly evolved since then, but he argued that if you look at what the police put resources into and what they don't put resources into it leans toward what he calls 'social control'.

He gave the example of recreational drugs as he said that those with less money are more likely to be caught taking recreational drugs and that's where the police's focus is.

He stated that it's not because the police hate poor people or Black people, but because the police are rewarded for the number of arrests they make, and the easiest arrests

are going to be in a place where people are probably on a lower income.

Dr Roger Grimshaw, research director at the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies (CCJS), also explained what he thinks is meant by institutional racism in the police and why it exists.

He said: "I think that first of all we have to decide what it is that is institutional about the racism and I would argue that it's a combination of practices and attitudes within an organisation that produce persistent and widespread effects so when we talk about root causes we have to look at the whole structure and the expectations and the way in which policing like other institutions is embedded within a society that has systemic racism.

"We have to look within and outside because we know for example that there is racism in several parts of the criminal justice system."

## Stop and Search

One area of institutional racism in the police is the use of stop and search that allows police to stop anyone believed to be in possession of weapons or drugs and search them. Just last week it was

announced that five Metropolitan police officers will face a gross-misconduct hearing over the stop-and-search of Team GB athlete Bianca Williams following an investigation by the Independent Office of Police Conduct (IOPC).

Williams and her partner were stopped by police in their car in west London in July 2020 and they were handcuffed and searched for weapons and drugs.

The couple believe they were stopped and racially profiled because they are Black.

Another incident where police stop and searched a Black person is the case of Child Q.

On December 3, 2020, a Black 15-year-old girl, known as Child Q, was strip searched by police at her school in Hackney while she was on her period and even made to remove her sanitary towel.

School staff were concerned that she smelled strongly of cannabis and may have been in possession of drugs.

Two female police officers strip searched her without another adult present and without the school informing her family, but no drugs were found.



**JUSTICE SEEKERS:** Protesters gathered together demanding justice for victims of police terror. Credit: Peg Hunter via Flickr under CC BY-NC 2.0 license



RESIGNED: Former Metropolitan Police Commissioner Cressida Dick. Credit: Katie Chan via Wikipedia Commons under CC BY-NC 4.0 license

The Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review, conducted by City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership, found the strip search should never have happened, was unjustified and racism 'was likely to have been an influencing factor'.

Mr McLeod said: "I was enraged. There was something so degrading when you heard the detail of what happened to this young girl."

"To strip search a child even with their parents there makes no sense to me."

He said that there is a real habit of seeing young Black kids as much older as they are, and that people see young Black children as adults and treat them accordingly.

Stop and search rates are particularly high for BAME groups compared to white ethnic groups.

Government statistics show that between April 2019 and March 2020 there were 6 stop and searches for every 1,000 White people compared with 54 for every 1,000 Black people.

Mr McLeod said: "I was stopped 100 times when I was a young man and people spoke about how it was biased then and still is now."

"If the police go out looking for a certain type of crime and have in their mind a certain type of person who commits that crime that's where they're going to look."

Dr Grimshaw added: "As far as stop and search is concerned it is a power that is discretionary so it can be used on the street

in interactions without the reason being entirely clear.

"The overall effect can be traumatic for people who are being stopped and searched on the basis of what is quite thin reasons."

"The nature of the power is something that has to be taken into account and what we see then is this institutional effect in which prejudicial assumptions are brought to bare that certain kind of young people who look a certain way who appear on the streets regularly will be possessing drugs."

### Tackling Institutional Racism in the Police

Following the resignation of Cressida Dick, a new Metropolitan Police Commissioner is due to be appointed this summer and it is hoped this will be a step forward in tackling issues within the police system like institutional racism.

Mr McLeod believes that one way to tackle institutional racism is by the police being honest.

He said: "Because we're so political there's a danger here that police are worried that if they expose what has happened there'll be criticised for it so they kind of cover it up and make things sound better than they were."

"We need to be really honest about what's been going on and what's happening within the police service even now."

He also made it clear that despite the practise of institutional racism, there are

some very good police officers.

He added: "As a councillor I work really closely with the police and individual officers and they are brilliant."

"They're really community spirited and they're in it for the right reasons."

Simon Fisher, Metropolitan Police spokesperson, added: "Policing is complex and challenging and we strive to ensure we are fair and just."

"Where we get it wrong we welcome scrutiny and where there are complaints we take these incredibly seriously and expect to be held to account for our actions, including through independent investigations by the Independent Office for Police Conduct."

Mr McLeod also

said that it takes all of us to tackle the issues including the police themselves and communities.

He thinks it takes us as a society to keep saying that we want a police force that will make us feel safe on the streets whether we're male, female, Black, White and that we want to walk around the streets with confidence from the police and anyone else.

As well as stop and search rates, another visible area of institutional racism in the police is the Gangs Matrix.

The matrix is a database of suspected gang members in London and it was launched by the Met Police in 2012.

Dr Grimshaw believes that in relation to tackling institution-

al racism in the police the Gangs Matrix must be looked at.

He said: "I think gang databases is something we have placed a lot of emphasis on and there are a lot of documents and reports about the Gangs Matrix which show how it has been developed in a disproportionately racialised manner."

"It's meant to provide information to the police about who is involved in gangs but it's extraordinary the number of black individuals has been in this database and despite featuring heavily in these databases, young Black and minority ethnic people are not responsible for the most serious violence in their areas."

He views the matrix as a kind of organi-

sational bias which builds up throughout the organisation and influences practise because it's organisationally sustained.

He said that if a police officer in London wants to find out who's in a gang, they will go straight to the Gangs Matrix

The matrix is an institutional base of information for them to go to and it is the police's go to for finding out who's in a gang.

He added: "If you want to change policing you have to change the organisational manifestations that unite and organise the whole of the police body and I think that the gang databases are a classic example of what we would refer to when we talk about an institutionally racist structure."



UK Protesters: Black Lives Matter protest at Hyde Park, London. Credit: Katie Crampton via Wikipedia Commons under CC BY-NC 4.0 license

# The lasting impacts of public sexual harassment on victims

By Luran O'Toole

Public sexual harassment (PSH) can leave a lasting impact, affecting people's mental health, sense of safety, self-esteem and behaviour.

The term PSH is used instead of street harassment to highlight that this behaviour does not only happen on the streets, but in all open spaces.

During lockdown incidents of street harassment became more severe leaving many women feeling vulnerable and nervous to leave the house.

A quarter of girls (25%) felt unsafe exercising alone during the lockdown period whilst two in five (40%) felt unsafe walking alone in public despite the streets being emptier according to Plan International UK.

According to the British Trans-

port Police reports of sexual harassment on transport in London jumped by 61% compared to before the pandemic.

In response Transport for London launched a campaign in October 2021 in an effort to tackle public sexual harassment which included a series of posters that highlighted common forms of harassment.

Renata Guimarães, Naso psychologist and academic researcher for Our Streets Now, said: "Women, girls, and marginal-

ised genders across the UK are facing harassment every day, previous research and lived experiences show that PSH creates a constant feeling of insecurity and fear, especially for those who experienced PSH before.

"They change their behaviours to avoid PSH, such as not wearing certain clothes, not exercising in outdoors spaces, changing the time they travel, taking different routes, not going out alone or not going out at all.

"Fear, anger, and anxiety are commonly experienced by victims at the moment of the sexual harassment act, and can also lead to increased anxiety, depression, self-harm, social exclusion, guilt, lower self-esteem in the longer term.

"In some cases, experiences of PSH can cause post-traumatic stress disorder or trigger episodes of PTSD, especially in people who also have prior experiences with sexual trauma

#ENDPSH  
@OURSTREETSNOW

**TWEET END PSH:** Public sexual harassment is the most common form of violence against women and girls, the majority of women will experience at some point in their life or abuse.

"It is also an intersectional issue, not all experiences of PSH are the same; it depends on identity categories." 81.3% of women feel unsafe in a park or open space when it is dark compared to 10.7% in the day according to the office for national statistics.

The figures show the extent that women are more likely to feel unsafe at night.

Our Streets Now and Plan International UK are calling on Parliament to introduce specific legislation tackling PSH called the Crime Not Compliment Campaign.

Currently there is no law to prevent and prosecute PSH.

Renata said: "The legislative change is necessary for the UK to create the protective framework to comply with its international treaty obligations and for girls and women as a further critical step

towards gender equality and social justice. "It limits police ability to respond, confuse victims and give abusers and harassers a pass.

"Right now, the legal framework does not send a clear message that PSH is unacceptable.

"UK's education systems need reforming so that every young person in the UK is taught about PSH in school and young people recognise it's prevalence and severity.

"Regarding involving society at large, Our Streets Now focus on research and collective learning.

"We have a literary magazine called Our Words, which acts as a form of knowledge production and exchange within the Our Streets Now's community, opening conversations on topics that society does not regularly discuss or deem taboo.

"We feature articles, poetry, book reviews, interviews, short stories, opinion's pieces on PSH and topics related to this form of gender-based violence (e.g., mental health, sex education, gender norms, allyship, etc)."

Schools, higher education and society are the three primary-fronts on Our Streets Now educational targets for this year.

Renata believes that society, including those in power are not taking PSH seriously and are not affirming that it unacceptable.

Impacts on individuals are complex and often long lasting. The Young Women's Trust surveyed 2995 16 to 93 year olds and found that young women who experience sexism are five times more likely to suffer from clinical depression compared to those who have not experienced sexism.

This survey showed

that the 16 to 30 year olds are more likely to experience PSH than other ages, women between these ages reported greater psychological distress four years later.

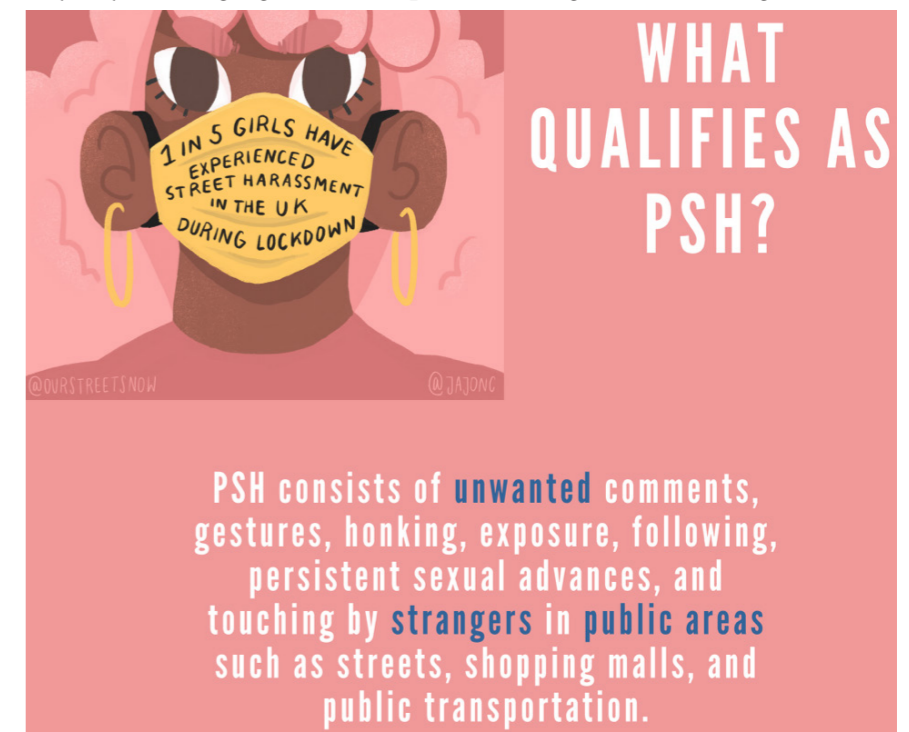
Renata said that therapy can help people deal with the daily difficulties that have appeared because of PSH and those listening need to do so in an empathetic and non-judgemental way.

Our Streets Now was founded by British sisters Maya and Gemma Tutton in April 2019. After Gemma got sexually harassed in public for the first time at age 11, Maya and Gemma started to talk about how these experiences were common among many girls they knew.

The sisters created a petition demanding that the UK government needs to take PSH seriously, it currently has over 450 thousand signatures.



**PSH CAMPAIGN PICTURE:** Our Streets Now aim to tackle PSH in two ways: by enacting legislative and political change and increasing awareness



**EXAMPLES OF PSH:** France, Belgium and Portugal have all made public sexual harassment illegal but the UK has not



**EXPERT:** Renata Guimarães, Naso is currently doing research on the lived experiences of Brazilian women with Public Sexual harassment in São Paulo.

# Photographing the unseen



**A RAINY DAY:** A homeless man on the roadside. Credit all: Anthony Dawton, Not London

By Joseph Marshall

Photographer Anthony Dawton finds working in London more chaotic than refugee camps abroad.

His image series, Not London, which has been turned into a book, features portraits of homeless people on the streets of the capital.

Dawton finds taking pictures for NGOs like UNICEF and Save the Children to be well-organised in comparison.

He said: "There's no one in London in charge of the people on the streets.

"If you go to a big refugee camp in the Middle East, the NGO provides you with a guide. There's a rhythm to the day."

Despite the anarchic urban environment, he establishes a relationship with his subjects, selecting them on sight as he cycles through London's boroughs.

Only a small percentage of those approached refuse to be photographed, and most are happy to be spoken to.

Dawton said: "I always promise I'll return with at least one print of them – they're delighted to have them.

"I often do give them money. I've taken their time and I'm not sure it's my business to tell them or imply that they can't have the money because I don't want them to spend it on something, or even give them the money and say don't spend it on drugs or alcohol.

"That's not my decision to make." At other times they're just glad to be part of the project and refuse to take any money.

On the 300,000 households made homeless since the pandemic, he said: "I don't have the answer but I don't think there is one.

"I'm a photographer. I'm not a social

worker or a politician with any influence.

"I feel I'm just photographing in a tradition of photographers here and in the United States that has been going on since Lewis Hine in New York in the late 19th century, photographing the homeless, the dispossessed.

"There's no final way of dealing with the problem, people are on the streets for a variety of reasons and I'm not sure what any government, charity or social worker can do. It's so fundamental.

"For many of them the street life is more palatable than being

in not very nice hostels or hotels."

Dawton highlights the sobering fact that it doesn't take much to become homeless; a run of misfortune can land even the most privileged individuals on the streets.

"We're all where these people are but for the grace of god."

He said: "They express a dignity and nobility that is a function of what they've been through.

"I find that extraordinary. If just a few people hear the voice in the pictures I'd be very happy."

The book, Not London, is available at notlondon.uk



**DISPOSSESSED:** A homeless man stares



**ASLEEP IN THE CITY:** A woman sleeps in a makeshift bed.

# Is youth homelessness on the increase?

By: Mariana Viveiros

Youth homelessness is increasing year after year in the UK.

The UK is facing its biggest increase in homelessness for centuries.

With the increase of the cost of living in the UK, homelessness has increased says Emily from Centre Point.

Nearly 122,000 young people facing homelessness last year and this has increased year after year.

Emily, Centre Point spokesperson said: "The data shows that this year will still increase due to the rise of living cost, increasing of energy bills and just the cost of things is increasing so exponentially.

"The benefit rate has not risen with those sorts of rising costs of living so young people receive very small amount of benefit rate even if they live in sort of independently from their family, they still receive a lower benefit rate than someone who is over 25 despite them having the same living cost."

"The lack of support from the government in terms of low benefit rates is really concerning especially when these costs are going up even further.

We will probably see more increases in homelessness."



**A REGULAR SCENE:** Homelessness is rising in the UK. Credit Osvaldo Gago via Flickr

Emily adds that we should all 'shout out' to the government, making them know about it, write to your MP, sign petitions, talk about it, raise the concern about this issue.

She added: "We've seen young people who are struggling to afford just the basic needs or even having to choose between paying their bills or skipping meals which is just really concerning"

Centre Point supports young people between the ages of 16 to 25 who are homeless or at risk and supporting them into space and stable accommodation within.

Provide young people with the support they need to get their lives back on track, which could be

giving support with their mental health, guidance on what jobs they can get, or even any training that they might need.

Emily adds: "Young people who come into our services there's high level of mental health needs whether that is anxiety, depression or PTSD.

"In terms of health a lot of our young people are struggling to afford food and so I've spoken to quite a few young people and their support workers and these young people are losing weight they're not getting the right nutrients that they need to be able to live.

"How can they buy fruit and vegetables? It is too expensive so they're having to buy some of the really

cheap food whether that's packet noodles at 90p and also ready meals that they are really cheap"

Richard was a homeless person at 19 years old, he tells his story of how he ended up being homeless.

Richard says: "I was forced to leave my family home.

"In the beginning I stayed some of my friends' houses, sleeping on the sofa until I could tell that they were having enough of me and ended up on the streets.

"I spend my days in the local leisure centre and even libraries so I could use their facilities.

"I went into survival mode and tried to lockdown my feelings.

"I had no one to

support me or even listen to me, people would just walk past, look at me and ignore me, making me feel like I was nothing.

"My mental health was bad, not having anyone to talk about it, being seen and not being seen by people when I was on the streets was just another level.

"I felt like that was how my life was meant to be and I had no choice and thinking that I would not have a future.

"Eventually, I found one of my old friends that helped me so throughout that very difficult time, with everything I needed and step by step eventually got up on my feet and managed to overcome that issue in my life."

# The importance of sustainability and shopping independently

By Lauran O'Toole

Throughout Covid people began to change their mindset towards shopping independently and shy away from the huge brands and massive multinational businesses that dominate our world.

Independent shopping not only supports the local economy but offers retailers the chance to champion someone's livelihood rather than a big corporation and experience the uniqueness of their products that

cannot be found anywhere else.

In 2021 independent shops in the UK saw a record first rise in their numbers in four years according to the Guardian. During the pandemic the government urged shoppers to 'shop local' to support small businesses in engaging with local customers.

Rebecca Morter, CEO and founder of retail start-up Lone Design Club said: "There has been a huge amount of support through

Covid and people have started to change their mindset.

"People are starting to consider how much an item should really cost, what's appropriate, who is actually being paid and making a profit from this.

"Regardless of the size, do we want to see our high streets completely obliterated or do we want that little coffee shop or little boutique to stay.

"If we don't support these local brands, we will lose the creativity of the future which a

lot of younger designers are really pushing forward.

"I think that people are realising that we need to put our hands in our pockets if we want these independent businesses to survive."

We now chat to three independent business owners about the benefits of shopping locally and ways they target customers.

## Lone Design Club:

Rebecca launched her own brand at London fashion week in 2015 and found that customers were wanting to go directly to brands whilst selling to stores was becoming harder because of slim margins and small brands are charged a lot extra than established brands.

Consequently, Rebecca sought to create a platform that disrupted the wholesale model.

LDC support independent and sustainable brands by con-

necting them directly to their customers to build trust and form long lasting relationships.

LDC are the only channel retailer for the sustainable fashion sector, they work with over 400 brands across the world who focus on sustainability.

Rebecca said: "Without unique and unusual designs we would lose the individualism of being our own people.

"With independent shops you get something that no one else really has, a lot of customers come to us because they do not

want to look like a Topshop window or a mannequin.

"They want something unique and different that has a story behind it and you cannot get that from the high street or fast fashion.

"We're an e-commerce platform that's seriously powered by physical retail.

"Community lead curated pop up stores create a buzz, hype and excitement about physical retail space.

"We use these pop up stores as a way for customers to see, touch, feel and increase their relation-

ships with independent brands which is absolutely pivotal.

LDC have hosted over 50 pop up stores allowing customers to meet the designers behind the brands and change the high street to better service retailers and local brands.

Rebecca expressed that reaching customers online is great however, it is becoming extremely saturated but if independent brands have the ability to harness the power of physical retail and online together it can amplify their growth.

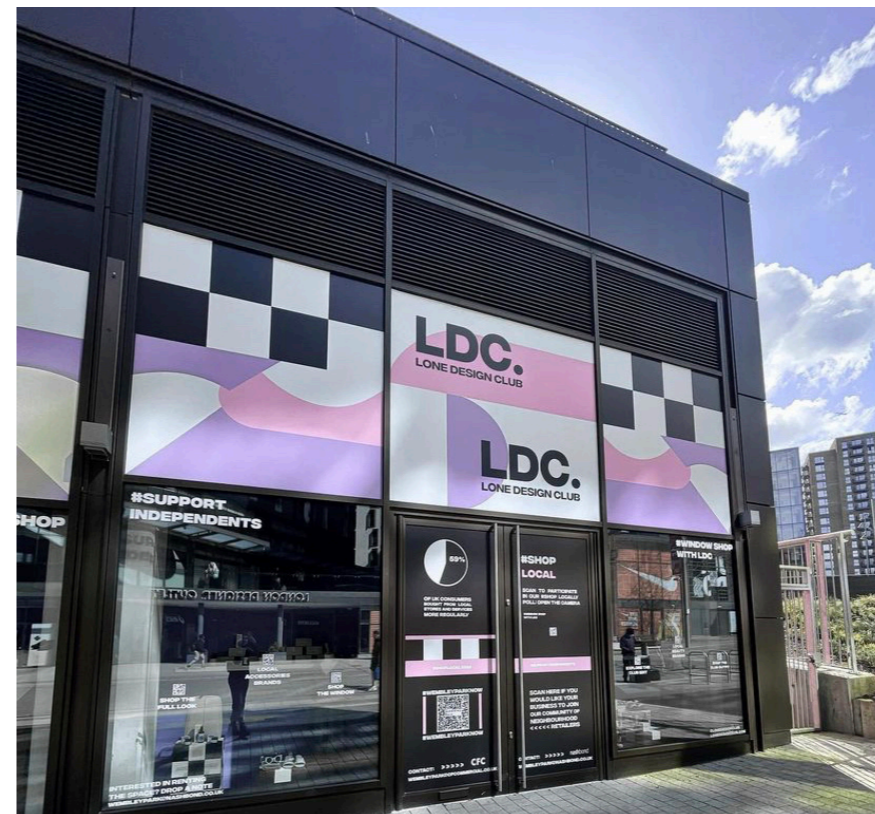
Rebecca said: "When you go to a smaller



RISING STAR: Rebecca Morter and LDC were named as one of the Forbes under 30 and Drapers 30 under 30



OWNER: Mark Wigglesworth started The Good Wine Shop in Twickenham in 2004



WEMBLEY POP - UP: The stores offer a selection of independent brands

brand there will be a story whether it's the materials, the metals used in the jewellery are recycled, maybe their vintage sourced gem stones.

"There is an increased awareness about how much these fast fashion brands earn compared to the people who are being completely exploited in the factories.

"Whereas, shopping independently may mean you pay a bit more for better quality but you know people within the supply chain got paid fairly and that is what we should be promoting."

## Good Wine Shop:

The Good Wine Shop who are independently owned have been in South West London for 18 years and have grown to have shops in Chiswick, Kew, Richmond Hill and Teddington.

As an independent merchant they focus on family producers who create artisan and unique wines on much smaller production levels rather than large branded wines.



**RICHMOND HILL STORE:** Across the businesses 700 wines are available at The Good Wine Shop

The business recycles the money that is spent in their shops back out to their community by hiring local people and using nearby suppliers such as Teddington cheeses.

Owner Mark Wrigglesworth said: "I think local businesses have a real connection with the community and the customers they serve."

"People come into our shops on a regular basis and we know them, their kids, their dog, we know where they're going on holiday etc because we're part of the community."

"There is an element of engaging with other local businesses when it makes sense to."

"In our gin range we stock Ealing gin, Kew Gardens gin, our beer range is typically London focused and very local."

"There is a brewery in Kingston whose beers we stock and a new brewery called Jawbone in Twickenham whose beers we have started stocking."

The shop keeps in regular contact with their customers by emailing them a newsletter with updates on what is happening in the shops.

Mark believes their carefully stocked ranges and direct relationships they have with their producers helps them survive amongst so many chain shops.

The Good Wine shop are currently securing certification in becoming the UK's first carbon neutral wine retailers.

They have signed up to be part of a sustainability programme with trade publication Harpers Wines and Spirits.

Mark said: "We're appointing a green or sustainable champion internally – a member of staff who is taking the lead and trying to look at various aspects of the business and see where can we change and reduce our footprint to get to the point where we are carbon neutral."

"With our packaging we only use recycled

packaging inside our boxes so there is no plastics other than fine wine going abroad.

"Less than a year ago we were using polystyrene cut outs, we have now gone to completely recycled cardboard."

"We got rid of our diesel van of 13 years about 18 months ago and have a 100% electric van."

## Sophie Anna Art:

Sophie Hunt founded her small business on Etsy out of lockdown in November 2020 after striving to make and sell her own products.

Sophie Anna Art

initially sold just christmas cards but the brand has grown into making branded products such as logos and business cards to personalised portraits and stationary.

As a graphic designer Sophie aims to expand her business further by making pencil cases, tote bags and notebooks.

Sophie said: "Making connections is really important, when I started up my business I started following similar small businesses and participating in local groups."

"That allowed me to engage with like minded people and as you grow from that you support one another by reposting each

other's work which expands your audience."

"I have made personal relationships not only with my audience but with creatives."

Sophie expressed that targeting customers can be a challenge because often independent and local brands are more expensive than mainstream businesses.

Predominantly Sophie uses Facebook where she has her own art page to post daily and engage with her audience.

Sophie said: "Personally, I think having a good social media brand is so important for small businesses."

"Being part of Facebook advertising groups is where I get

most of my sales but also having a good brand on Instagram."

"Recently I have been more on TikTok because that is a growing platform and as a small business you have to adapt quickly."

## How local shops support ethical methods:

In 2021 UPS surveyed 10,000 UK consumers on their shopping habits.

62% of people have continued to shop locally post pandemic.

Whilst 42% of people believe that smaller retailers sell more innovative and unique products.

According to Talking Retail Londoners are the most likely to shop locally.

In 2020 Londoners spent £3.05 of every £10 with independent businesses near them.

Consumer passion for sustainability has grown across the globe with people adjusting their shopping habits to become more eco - friendly, with 77% of UK consumers consider sustainability to be important when choosing a retailer.

Whilst 63% of UK consumers want well-known brands to have sustainable or environmentally friendly packaging and 53% believe large retailers should carbon offset for deliveries, according to UPS.

Shopping locally can help air pollution and



**ANJA ANODISED BAG:** Bottletop was founded in 2002 by Cameron Saul, Roger Saul and Oliver Wayman

cut carbon emissions as food miles are often reduced and helps support the local economy.

Rebecca said: "These smaller brands are able to be super agile and be really reactive whilst using innovative materials in their approaches."

"They can also adjust and pivot their businesses much quicker than a large corporation can."

"Therefore, when someone like H&M focus on sustainability they'll have a 10/20 year strategy."

"Whereas smaller businesses can adjust

their models a lot faster and make decisions that are better for the people and the planet quicker."

"There needs to be more awareness in education especially for fast fashion shoppers on the damage that some of these mainstream corporations cause on the environment."

Local and independent brands are able to more flexible and adapt with sustainability quicker.

Mark said: "If you're a smaller business you're a bit more nimble on your feet."

"Ultimately if someone comes to me with a bright idea I can say yes and it can be done by next week."

LDC work with a brand called Bottletop who create bags using the bottle tops of cans.

Bottletop support workers across developing countries by paying employees 40% more in wages to help local societies.

Bottletop launched the #TOGETHER-BAND campaign in partnership with the UN Foundation and UBS on Earth Day 2019 to raise support.



**OWNER SOPHIE HUNT:** The repetitive lockdowns gave Sophie the time to create her own business and she creates work that fits her audience



# Twickenham not-for-profit band project set to play at international teen rock festival in New York City

By Rahima Miah

A Twickenham not-for-profit band project is set to play at an international teen rock festival in New York in June.

Powerjam, a not-for-profit band project in Twickenham for budding, serious, and disadvantaged musicians aged 9-18, will play at the Kids Rock

For Kids International Teen Rock Festival in New York City.

It will represent the UK at the festival, which is a charity event that will raise money through UNICEF for children in crisis.

Powerjam founder Anna Texier said: "The first thing I thought was I can't wait to tell

the bands.

"It's just a really amazing educational opportunity because they're going to be meeting other young people from completely different cultures who share the love of music so like-minded young musicians from all different cultures will be coming together so that's amazing."

One Powerjam band, 'Nobody For President', is confirmed to play at the international teen rock festival so far and the members are 16-years-old.

The New York festival organisers selected Powerjam to represent the UK after coming across Powerjam bands' releases of their music and through the

charity's social media.

Texier said that the organisers were really impressed with not only the standard of the bands themselves, so they reached out to Powerjam to invite it to participate in the festival.

Other teen bands from Brazil, Indonesia, South Africa, Canada



**LOUD AND PROUD:** Nobody For President singing their heart out at a Powerjam gig at the Crawdaddy Club. Credit: JC@marinegrrrl



**TEENS IN SUPPORT:** Sold out audience at Powerjam's Crawdaddy Club gig. Credit: Dubbel Xposure Photography

and across America will participate in the festival.

This will be New York's first ever International Teen Rock Festival and each participating band will perform on three stages, one per day.

The first one will be outdoors on 18 June from the afternoon until the night, the second will be on the next day at an indoor venue and the third one will be indoors as well.

As the event will take place on the last week of GCSE exams, Powerjam has only been able to secure a place at the festival for one of its bands.

Texier added: "Thankfully the organisers are really impressed with all our bands so any of them could go but logistically because of exams we have to be very careful."

The charity, along with its bands, has chosen a set list for the

international teen rock festival and it is striving to get its young bands prepared for the event.

Texier said: "When we get together we work on getting tight as a band and really working on their performances and their confidence levels, because if you're not fully confident with your material and this goes for any performer, professional or amateur, you cannot have fun on stage.

"You can put a teen band together and have them crank out any rock song. It's not that hard, but to have them be really tight and sound really good you have to get to a certain level and really practise together as a band."

During lockdown, Powerjam held regular songwriting sessions on Zoom for its bands and it then established Powerjam Recordings, a label that allows young musicians to retain full copyright to

achieved an estimated more than 260,000 streams across all platforms, including Spotify and Apple Music, since 2020.

Music by Powerjam bands has even been played on BBC Radio 6.

Last month, Powerjam performed at the Crawdaddy Club in Richmond and the event was completely sold out with many teens queuing at the door.

It has also received a grant from Richmond



**ROCK STARS:** Late In Tokyo taking their turn to wow the crowd at the Crawdaddy Club. Credit: Dubbel Xposure Photography

their songs.

The charity helps its bands to professionally record their songs, release them and market them.

Texier said that the bands have collectively

Council to help the bands to continue to gig on stages in the community as the charity is in need of resources to allow the bands to carry on performing.

# The vinyl boom and the multiformat era

Old-style vinyl records are continuing to experience something of a revival amongst music fans, as sales rose by more than 10% between 2020 and 2021, writes Joe Marshall.

According to the Official Charts Company, the number sold in the UK rose from 4.8 in 2020 to 5.3 million in 2021, an increase of 10.6% in album equivalent sales.

That is close to

structible, fell from 23.5m to just 14.4m between 2019 and 2021.

Kevin Jones, co-founder of Twickenham's Eel Pie Records, explained that CD sales have now dropped off to the point where the shop isn't stocking them any more.

Meanwhile, the public are streaming in ever growing numbers, accounting for 83.1% of the market in 2021, up 2.5%

more resources to create more vinyl and to market it accordingly and to improve the quality.

"Then more artists want to release on those formats.

"At the same time, we've seen this almost symbiotic relationship with streaming.

"One factor that counted against vinyl and CD and physical formats in the early days, when we were first transitioning to digital, was people were reluctant to pay for the download and the physical equivalent as well, so the two felt like they were in competition – you either had one or the other.

"As streaming came along from 2014 onwards, because it was an entirely different model where you were paying for a service rather than purchasing the product, suddenly it felt like the two could exist and actually be quite complementary.

"Most of us will stream for our general discovery and day to day needs, but if we come across an album or an artist that we particularly love, then quite a lot of people will make the effort to actually go out and buy it.

"Fans who love the artists and want to buy them on vinyl,

CD and cassette will probably invest in all the formats.

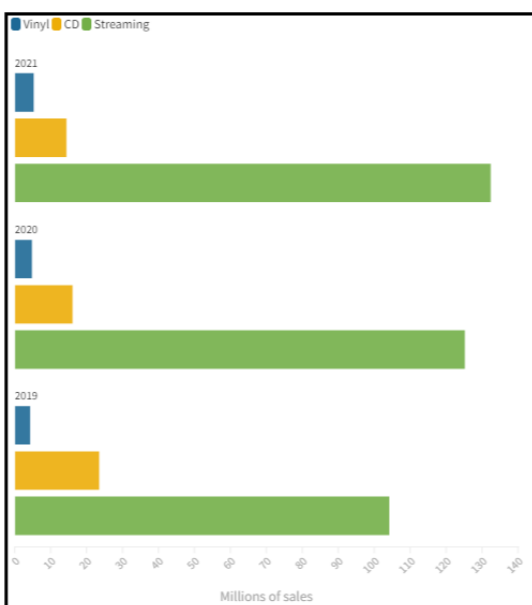
"One of the defining things about our music industry at the moment is that there's never been more choice.

"Whether it's through streaming, downloads or across those physical formats, record companies invest in this and they enable it, as do retailers.

"It's a bit of a golden scenario to be in and I can see it carrying on nicely along those lines."



SPOILT FOR CHOICE: Inside a record shop. Courtesy of Mick Haupt via Unsplash



THE CHARTS: A graph showing the change in music streaming and vinyl record sales in the past three years



NEEDLE DROP: Record player Courtesy of Robert via Flickr

**"If we come across an album or an artist that we particularly love, then quite a lot of people will make the effort to actually go out and buy it"**

**- Gennaro Castaldo**

the 11.6% rise seen between 2019 and 2020 and represents the 14th consecutive year of growth since 2007, when a record low of 205,292 vinyls were sold.

The album equivalent unit is used to define the consumption of music that equals the purchase of one album, and can be applied across digital and physical formats, including streaming services like Spotify.

Moreover, whilst vinyl has jumped, CDs appear to be on the way out.

Sales of the shiny discs, which were once touted as inde-

on the previous year.

The current growth in the streaming market is colossal, with 2021 seeing 132.4 million sales, compared to 104.2 million in 2019.

Gennaro Castaldo, Director of Communications at the British Phonographic Industry said: "In particular younger consumers are attracted to the idea of vinyl.

"We see continual growth and that growth feeds more demand.

"There's a virtuous circle, as growth begets growth.

"Labels see there's demand, they devote

# Gaming and how it affects mental health

By Amelia Oprean

Gaming has many negatives, as people have expressed in the past. However, many argue that they don't affect mental health as negatively as they think.

But how do they affect mental health?

Ellelivia Degiorgio is an avid gamer, and has been gaming since a young age. Gaming with her brothers was what she did and still does, regularly, and her favourite games include Genshin Impact, Call of Duty, and many others. She said that gaming has really helped with her mental health.

She said: "I play video games because they help me destress after a stressful day.

"At university, I have a lot of work and assignments to do, so after these long days, gaming is a way to help me enjoy my time after a stressful day."

Ellelivia recalls a time where she would always be gaming with her brothers.

She said: "Me and my little brother especially would play games together.

"It's so nice to see that games have evolved from two-player into four-player - the more the merrier!"

A survey done by a research agency



GAMING: How does it affect mental health, does it affect it positively, or negatively, and what do the research experts have to say about it?

found that three in five gamers think playing games improves their mental health.

An survey done by Opinium Research found that perhaps surprisingly, gamers with better mental health game for longer during a week.

Cameron Hatter, Researcher in the Gaming Team, said: "It is hugely positive to see the mental health benefits linked with gaming.

"These findings will perhaps help set minds at rest for parents who are considering purchasing the latest video games for their families this Christmas."

As part of the survey, participants were asked to rate their mental health from a 0 (being the worst) and 10 (being the best).

The research found

that those who rated themselves 0-3, were likely to play an average of 8.2 hours of video games in a week, and were likely to spend £19.20 on video games in a typical month.

The opposite was true for their counterparts.

Those that said 9 or 10, spent over an hour longer than those with worse mental health, and their average monthly spend also increased to £24.20.

When looking at why people game, nearly half of gamers agreed that gaming helps reduce stress, whilst a further 47% said it is a way to escape the "real world" and distract themselves.

Those with better mental health mentioned that gaming was less used as a form of escapism.

gaming world, which can be a worry for any parent.

Around 62% of gamers interviewed were parents.

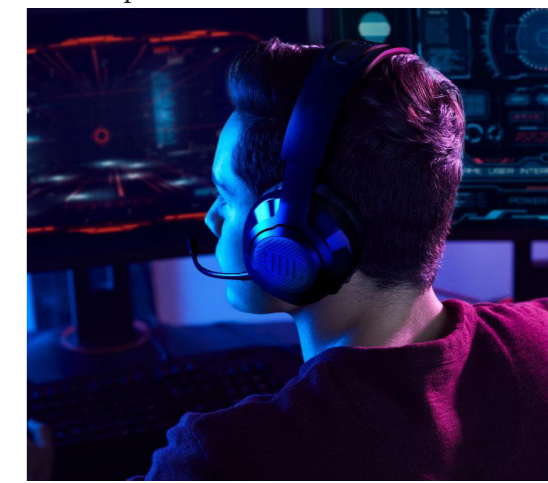
Fewer than half (42%) mentioned that they game with their children, and see it as a bonding activity.

Hatter added: "With the impact of Covid-19 and all the life restrictions that came with it, focus on mental health has never been as prevalent or important as it is today.

"The overall gaming popularity increased by 63% over lockdown.

"With that in mind, it's encouraging that this seems to be having a positive impact on gamer's mental health."

The gaming world is always changing, and with this change, hopefully the more negative mindset towards it will too.



THE GAMER: What are the best things about gaming, and how do these affect you?

# How does exercise help with your mental health?

By Mariana Viveiros

Doing exercise can help with stress relief and can also improve any other mental health issues.

It is known to the public that physical exercise can help with mental health issues.

Each year more and

more people struggle with mental-health related illnesses.

More and more often people are suffering with mental health issues, especially after each lockdown.

Ben Wynter, personal trainer, said:

“Exercise makes us feel better mentally because as human beings we are designed to be active so very much like any other living animal on the planet, I believe that it’s what we are designed to be mobile to be active.



GET RUNNING: Row of treadmills at the gym at Pure Gym.



WEIGHTY: Women’s section at Pure Gym

“An example would be, if you don’t walk a dog for a number of days, they get depressed and they are not their usual self and they get unhealthy.

“The secret is just the balance with your physical, mental health and emotional health too.

“The differences that I have seen on some of my clients that have joined the gym with low confidence, a bit wary about what may be in store and not very confident in themselves and with some personal training they are able to surpass that expect-

tation and hit new targets and that gives them more confidence within themselves.

“My advice to people that are struggling with their mental health are talk to others, if you don’t have anyone to speak to then look into therapy but also take into consideration your physical well-being which can be just walking for 30 minutes or even go on a run, just switching off and that can make wonders to your mental health.”

Exercise is not just to look bigger, built muscle or to even look skinnier.



SPORT HELPS: Going to or taking part in sport can really help your mental health. Credit: Miroslav Fedurco via Flickr

People who exercise regularly tend to do it as it gives them a sense of well being.

There are so many benefits to the physical exercise people that practice exercise, either sports or going to the gym people feel more energized throughout the day,

sleep better, and feel better in general.

When it comes to mental health well-being, some people have started by just going to the gym to change their looks, however, it got to the point where they were going to just feel good when it comes to their mental

health.

Logan Forbes, football player said: “I play football, sport is obviously very sociable because you’re usually in a team with other people and you’re always communicating and being sociable and it kind of takes your mind off any stresses

in your life and it gives you that space to enjoy yourself without any worries.

“I decided to play sport firstly because I’ve got a keen interest in it in general and it offers the opportunity to me up new people and make you friends and secondly, it’s a

really good way of keeping physically fit and improving your general health.

“I would say sports affected me in a positive way for mental perspective purely because I am able to feel mentally stimulated and do something that I love.



KEEP PUSHING: Pure Gym equipment

"I use sport as an escape tool which then allows me to feel mentally fresh and I'm happiest."

"The people who have been around not playing sports probably say the same thing as well."

"It allows you to forget about the stresses of life and enjoy your-

self to the fullest from a mental perspective."

You can tell people are the happiest when their play sport."

"I would probably say that the most notable changes mentally in the people around me when playing sport is how everyone kind of comes together to achieve one goal."

"So when playing football everyone is there to their obviously enjoying themselves, but they also want to win so ultimately there's a group of people who mentally have the same mindset that gives everybody a mental boost."

Depression, anxiety, stress, and other

mental health issues are becoming more and more common within the younger generation."

Physical exercise can be a form of dealing with those same mental health issues."

Mental health includes our emotional, physical, mental, and social wellbeing."

Exercise is an important part of our physical health."

It prevents health problems, boosts energy, helps you sleep better and not only that but also the fact that it helps with your mental health."

Some people feel safe going to the gym, an escape."

It helps them to think or even just focus on themselves without worrying about the stresses that life causes."

Practicing sports or any other physical activity will help reduce anxiety and depression levels"

Trinity Smith, 22 years old, said: "I joined gym just because another friend of mine made me join to go with her."

"In the beginning I didn't really know what I was doing in terms of exercise and how it could benefit me but as the time passed, I figured it out."

"I realised that later as I was being more consistent that not only, I've seen a physical difference in me that also when it comes to my mental health and dealing with life problems, I had a different approach to it."

"Gym became my escape. "I was at university, and I was stressed about every assignment that I had at the time and suffered from depression since I was 16."

"When I decided to join gym and kept on the consistent I realised that it was not only helping me physically but also mentally."

"Mentally, it became easier to deal with it and I felt good about it."

"Going to the gym made me forget about everything that I was being stressed about."

"My advice to people would be give it a try,

gym doesn't need to be just to change your physical appearance, but it is also good for your mental health."

"Even if you don't

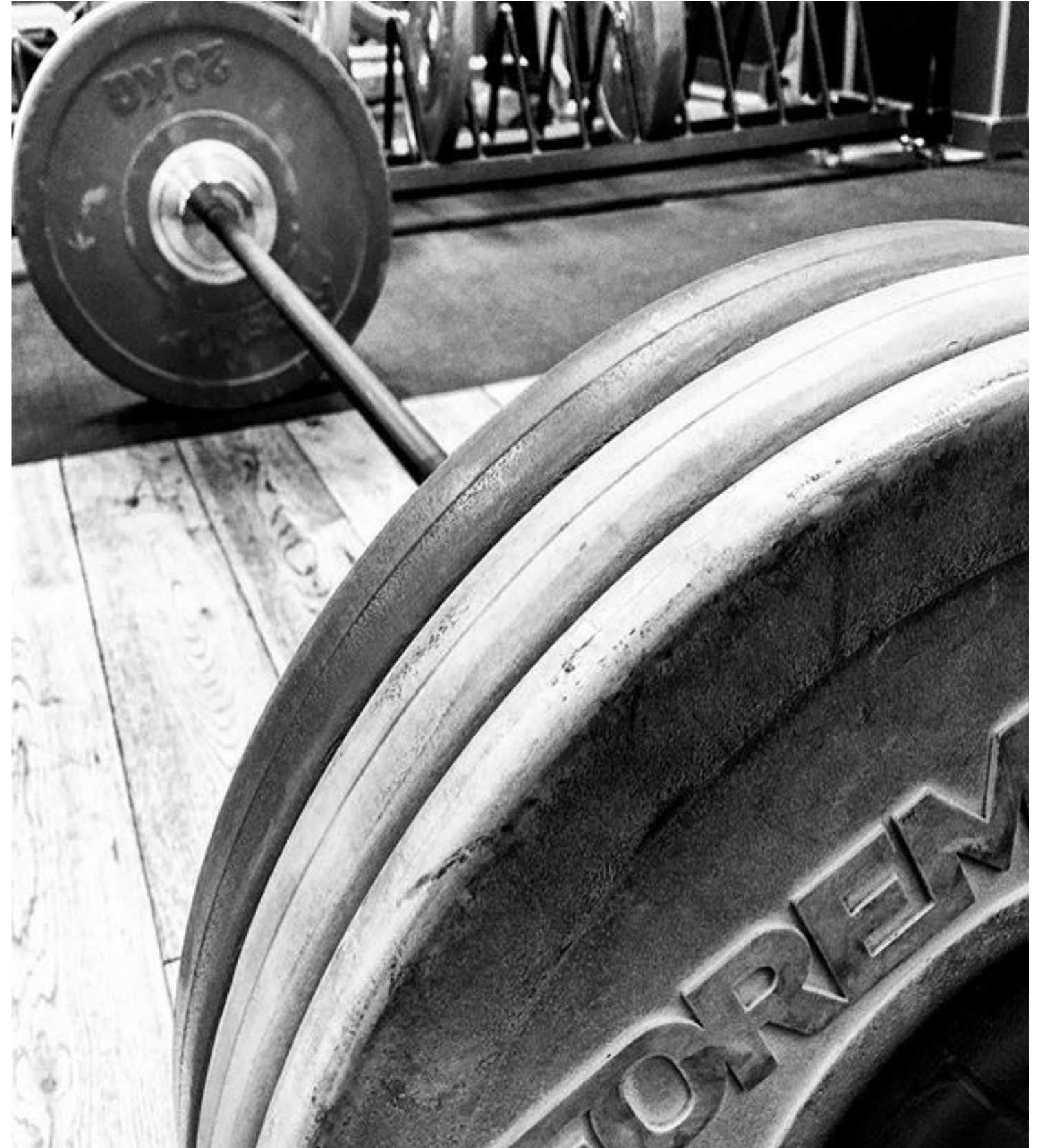
like to do sports or go to the gym, give it a try it can help you in ways you did not expect it."

"Mental health is

something we should all take seriously and try everything we can to overcome it."

"We all hear that practising sports or any

other physical activity is good for the body but not enough is said when it comes to taking care of mental health."



HEAVY: A weight set-up in a gym. Credit: Adrian Clark via Flickr

# Are women gaslit in healthcare?

There has been an increase in gaslighting in healthcare and web searches relating to this – but why is it an issue, writes Amelia Oprean.

84% of women in the UK feel as though whenever they visit their GP, they aren't listened to, and end up being gaslighted into believing their issue isn't a big one.

Gaslighting is where the perpetrator makes the victim question themselves, their own beliefs or reality.

Nichelle Charles, 23, is one of many women who have faced this problem.

Irregular periods don't typically cause a concern, and they happen to most women.

If you go a month or two at most without getting your period, there's not really a need to be worried.

Around 14%-25% experience menstrual irregularities, according to the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

When Nichelle saw that her period had not appeared for four months, she visited her GP to see if she could get any answers.

She told SWL: "It involved a lot of back and forth over the phone to convince someone to see me."

"By the time I had booked in to be seen, my period had not shown up for eight months."

After a blood test to check for hormone

imbalances which came out negative, the result was a high blood sugar level.

Nichelle said: "They ultimately blamed it on my weight, as to why I was having irregular periods, which I felt was not the case."

"I felt stressed, because I did not know what the problem was and why it was that I was missing periods."

"I wanted to rule out anything serious as soon as possible."

As part of a survey carried out by the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) in March 2021, around 100,000 participants got in touch to share their experiences as a woman, experiences of a female family member, friend or partner, and their reflections as a self-identified health or care professional.

Whilst 84% of women feel they are not listened to, a close tie of 85% of women feel comfortable talking to healthcare profession-

als about general physical health concerns.

However, this falls to 59% when it regards mental health.

77% of women felt comfortable talking about their menstrual wellbeing with a healthcare professional, and whilst this might've been the case for Nichelle at the start of her visits, this trust eventually decreased.

She told us: "I tried to get an appointment for months, and when I finally did get one, they weren't helpful."

"They seemed to want to get me in and out as fast as possible, because my issue seemed like a lot more effort."

"Which, it shouldn't be, as it is my health and if it's something serious, I want to catch it right away so that I can deal with or manage it in the best possible way."

Psychologist and bestselling RadFem author Dr. Jessica Taylor is an advocate for speaking out for

the rights of women, especially regarding healthcare.

In one of her many powerful, supportive Twitter statements, she wrote: "Women need support, information, guidance and compassion to attend smear tests that trigger them, scare them, humiliate them and worry them. Maybe listen to women?"

In an interview with The Guardian, she said: "I will always centre women in my work and I will keep making misogynists uncomfortable."

At the release of her book in 2020 titled 'Why Women Are Blamed For Everything', Taylor received a lot of online hate, including daily messages from men telling her crude things, such as death threats.

She also said: "Abuse and trolling is scary, and it's exhausting, but it's never going to get me to a point where I say, 'I will stop talking

about the abuse of women and girls."

Camille Noe Pagan wrote for The New York Times about her experience getting treated.

She told her physician that she wasn't enjoying time with her children, and in response got a cheerful "Well, you look like you're doing great!"

Her physician told Pagan to keep exercising, doing yoga and maybe meditating, and as always, getting more sleep.

Pagan, however, felt like these just weren't working for her.

She writes: "My physician was just like me. A relatively young, educated mother of small children with plenty on her plate."

"Wouldn't she know if I were truly in need of treatment?"

It took her months to summon the courage to seek help, and eventually get therapy.

However, there still remains the issue of healthcare profes-

sionals dismissing or downplaying their patients' concerns.

In the survey done by the DHSC, a respondent aged 25 to 39 said: "I wanted to discuss sterilisation and was told I was too young to know that I didn't want children."

"The doctor then went on to tell me that I would change my mind if I met a nice boy', despite being engaged to a man at the time. They did not listen to the concerns I raised."

Another, aged 25 said: "I had to visit my GP surgery three times about a single suspect mole. The first two times, it was dismissed. They eventually referred me to a specialist. It turned out to be cancerous."

When thinking about what could have been done to help her situation, Nichelle said that more effort should've been put in when looking at what issues cause irregular periods.

She said: "Women are often labelled as 'hysterical' when they get angry or have any other emotion which is seen as defensive."

Whenever there is an issue, it's all put down as hormonal imbalances, or that it's 'all in our heads', and when women try to speak up about it, they are ignored.

"It feels as though you have to wait until you are seriously ill until some doctors take your concerns

seriously."

A University of Pennsylvania study found that women waited 16 minutes longer than men to receive pain medication when they visited the emergency room.

New Scientist writes that UK studies show that misinterpretations of female pain as anxiety often contribute to women being around more than 50% likely to be misdiagnosed after a heart attack.

A 2018 study analysing journal papers on sex, gender and pain published in the UK, US and Europe in 2001 revealed that terms like sensitive, malingering, complaining and, indeed, hysterical are applied more frequently to pain reports from women.

Nichelle said: "I think to further improve services for women who need help, there needs to be a better concern for their issues."

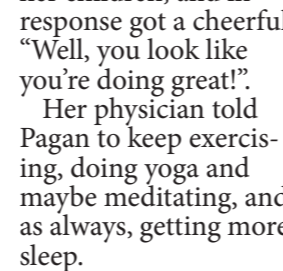
"Everything needs to be tested for even if it might be something miniscule, and it shouldn't be stopped until the answer is found."

Pagan writes the steps that you should take if you feel like you are being ignored by a health professional.

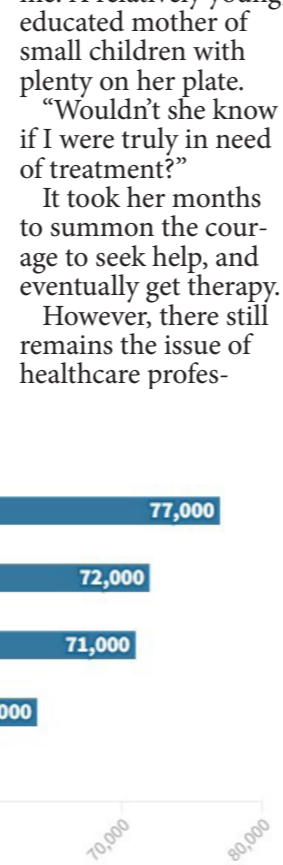
There is still a lot of work to be done to smooth out the quality of care women receive.

Hopefully, this much-needed change and progress in care will start coming soon.

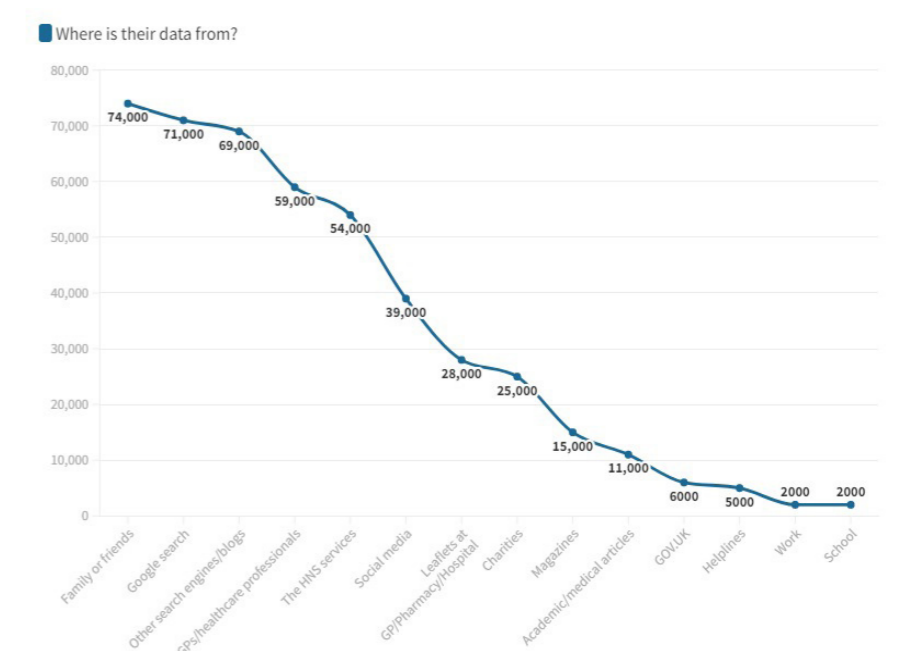
Where is their data from?



How many?



WHAT DO WOMEN FEEL COMFORTABLE TALKING ABOUT? Though these are good numbers, it still isn't 100%. Why do that small majority not feel completely at comfort talking to their healthcare professional?



WHERE DO WOMEN FIND THEIR INFORMATION? A decreasing amount of women actually go to their GPs or healthcare professionals for help. They're more likely to turn to family and friends, or even Google or social media for their concerns.

## What should I do if I am feeling ignored?

1.

**Ask them about the guidelines.**

"What is the basis and source for your diagnosis?" Guidelines tend to be objective and data-driven, so many women do better when their health professionals and doctors follow them.

2.

**Be direct.**

"I feel like you are not hearing me, and that you are not listening to me." If you are concerned, you should be allowed to express that freely. Never should you feel blocked or unable.

3.

**Check your own bias.**

It's important you recognise that you are not self-diagnosing, you are not overreacting, because you are expressing concerns over your own health and what worries you.

# The impact of the fuel crisis

By Michael Phillips

As fuel prices have risen to an all time high businesses both large and small have said how much impact it is having.

Figures by the RAC currently show that a litre of unleaded petrol costs an average of £1.63 a litre with diesel even higher at £1.77 a litre.

It comes as Russia's invasion of Ukraine continues to affect the cost of oil worldwide.

On the 23rd March the Chancellor Rishi Sunak announced a 5p cut to fuel duty meaning a small cut in the price.

However prices are still at record levels leaving people struggling.

Fuel prices fluctuated during the pandemic but have been steadily rising for over a year, with a huge spike in the past few weeks.

Pat McFarlane, 69, from Richmond, is a self-employed driving instructor and she said: "If I put £40 in my car it's about half a tank whereas before it was around three quarters to two thirds of a tank of fuel so its going down much quicker in lessons."

"If I'm doing longer distances on the dual

carriage ways, I'm using even more but I don't want to put the students prices up yet.

"I only just put the up in January so I'm hoping to just absorb that for a moment.

"I don't want the students to be out of pocket and stop lessons because they've got the same bills that I have as the cost of living has gone up for everyone so I don't want to make it more difficult for the students.

"Doing small things like changing

gear and not sitting idling, I'm hoping will also make a small difference as students are notorious for this."

Simon Williams, an RAC spokesman said: "Fuel prices were rising prior to the Ukraine situation, that was because there are two things that affect what we pay for fuel at the pumps, that's the price of oil and the exchange rate.

"Fuel like oil is traded in dollars so we need exchange

rate to be strong as possible against the dollar at the moment the pound is worth 1.3 dollars.

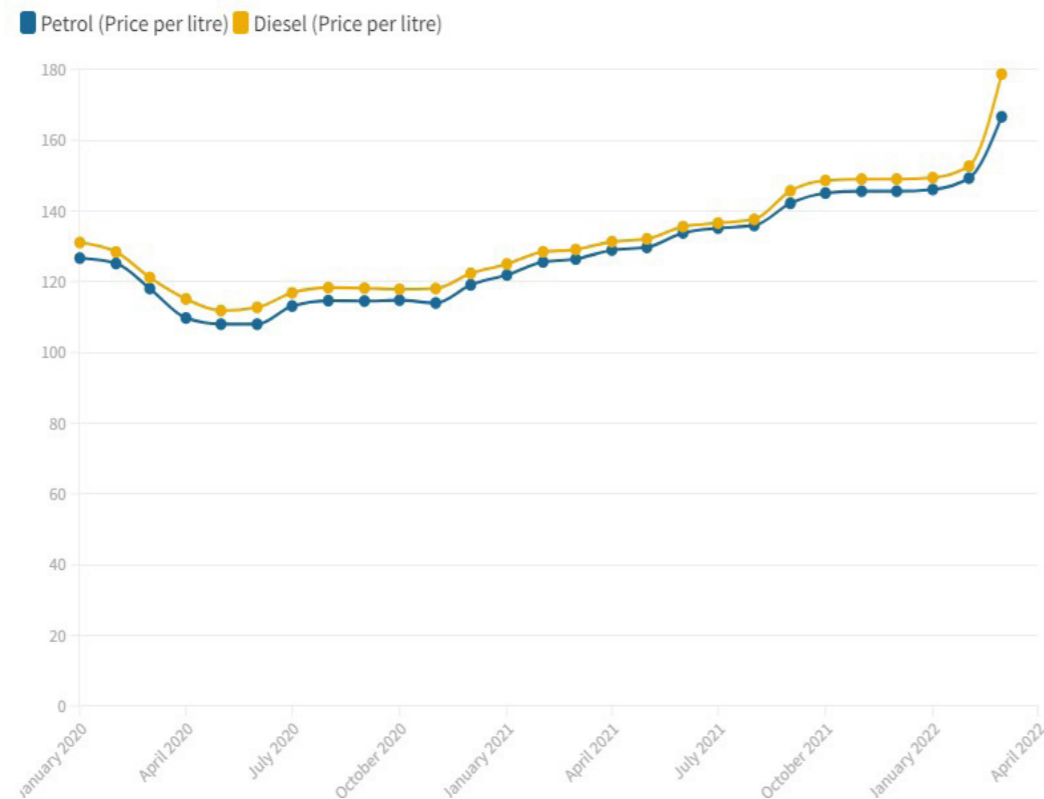
"If you look in perspective, back in 2008 we had the record high oil price 144 dollars a barrel, but at that time the exchange rate was two to one, so the highest price anyone paid that year was £1.20 for petrol.

"So you can see the power of the exchange rate in this situation so what has been happening with oil is that it has been

rising because during covid the global producers cut the supply of oil because people are moving around.

"The world as much so not as much oil was needed and then gradually they have been releasing more supplies.

"Unfortunately oil supplies have been out of kilter with demand and then the situation happened in Ukraine the oil prices went up markets got spooked and now record prices on a daily basis."



SHARP RISE: Fuel Prices have been increasing rapidly since January

# Will the next generation be able to afford a house in London?

By Mariana Viveiros

London house prices have continued to rise, raising questions over whether the next generation of house buyers will ever be able to afford a home in the capital.

In the last 12 months, house prices have risen by 2.2% in London – and they have surged consistently over the last 10 to 15 years.

In 2015 an average house in London cost £404,773 while in 2022, the average price of a house is £510,102.

Tim Bannister, Rightmove's Director of Property Data, said: "High demand and a shortage of available stock are supporting a rise in prices and a new record average asking price this month.

"The rising cost of living is affecting many people's finances, especially those trying to save up enough for a deposit to get on the ladder or to trade up.

"However, despite rising costs and rising interest rates, the date right now shows demand rising across the whole of Great Britain, with many people determined to move as we head into the spring home-moving season."

The graph shows that it's not just since 2015 that house prices have been rising, as back in 2007, the

average house price was below 300,000, compared to now.

In general, every borough in London has seen an increase in prices.

The cheapest area in London to purchase a house is Barking and Dagenham, with the average house costing £345,873.

Conversely, the average house price in London's most expensive borough Kensington & Chelsea is an eye-watering £1,403,815.

University student Lucy, 22, said: "I plan on buying a house in London but looking at how expensive they are and the process of obtaining one, it seems like an impossible plan.

"Even just to get enough money on the down payment of a house seems impossible.

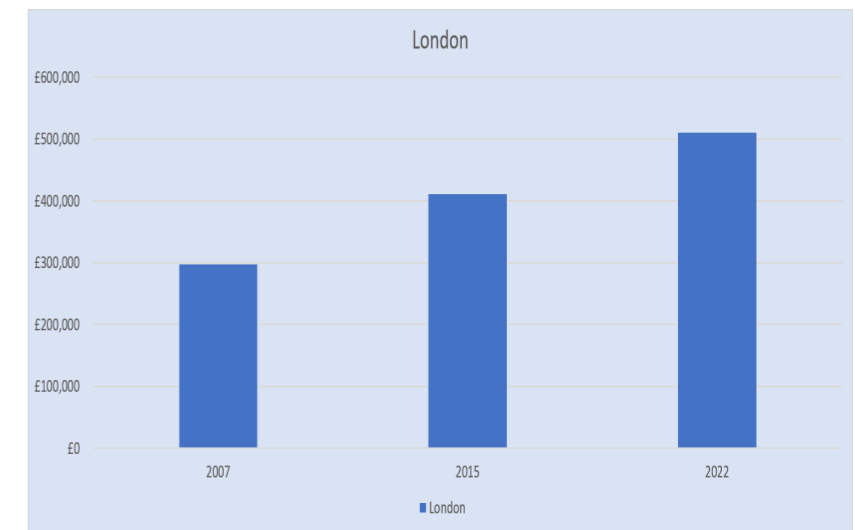
"Not only does buying a house seem impossible, but we also need to look at the fact that everything is going up.

Sabrina, 24, said: "I want to purchase a house with my partner but with everything going up, it seems impossible to do so which makes me frustrated.

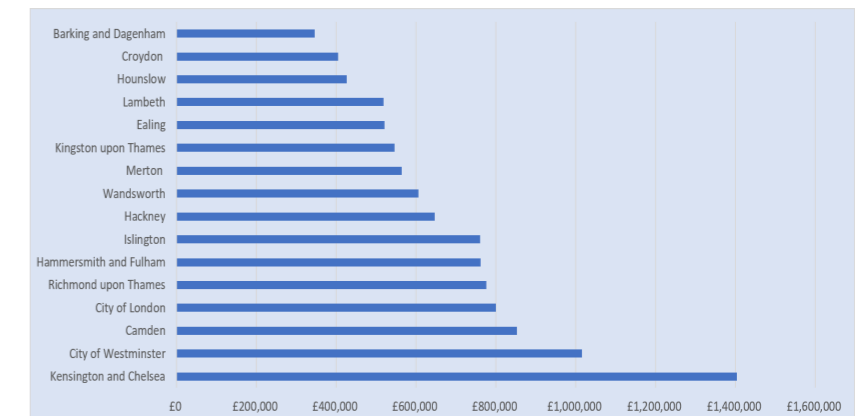
"We live in one of the most expensive cities in the world. I try to save as much as I can, and it just seems like it isn't enough."



STARK CHANGE: The difference between the average house price in London in 2015 and 2022



RISING: The average London house price between 2007 and 2022



LOCATION MATTERS: The figures show the average price of a house in London by borough

# A virtuous organisation: The BBC under existential threat



SHINY NEW DIGS: Broadcasting House is the home of the BBC in London. Courtesy of David Carroll on Flickr

The BBC is a beloved institution, integral to our identity and prominent in our collective psyche and daily lives. Now in its centenary year, it is worth looking back at some of what makes it a virtuous broadcaster, as well as some of the existential threat it faces from the world of politics, writes Joe Marshall.

Justin Rowlett is the BBC's first Climate Editor - a forward thinking job title given the current environmental crisis. He has had an illustrious career at the corporation, having spent time in Delhi as its South Asia Correspondent, and has produced investigative journalism for Panorama and Newsnight. He sung the corporation's praises, saying: "In societies that don't have an independent media you see a lot more political division perhaps than you see in Britain. It's a way of getting objective coverage out there, stuff that people can trust.

"It helps dispel conspiracy theories. You look at the work the BBC did publicising the public health messages during the pandemic. That's obviously very useful.

"It also did on-line education pro-

grammes for kids that were at home during the pandemic. It's the envy of the world."

Indeed, the broadcaster runs the free Bitesize service for children based around the national curriculum, endeavouring to provide an alternative source of knowledge for general school study or those sitting exams.

Programmes like Horrible Histories provide a sort of soft or subliminal education as they are equal parts knowledge and humour, making them popular with adults too.

Launched in 1985, Children's BBC (CBBC) has run dedicated and often acclaimed programming for youngsters, such as the drama Grange Hill, which was based on the lives of school kids, tackling issues like drugs, bullying and teenage pregnancy.

The Open University and the BBC have shared a partnership for over fifty years, bringing education into the homes and devices of adults across all its platforms and channels.

This extends to documentaries, which is something the Beeb is globally renowned for. The esteemed

David Attenborough has gained the status of national treasure for appearing in programmes like the Planet Earth series, which offers a cinematic view of the natural world.

But there is conflict between the BBC and Boris Johnson's Conservative government over funding. Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries has said that the licence fee, compulsory for all households with a TV or who use the digital streaming service BBC iPlayer, could be scrapped in 2027.

This would damage the revenue going towards the BBC's multitude of radio stations and podcasts, which can be accessed via the BBC Sounds online platform. In the meantime she has frozen the fee at £159 until 2024, not in line with inflation. She says this is because of the cost of living crisis but it leaves the BBC short.

On 16th January 2021, she tweeted: "This licence fee announcement will be the last. The days of the elderly being threatened with prison sentences and bailiffs knocking on doors are over. Time now to discuss and debate new ways of funding,

supporting and selling great British content."

Since her appointment in September 2021, Dorries' criticism of the BBC has been incessant. She's been one of its long term agitators, and Johnson's decision to make her culture secretary has been seen as an intentionally antagonistic move.

She accused it of nepotism and a liberal bias, arguing that jobs at the corporation should be available to all, "not just people whose mum or dad work there". This might appear hypocritical in light of the fact that in 2012 she employed both her daughters to work in her parliamentary office at a cost of £80,000 - equivalent to 503 licence fees.

There is also ongoing contention over whether the BBC is politically biased, with pressure groups and lobbyists from the left and right of the spectrum arguing that its news coverage is unbalanced.

The current government has given mixed messages on its future. The Prime Minister Boris Johnson claims the broadcaster will exist "for a long time to come", whereas Dorries has accused it of disproportionately

hiring and representing middle and upper class people.

Dorries believes the BBC could be gone in ten years. There is a 'good cop, bad cop' dynamic between the two leaders. All this plays into the future role of the broadcaster and whether it will retain its licence fee funding beyond its first one hundred years.

In 2019, Johnson's government boycotted Radio 4's Today Programme - a show with a long history of incisive and in depth political interviews.

This landmark move demonstrated a disregard for the importance of and an unwillingness to cooperate with the Beeb. The current freeze to the licence fee and the threat to its continuance is a step up in hostilities.

Regarding tensions with the government, Rowlett believes: "Most Conservatives actually quite like the BBC. They get annoyed with it when it exposes hypocrisy amongst their colleagues."

Tom Giles was once the editor of the BBC's investigative news programme Panorama, and is now Controller of Current Affairs at ITV. He is responsible



**BROADCASTING HOUSE:** Outside BBC HQ. Courtesy of Matt Cornock via Flickr

for the programmes Exposure, Tonight, On Assignment and The Agenda and has perspective on how these outfits operate compared to their equivalents at the BBC. Giles cited “the global projection of our values through its independent news and current affairs coverage” as an important part of the BBC’s contemporary role.

The BBC World Service and BBC World News are good examples of British soft power operating abroad. This was affirmed by the Chinese government’s move to ban the latter in February 2021, as the balanced and democratic nature of its programming is considered a threat to the Communist Party’s headline regime.

Robin Aitken, author of ‘The Noble Liar’ and ‘Can We

Trust the BBC?’, is a former BBC journalist turned arch critic. Having worked there for many years as a TV and radio reporter, he now frequently provides commentary on what he sees as liberal bias and groupthink within the corporation.

Perhaps unexpectedly, even he has something positive to say about it. He said: “One of the BBCs greatest strengths is that when it’s under political pressure, as it has been recently, it has legions of influential supporters who come to its aid, because it has earned the gratitude of a substantial proportion of the population because of the programmes it has made.”

“These aren’t necessarily news programmes. There are lots of different series in different formats and genres, in radio

and TV. Nearly everyone in the country, if you were to ask them, would have at least one programme the BBC has made which they thought was fantastic.”

Across the social and political spectrum, people have high praise for much of what the BBC does. It has long been thought of as a cultural adhesive - an institution which binds and unifies the United Kingdom in a way not seen by any other broadcaster in any other country around the world.

Giles said “I think the BBC is obviously massively important, it has a very big projection both in Britain and abroad but also in terms of supporting the wider cultural and social fabric of life in this country. It’s a unifier. It’s an important glue that holds together the United King-

dom. That’s something that isn’t said enough.”

Some would even go so far as to call the broadcaster a force for ethical good.

David Hendy is a respected media historian and author of *The BBC: A People’s History*. As he puts it he has “spent nearly 30 years researching the BBC, in its archives, reading written memoranda, reading policy statements, listening to oral history transcripts of hundreds and hundreds of members of staff.”

He is possibly more qualified to comment on the institution than any other academic or insider.

He said “Its ethos of bringing the best of what has been thought and said and done to as many people as possible, has an ethical basis. It was founded in the 1920s, in the wake of the

First World War, on the basis that, as one later director general put it, if you want to sustain true citizenship and the leading of a full life, which seems to me to be a moral purpose (what is a full life? One that is rounded and balanced and happy and productive and so on), then broadcasting can contribute to that in some way. This means being informed, being entertained, being allowed to rest and relax, to enjoy culture.”

In many ways the BBC serves the British people, just like our education system or the NHS. As Rowlatt puts it, “I experience the respect people have for the BBC everyday as I go around the country. You get positive feedback from almost everybody. There are lots of reasons to celebrate the BBC.”



**TELEVISION CENTRE:** The BBC’s old home in Shepherd’s Bush, London. Courtesy of Colin Smith via Geograph



**ALEXANDRA PALACE:** The BBC broadcast from here in the 1930s. Courtesy of Ian Rob via Geograph



# What's it like growing up in Britain?



**MERCH STAND:** Some of the memorabilia for sale at the Museum of Youth Culture

Growing up, a lot of us identified with one subculture or another.

How you look and what you listen to is as important to young people today as it was a hundred years ago, writes Joe Marshall.

Now, an emerging museum is looking to document and preserve the point at which fashion, music and lifestyles intersect, giving birth to movements as diverse as the beatniks of the 1950s and the hip-hop heads of the 1980s.

The Museum of Youth Culture was founded by Jon Swinstead in 2015. A former raver, he cut his teeth in the 80s running a clubbing fanzine called Slea-zenation.

He said: "It was supposed to be an irreverent take on the magazines that were around at the time, that were all a little bit

serious and fond of themselves. We would make jokes and have a laugh about the scene, even though we were fond of the scene."

Part shop, part gallery, the museum is currently based on Beak Street in Soho.

Having previously popped up on Shaftesbury Avenue and Carnaby Street, this temporary home is a little smaller than what the staff are used to.

Upstairs you can buy vinyl records and cultural memorabilia, whilst the downstairs space is only large enough to exhibit a handful of images from a vast library.

Scott works at the museum in product development and collaborations. He said: "The main goal is to have permanent spaces in the UK.

We've got a site in Birmingham locked in for 2025. We're

also looking at sites in Glasgow and Edinburgh, as well as London."

The MYC is a not-for-profit museum, born out of YOUTH CLUB - an enormous Heritage Lottery & Arts Council Funded collection.

Its archives hold a treasure chest of images, ephemera and written accounts, covering virtually every conceivable cultural milieu.

Over 200,000 photographs can be accessed online, promising many happy hours exploring the past.

Teddy boys, goths, emos and more are all represented and celebrated.

Swinstead's operation wishes to showcase an unfiltered view of its subjects' lives, with a commitment to authenticity.

The museum is founded on the belief

that 'everyone has an important story to tell about what it means to be young.'

The 'Grown up in Britain' campaign encompasses a collage style book, made up of vibrant photography of teenagers from the 1920s to the present day, as well as an exhibition in the West Midlands.

Ahead of this, the MYC is asking people who grew up in Coventry to upload a photo, flyer or other artefact to feature there.

As for the kids of today, Swinstead recognises the emergence of social media as a "watershed moment."

He said: "When I was 14 years old I knew what I knew because of the people I knew and that was limited.

"I had magazines or newspapers I might read but by and large

the information was fairly limited.

"Maybe that's why pre-internet we had a scene and you stuck largely to it. Post-internet it's like a supermarket.

"They know everything as soon as they can get online. They can be influenced by an infinite number of things. I think people pick and choose a bit more.

"There's more fluidity in what people wear and look like and do."

Ken works in graphic design and is a customer at the MYC. He finds young people today "a little tiresome", because of what he sees as a sense of entitlement.

He said: "My youth culture was late 80s into the 90s. Rave, Manchester, Hacienda, clubs around Manchester, The Smiths, that sort of thing."

But the museum



**A WINDOW ON THE PAST:** Photographs from the museum's collection

doesn't discriminate, catering for old and young alike. Swinstead said: "We've just finished a show called the punk art show, which was a selection of 20 artists who were punks in the day, from '77 onwards. We had various talks and a lot of acoustic gigs in the space."

At the same time, Scott said: "We've seen a massive increase in people of a younger generation coming in and having a look. I think they want to see what it [youth culture] was like and form their own direction from it."

Alexander Apperely is part of a network of 400 photographers who contribute to the collection.

Earlier in his career, he was a photographer for Morning Star - the official English language paper of the socialist bloc.

His take on the youth of today is "There's lots of ways of communicating but not enough communication face to face going on".

The Museum of Youth Culture is a cross generational feast for anyone who's ever been inspired by the styles and the sounds around them.

Noughties teenagers will identify with an essay called A Love Letter to Myspace, whereas older people might recognise themselves in the depictions of the Northern soul or skinhead scenes.

If you're really old you might feel nostalgic looking at pictures of flappers from the roaring 20s.

It looks as if the museum is moving onto bigger and better things, with a permanent space housing everything it has to offer on the horizon.



**GROOVE IS IN THE HEART:** Photos of dancers in the collection

# German twin town visitor in Richmond

By Rahima Miah

A trainee teacher stayed in Richmond from its German twin town in March to improve his teaching and English skills.

Tobias Kamprad, 24, trainee English teacher from Richmond's German twin town Konstanz, was hosted by the Richmond in Europe Association (REA).

Richmond has been twinned with Konstanz since 1983 and the REA promotes sporting, cultural and educational links across Europe.

Kamprad said: "I really enjoyed my time in Richmond and I experienced overwhelming hospitality from everyone especially the Richmond in Europe Association and chairman Alan Mockford.

"Britain and Germany are so closely connected to each other in terms of their position on the map and we share so much history, I think it's so important to learn from each other and get to know each other."

During his stay in Richmond, he worked as a German

assistant in a secondary school in Twickenham to improve his teaching and fluency in English.

Alan Mockford, REA chairman, said: "By Tobias coming here, he has improved his English and also gone into a school where the students have encountered a native German speaker and who can tell them all about modern Germany.

"One of the problems in Germany is that it's not a requirement for the teachers to study abroad in the country whose language they are going to teach, so if you go to a school in Germany most of the teachers of English teach English with a German accent and in a German way because they've never been to England.

"Tobias took it upon himself to come here voluntarily because he wanted to be able to hear real English so he'll go back and teach the children in Germany real English."

Kamprad came to Richmond at the beginning of March and went home at the end of the month.

On 5 March, REA committee members held a welcome reception for him.

Kamprad visited several attractions in Richmond and on 17 March the Mayor of Richmond, Cllr Geoff Acton invited him for tea at York House.

Kamprad is studying English at the University of Konstanz, a small university town close to the Swiss border.

He spoke about some of the similarities between Richmond and Konstanz.

He said: "Both are university towns. I think the people in both towns are very open minded and European so to say, maybe because of those universities, but both are really quite nice places to be at and live in.

"Both are green and both are connected to the water so Richmond has the Thames and Konstanz has the lake."

Mockford added: "Both cities are very liberal and very Bohemian."

Kamprad also mentioned some ways Konstanz is different to Richmond.

He said: "Konstanz

is a rather small city. I think it's smaller than Richmond and it's not part of a bigger borough but it's a small university town close to the lake of Konstanz in the south and close to the Swiss border."

Mockford said that Konstanz is about half the size of Richmond.

Something new Kamprad was introduced to during his stay in Richmond was going to the pub after work.

He added: "One fun thing for example is the Friday afternoon pub event which is something

quite British I would say.

"That doesn't exist back home so on Fridays after a long school or work day every German just wants to go home, be quiet and recover so to say but here people really take the chance and say yeah let's start together into the weekend, lets have fun together and just meet and forget about work."

Kamprad is the first foreign exchange student the REA has hosted since the start of the pandemic, but it also has two young French women coming in June and July.



**TWIN CONNECTION:** Tobias Kamprad, the Mayor of Richmond, Cllr Penny Frost and Alan Mockford by the twin towns sign. Cred-

# The journey of learning to love your body

By Lauran O'Toole

Learning to love and accept your body can be a long journey for many people.

Sadly, over a third of adults have felt anxious or depressed about their body according to the Mental Health Foundation.

The internet can be destructive for some as social media allows people to see other's bodies that can be idealised as the perfect type.

James Green from BodyWise said: "We often follow different influencers, fitness models and even friends/family

members that make us feel bad about our bodies.

"Sometimes it's a subconscious thing that we don't fully recognise.

"Photoshopping has come a long way since the early 2000s but there are still a lot of models with size 0 bodies who appear to have no cellulite or individual quirks about their bodies.

"This can make people view their body as not 'normal' and influence them to want to change it.

"Family and friends are another big

influencer, arguably the largest influence on how people view their body.

"If a family member or friend makes a rude comment it hurts deeply as it is an opinion you respect.

"You are likely to internalise that opinion and believe them."

James expressed the importance of surrounding yourself with friends and family that lift you up and love you for the way you are.

The Mental Health Foundation found that higher body

dissatisfaction is associated with a poorer quality of life, physiological distress and the risk of unhealthy eating behaviours and eating disorders.

Our bodies are something that are with us for life so when we are not happy with them it can severely affect our mental health and life in general.

## Three things you can do to start to love and accept your body:

Polly Arnold from BodyWise said:

**1.** Build a connection with yourself. "You can't love your body if you don't feel connected to it, you are with your body for life so get to know it.

One great way to build a connection with yourself is to stand in the mirror each morning and smile at yourself. It's a small gesture but it reminds you that you are on your side and promotes self-love.

**2.** Try to accept compliments.

Often when people give us a compliment about our bodies we brush it off and move on because we don't

fully believe what they're saying.

We think they are just saying it to be nice but only by really trying to accept someone else's view as truth and that someone really does think you look amazing, can you start to change your own narrative.

Each time you fully accept a compliment as true, you are slowly breaking down the wall of hatred you have built.

**3.** Thank your body. A great way to fully appreciate yourself is to have gratitude for every single thing your body has done for you and think back to everything you have done in your life.

You may have climbed a mountain, gave birth, faced hardships, danced the night away, fell in love, made beautiful connections and so on."



**BODY POSITIVITY:** A negative mindset can occur no matter your

# LGBTQ+ members talk about homophobic bullying in schools

By Michael Phillips

Two teenagers have spoken out about the homophobic bullying they've experienced growing up gay.

Figures from Stonewall show that just one in five LGBT pupils have been taught about safe sex in relation to same-sex relationships.

Maddy Curtis, who is 23, said: "I did have friends who are accepting but for the most part it was like a pretty traumatic expe-

rience.

"It all started with sort of verbal abuse the whispering I mean I'd go into the changing rooms at school for PE and instantly people looked at me and whispered to each other you know that Maddie Curtis she's a lesbian.

"It got to the point where I isolated myself I got changed in the toilets on my own.

"I was terrified to even look at some girls because they would jump to conclusion that I fancied them

or that I was like a pervert.

"They call me things, obviously things that weren't true and it hurt a lot and I automatically thought; you know what being a lesbian is a bad thing so that sort of gave me a lot of internalized homophobia.

"A lot of people have that it's a real thing and it sucks, because it is nothing to be ashamed of but for so long even up to this age.

"Every now and then I get little flashbacks

and even in public if I'm with my girlfriend and holding hands you will get people shouting at us.

"You think it doesn't happen anymore but it really does.

"I am a lesbian it's not a secret anymore but the things that people said it really has done damage and school was the roots of it.

"Girls were the worst, I only got bullied by girls which is you know never really got I mean there was a few boys here and

there who jumped on the bandwagon but it was mainly girls.

"I was only 11 or 12 I didn't understand what I had not done anything to these people, nothing at all, so I didn't really understand what what was that what their problem was.

"I didn't understand what I had done and then it also made me question is there something wrong with me is it bad to be a lesbian is it bad to be gay is it bad to be different so then I automatically

hate myself."

Although Maddie's story is shocking unfortunately it is not uncommon.

Figures by Stonewall show that Half of LGBT pupils hear homophobic slurs 'frequently' or 'often' at school.

Oliver Murphy, a University student said: "I've experienced a lot of homophobic abuse on the streets in London also my hometown near Cambridge.

"Not so much in school because I didn't

come out until I was about 20 which was a difficult journey in itself, but what I can say I have experienced a lot of homophobic abuse on the streets in London and also my hometown near Cambridge.

"What really is interesting is the demographic of the abuser tends to be young people and in one instance it was a group of secondary school age children, no older than 16 and me partner were just walking my dog and we came

across this group of four children and they could obviously see that we were partners and the abuse that emanated from them was just disgusting.

"You f\*\*\*\*\* all of the kind of homophobic terminology under the sun really that they just threw it us and we did nothing to provoke it we were just there walking.

"We weren't being imposing to them or posing any danger to them or threat to them so it was just it was really out of the blue

and that homophobic terminology then became slurs and then started to turn into direct threats of violence towards us.

"They threatened to murder our family, so it was really was horrific experience and then we had another incident less than a month afterwards where we have a school that backs onto local playing fields where we walk a lot.

"These two I would say probably year nine they were even young-

er than the group beforehand they started throwing homophobic slurs.

"I think it made me question one; where they get it from where do they learn these homophobic traits and two; it really shows that something seriously wrong with society and that we are still producing individuals who learn to be homophobic for when they grow up.

"In the case of these children, I feel is that you aren't born with a preconceived view



GENERATIONAL SHIFT: Homophobic bullying has become increasingly unacceptable.



REPRESENTATION: The symbol of the LGBTQ+ community.

it's learnt from somewhere you learn to hate people hate isn't preordained at birth.

"I think it's a combination of things definitely their family or children and most of their behaviours from the parents they are raised by their parents they've obviously come into contact with some sort of homophobic attitude that's

not to say that my parents are actively out hunting and stalking the streets for gay people.

"You often find that the every day jokingly used phrases of you know if I'd be q\*\*\*\* or f\*\* can actually, when a child uses that and actually uses it but they haven't realise the consequences that that word has on an

individual who may be struggling with their sexuality or has been subjected to so much homophobic abuse that that word is almost a trigger point. "The internet can also be a real propagator for anti LGBTQ+ attitudes.

"They have almost unlimited access to the internet which has a range of horrific

content against the gay community."

Chris Lynch, a Secondary school teacher and member of the charity LGBT Humanists said: "I've certainly experienced myself what I think people would describe as internalised homophobia.

"Growing up realising that, well when I was growing up as a teenager there was no such thing as same-sex marriage so all of those things my straight friends and siblings having not as it were earned any difference from me could just assume they were entitled to That life was going to be more challenging more difficult and make more difficult by the attitudes and opinions of others.

"It's really really hard for young person to realise especially when it's tied to who you love, how are you express your self as an emotional and sexual Being these are things that you can't really compartmentalise.

"They are things that if repressed will only come out in even more unhealthy ways.

"I think it's no coincidence that we've got generations now that have experienced very promiscuous and very violent sex lives certainly not all but that is an ongoing epidemic.

"There are epidemics in gay male communities around drug abuse, alcohol dependence all of which are happening at disproportionately higher rates of the population.

"I think that a lot of that is tied to those early formative tra-

umatic experiences As someone who was at school 15 years ago.

"I remember certainly that there was no visibility of gay people in lessons it wasn't talked about I don't remember any social health education that even acknowledged since attraction.

"I remember there being so like almost tokenistic comments from staff that you shouldn't single out, bully people or vilify them for their sexuality but increasingly although in different schools its very different from others.

"Increasingly there is a greater realisation that the way schools were kind of quiet or indeed enabling homophobia was wrong and there needs to be ever greater attempts to address that.

"Having worked in three schools you do see posters, for example Stonewall posters some people are gay get over it you see increasingly the prominence of pride societies in schools which even 15 years ago was pretty much unheard of.

"I think as well you see the younger generation for who that very idea of a very fixed gender binary and also a very fixed sense of children grow up and express their selves sexually is slowly starting to dissipate, at least in some cases and all of that means that all the homophobic bullying certainly hasn't gone away but there certainly is a great success of resources in schools and public Challenge it.

"One thing that would stand out would be the fact that is that

although we now have statutory relationships and sex education that does include for example homosexuality.

"There is still apart from in Wales there is still the parental rights to withdraw children from all aspects of the relationships education provision

"I think that it's something that really does allow for homophobia from parents and from communities where they almost feel empowered to remove children from the good work that schools can do and do around challenging homophobia.

"I think also Although it's very tricky there should be as far as possible be cultures starting from the very senior leadership that mean if you are LGBT plus do you feel empowered to come out.

"That can be with the appearance of things like rainbow lanyards, that can be the way students in whole school context are addressed where it's not assumed that for example a boy is going to grow up and be a father and a girl is going to grow up to be mothers and marry men.

"So both in terms of language and broader culture there is definitely a lot of work that has been done really well but there is definitely a lot more to do in terms of empowering teachers to feel confident to say that being gay is okay.

"That the law says that being gay is okay and that the Department For Education is okay with that message in schools.

"I think there is a squeamishness some-

times especially when working with religious communities but the teachers don't really feel equipped to make that message heard and so more training around that and more messaging from the top down about that is really powerful."

"Both from my experience working in the LGBT plus charity sector and as six years as a classroom teacher it's very evident that students will come to school with social expectations already ingrained in them Of what normative masculinity and straight masculinity is meant to look like."

"Divergence from that is at best unfamiliar and unusual in both cases it's to be mocked is to be bullied it's something that is unacceptable.

"I think also that And that's also just on male homosexuality. "I'm sure the same happens in parallel cases with women to it's also the case that when we are teaching young people very rarely unless the teacher themselves is a LGBT plus well there be visible gayness queerness in the classroom.

"Unless the teacher explicitly centres an for example a maths problem for example Adam and Eve are getting married and whether they mention for example In passing And if it's a female partner she...

"Unless those still very very rare but very very important movies of inclusion happen then students assume that when they walk into a classroom they are walking into het-

eronormative straight classroom.

"I am reminded of Matthew Todd's book on this straitjacket where he said something like oh children grow up in a society that's homophobic and queer kids growing up don't have magical earmuffs they are somehow fortunately shielded from this all of that is ingrained in them Just as it would be in any other young people.

"The children having

Been educated in a particular social context where we have these stereotypes in and I think to then question the origin of those stereotypes clearly we are in a very young point in history of our society and even being vaguely affirming of gay people

For example and so if the culture we are living in Is one generations for hundreds of years you have you have just absorbed.

"These representa-

tions of gay men as camp or as a feminiate or on the other hand as kind of promiscuous or tied to poor sexual etiquette or risky sex practices or in the case of lesbian women just invisible well there is then a whole load of assumption is going against the existence of just normal LBGT+ people.

"I think you have these from cultural representations in the media context."



VERBALLY ABUSED: Olly and his partner were walking their dog.



EXPERIENCED: Chris Lynch has a range of expertise in this field.

# A third of women know a victim of drink spiking figures show

By Michael Phillips

A third of women have either been spiked themselves or know someone who has, according to figures released by YouGov.

Some two in five (40%) of those aged between 18 and 24 know someone who has been spiked, including themselves, the highest of any age group.

However, it is those aged between 24 and 49 who are the most likely to say they personally have been

spiked (14%).

Spiking usually refers to when drugs or alcohol are mixed into someone's drink without their knowledge or consent with the intent to incapacitate them or make them more vulnerable.

However, there have also been some reports of people being injected by needle in packed bars and nightclubs.

Nikki Fairbrass, who had her drink spiked on a night-out with friends said: "I know many people including

myself who have had their drink spiked, so these figures do not shock me one bit.

"It's rife and something serious needs to be done to stop this.

"There is limited help available from night-time businesses.

"It's scary as you are unaware of what's happening, and you are putting yourself and your safety in danger.

"It's definitely made me think twice about going out."

Tia Kidd, a university student who reg-

ularly goes on nights out said: "I know quite a lot of people that have been spiked while they've been going out and the more you read about it on the news the scarier it is.

"It happens and can happen to anyone and there's things you can do to stop it like using your hand to cover your drink but ultimately you don't want to be covering your drink the whole night, otherwise you won't enjoy yourself.

"My friend got

spiked and there was no motivation for it.

"Luckily, she was with friends, so she was safe, we got her help and called an ambulance but there was no possible reason to spike her other than to humiliate her.

"It's hard to understand why people do it but my advice would be make sure you're with people you can trust and make sure they get home safely.

"The thought of

someone injecting you while you are on a night out is so scary as there is literally nothing you can do to stop it."

The YouGov data shows that only 42% of women would be confident they would taken seriously by the police and 41% wouldn't.

Men feel broadly the same: 43% are confident they would be taken seriously by police, while 38% are not.

Approaching half of both women (49%)

and men (46%) are either not very or not at all confident a venue would take them seriously should they complain about being spiked there.

Additionally, only 27% of women and 30% of men think a venue would take them seriously if there were spiked.

A spokesman from Drinkaware, a charity which aims to reduce alcohol-related harm said: "Drink spiking is a heinous act and a serious crime.

"Although most reported victims of drink spiking are women, men are targeted too.

If your drink has been spiked it's unlikely that it will look, smell, or taste any different but the consequences can be very serious.

"Drinks can be spiked with more alcohol or with drugs, including date-rape drugs, with most taking effect within 15 to 30 minutes and symptoms usually lasting for several hours.

"Depending on what your drink has been spiked with, your symptoms could include lowered inhibitions, loss of balance, visual problems, confusion, nausea and vomiting or even unconsciousness.

"Symptoms will depend on many factors including the substance or mix of substances used, the dose, your size and weight, and how much alcohol you have consumed."

"If you or somebody you know start to feel

strange or more drunk than expected, or you suspect that your drink has been spiked, get help straight away and seek medical assistance if the condition worsens.

"Spiking a drink with alcohol or drugs is illegal and incidents must also be reported to the police."

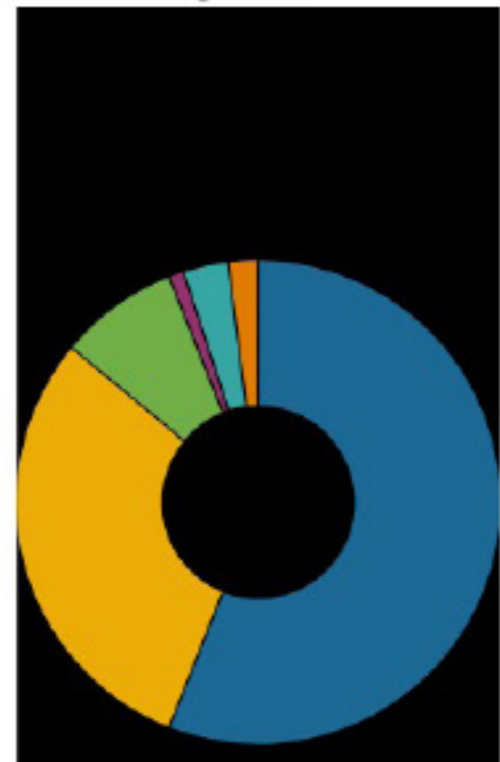
To help avoid your drink being spiked, don't a drink from someone you don't know or trust, and never leave your drink unattended."

■ most confident ■ fairly confident ■ don't know ■ not very confident ■ not confident at all ■ prefer not to say

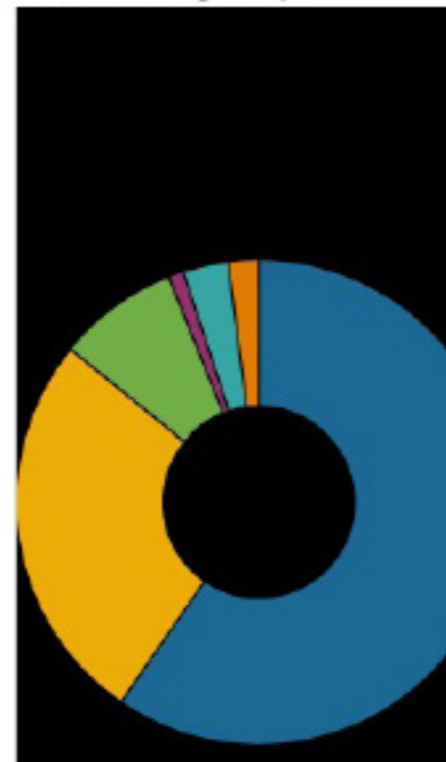
women trusting police



women trusting friends



women trusting family



WOMEN'S CONFIDENCE: Figures show that more than half of women trust friends and family.



A RARE SIGHT: A image of an uncovered drink in a club is becoming increasingly rare.

# How cheating can affect a relationship

By Amelia Oprean

Cheating is the act of engaging in a relationship whilst in a different one, at the same time, but what are its effects?

In 2018, research done by Secure Forensics found that 10% of affairs start online, and 40% of those turn into real life affairs.

John Junior, an editor for film and TV with Channel 4 and the BBC, was comfortable talking about his experience of being cheated on by his girlfriend.

He said: "I couldn't leave her because I didn't want to come across as too strong."

"It doesn't matter if they tell you they're going to change, a million times, you'll still stick by them."

He was in a relationship with someone for eight years, and from the very start, she had been engaging in cheating.

Blaming it on her drinking problems, she cheated on John for the duration of their relationship, and once he'd decided enough was enough, he left.

He said: "It hurt a lot. It was massive emotional damage."

"I think part of the reason was because it's part of the thrill. You can't have the best of both worlds – you either stay single, or have a partner."

According to Bolde, cheating can lead

## Cheating can lead to...

The demise of a relationship

Loss of trust and resentment

Tense relationships with family and friends

Feelings of guilt in the relationship

**WHAT CAN CHEATING LEAD TO:** Cheating doesn't come with a lot of positive results - information here taken from Bolde.

to a myriad of things.

Dr Sheri Jacobson, founder of Harley Therapy, a counselling service based in London, said: "I've been cheated on, and most of my clients I see have some experience of infidelity."

"It's very commonplace."

Dr Jacobson has been in the counselling and therapy industry for 20 years, and said that her fulfilment didn't ever come from investment banking and consultancy.

She added: "I couldn't envisage spending a lifetime in those areas."

"When I took a module on intercultural psychiatry and therapy, and the treatment of mental health issues, that really spoke to me."

Harley Therapy was

started in 2008, and has a wide range of therapists, creating change through in-person therapy, phone therapy, and online counselling.

Many people use the Harley service, and Dr Jacobson said this was exacerbated during the pandemic.

She added: "I think that often, in context, cheating is about dissatisfaction. Needs are not being met and that causes someone to try and get those needs fulfilled."

"It can be for attention or a sense of conquest or achievement, there are a whole variety of reasons as to why someone would cheat."

However cheating, according to Dr Jacobson, isn't always the reason

for breakdown in relationships.

She said: "It can reunite people, because they often come to therapy after a rupture like cheating and they managed to get back on track with renewed honesty."

When asked if cheating is psychological, she disagreed.

She added: "In my professional opinion, often, the single big-

gest cause of relationship breakdown is because it is lacking in some way.

"So, we turn to someone else because the relationship is lacking, and cheating is a by-product of that."

Dr Jacobson's message to those who have been cheated on, was: "As hurtful as cheating can be to the person affected, it can often shine a spotlight to both parties, and to what they can improve for the future."

"Although cheating can bring a lot of hurt, and pain, there is growth and learning to be had from it."

"It's the hardships that shape us the most"

John added: "You feel insecure, you feel like there is something wrong with you, but it's not you, it's them."

If you'd like to get in contact with Harley Therapy, their phone number is 020 3613 4684.



**IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT:** This is something that's very important to remember, says John

# Rise of UK Afghan asylum seekers and refugees

By Rahima Miah

There was a rise of Afghanistan asylum seekers and refugees in the UK between 2020 and 2021.

Immigration statistics collected by the Home Office show that Afghanistan asylum seeker applications lodged in the UK grew from 1,417 in September 2020 to 1,974 in September 2021, an increase of 39%.

The main cause of this is the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021 that led to more than 10,000 people being evacuated from the country.

Dr Nooralhaq Nasimi is the director of Hounslow grassroots charity Afghanistan & Central Asian

Association (ACAA), which supports Afghan and Central Asian asylum seekers and refugees, and was a refugee himself when he arrived in the UK in 1999.

He said: "I came to the UK on the back of a lorry in a refrigerated container with my small children. We were lucky we survived."

"After the fall of Afghanistan at the hand of the Taliban when the Taliban took power and seized the country, thousands of people tried to get to the airport in Kabul to get into planes and many lost their lives."

"The British embassy as well as some other embassies in Kabul moved their embassies to the air-

port where they tried to get some activists out of the country but after just ten days there was a serious explosion and the international community stopped evacuating people so that's why 15,000 people were evacuated from Afghanistan."

The data by the Home Office shows there was also a significant growth of Afghanistan asylum seeker applications in the UK between 2014 and 2016.

During these two years there was more than 1,000 applications and the number increased by 48.9% so it almost doubled.

Dr Nasimi said that the number increased so much because the inter-



**DR NOORALHAQ NASIMI:** Afghan refugee turned Afghan refugee charity director. Credit: ACAA

national community and the United States leadership announced the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan in 2014 then terrorist activities and the activities of the Taliban in different provinces, districts and regions increased, causing people to leave Afghanistan.

Dr Nasimi estimates that the amount of newly arrived Afghans in London is 5,000 and they are in different parts of London including central London, west London and Kensington.

According to him, west London alone hosts over 100,000 people from Afghanistan.

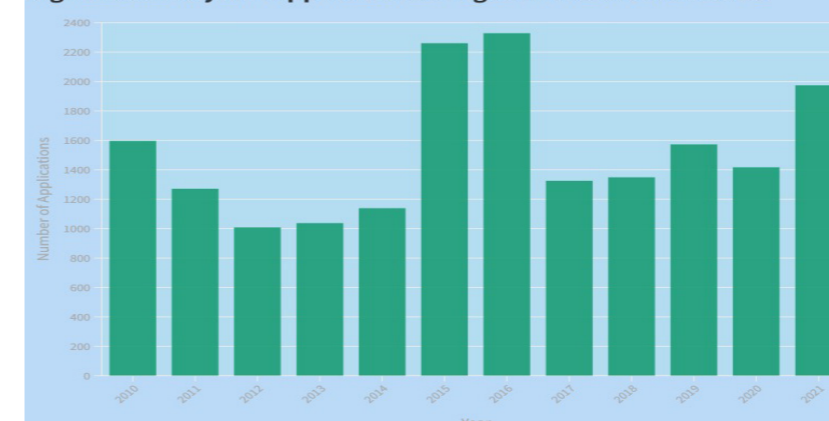
The main challenges Afghans face when they arrive in the UK is the differ-

ent language, lack of understanding of the culture, how to navigate and access opportunities and how to access other available services.

The ACAA helps them by offering English language classes, providing mentoring support to individuals who suffer from mental health issues because of conflict back in their home countries and giving free legal advice to women looking for help with domestic violence and divorce.

One of the charity's projects that has become popular is the women's empowerment project that supports women who were suppressed in their home countries especially Afghanistan women.

**Afghanistan Asylum Applications Lodged in the UK 2010-2021**



**STATISTICS:** Number of asylum seeker applications lodged in the UK by people from Afghanistan in 2010-2021. Source: Home Office

# London student told that her niqab is a 'security threat' and a 'safeguarding issue'

By Amelia Oprean

A school in London has banned the wearing of religious clothing on their premises.

In April, King Solomon Academy enforced a ban on their sixth-form students, disallowing them from wearing religious clothing, particularly the niqab.

Yasmin Ahad is a Year 13 student at this school who has been affected by this ban. She said: "I wasn't expecting this to happen, even my Head of sixth-form seemed genuinely interested."

"The next day, out of nowhere, he took me out of my lesson - I thought he was going to tell me off for wearing the wrong shoes."

"He told me that they (the school) don't accept the niqab, and to take it off."

Yasmin has been practicing wearing the niqab since around March, but endeavours to wear it in the future.

She recalls being surprised when the staff told her to take it off, telling the only Muslim teacher in the school when she went back to class, who agreed with her, saying that it wasn't right for them to be forcing her to remove it.

A student in Year 12 at the school, who wishes to be kept anonymous, felt strongly about the school's ban.

Yasmin recalls that this student said: "I'm

not going to take it (the niqab) off."

"I'm committed to it fully, so I'm not taking it off."

The niqab is a veil for the face that leaves the area around the eyes clear.

It may also be worn with a separate eye veil and is worn with an accompanying headscarf.

Headscarves, and their many variations such as the hijab, and the niqab, are all ways in which Muslim women adhere to the advice of the Qur'an.

The Qur'an, which is the holy text of Islam, advises men and women to dress modestly.

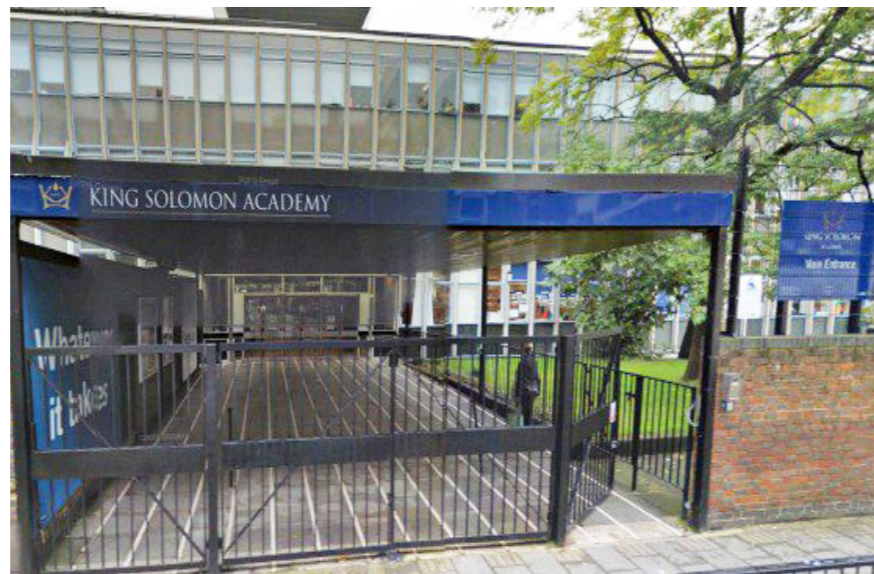
For some women, that description has been interpreted to cover all areas of the body, and that is why there are many different variations of head and face coverings.

When Yasmin went into school the following Monday, a massive amount of support from the student body was given to her.

She mentions that everyone was comforting both her and the Year 12 student, and had come in support of them, and were standing up against this ban.

She said: "Everyone was really frustrated and angry on our behalf."

"My Head of sixth-form, the vice-principal and the student body held a meeting



**KING SOLOMON ACADEMY:** The multi-stage school is located in the heart of London, Marleybone, and serves children of all ages - from ages of nursery, up until when the students are ready to continue further.

about the situation, and I said that I wanted to be present, because the meeting is about me.

"However, my Head of sixth-form told me that until I took the niqab off, you're not welcome into lessons, I am not allowed into this meeting, and I cannot be heard."

When Yasmin asked why, her Head of sixth-form told her that she is a 'security threat, a safeguarding issue, and a danger to the younger children at the school.'

King Solomon Academy is a multi-educational school, providing education from Nursery, up until Sixth Form, when the students leave for their future endeavours.

The school was established in 2007 and is currently headed by



**THE HEADTEACHER:** Max Haimendorf was the youngest headteacher in the country in 2010

Max Haimendorf.

Yasmin says when she comes into school for her timetabled day, the teachers form a line and escort her to a room on the other side of the building, picking her up from reception and taking her there.

No one was allowed to see her.

Yasmin claims that the school said that let her walk around out of lessons, and that it was her choice to leave them, when she strongly persists that the reason why she was out of those lessons in the first place, was because of them strongly being against the wearing of the niqab.

She also says that she offered them many solutions to their issues - one such issue being ID.

Yasmin said: "I told them that I was more than happy, at any point of the day, and with a female teacher present, to take off my covering so they could ID me."

"I wear my ID card around my neck."

"I gave them so many solutions, and they just didn't want to hear me."

The situation has also caused a lot of issues for Yasmin's home life, and her own physical and mental well-being.

She tells SWL that she doesn't feel like going in to school

anymore because she knows that her voice won't be heard.

She also said that some girls apart of the student body were meant to go into a meeting to discuss what was happening, but they didn't want to, because they felt drained and knew that they weren't going to be listened to either.

She said: "Tuesday (22/03) is when I posted the TikTok about it, because I wasn't being heard."

"Because of me going into isolation, I couldn't speak to my year group about it, and I couldn't be present in the meeting either, there was no way of me being heard."

"I felt really hurt, degraded, and embarrassed."

"Even the teachers were moving cautiously around me, like I was a danger."

The TikTok, which was posted in March when Yasmin was kept in isolation, now has garnered a staggering 382.2k views, and 63.9k likes, with many comments showing their sympathy, anger and support.

Her account was then removed, and she wasn't able to post anything from that account.

At the current time, she has her account back.

Zainab Chaudhry is someone who, as a Muslim, also feels

affected by this issue.

She said: "People should feel like they have the right to wear it if they want to."

"I just feel like the fear towards this is irrational. It's based on your perceptions, and people's perceptions of Muslims."

"If you're scared that someone who wears a niqab is going to do something weird or dodgy, most likely you have an irrational fear of Muslims."

She recalls that, at a young age, hearing certain phrases or names didn't really phase her.

Names such as Osama Bin Laden didn't make her react, because for example, her cousin is called Osama.

But, when she got older and started to learn more about peo-

ple's views and similar issues, that's when it clicked for her.

She said: "This is not what my religion is about."

"All the stuff that happens - terrorism and similar - isn't a part of our religion."

"I found myself having to explain myself all the time to people, and explain to them how, if one person does something, it's not like the rest of us feel the same."

"I know the truth in my heart, and it doesn't matter what anyone else thinks."

Noor, who goes by @celestialmoonmoth on TikTok, has a following of 127.7k followers on the platform.

They shared their thoughts on how social media, media and education in general contributes to islamophobia.

phobia.

They said: "Every story needs a villain, and a lot of media has very subtle nationalist messages - so we make good faceless enemies."

"It's easy to make an enemy out of a group of people you're not interested in understanding or learning about."

Noor is a revert to Islam and explained why they wanted to make this decision.

They said: "I was first deeply drawn to the beautiful recitations of the Qur'an, and then by the kindness of The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)."

However, they also said that making this decision had a knock-on effect to how family and friends viewed them.

They said: "A lot of my family and friends



**THE CLOTHING:** Women can choose from a variety of styles to cover up and wear their hijab and niqab, among other variations, like the burqa.

absolutely took a step back from me.

“Many of them thought I was giving up my rights as a person, and others were afraid that I was going to attempt to tell them how to live or try to convert them as well.”

“Of course, I also had to deal with small comments along the lines of ‘Well, as long as you don’t become too radical and turn into a terrorist.’”

Both Zainab and Noor share similar thoughts on how education can contribute to islamophobia.

Zainab said: “I remember reading things in R.E. and thinking ‘Hold on, that’s not right.’”

“In secondary especially, all the Muslims in my class would correct our teacher and let them know that what we were being taught isn’t right.”

“But the teacher would respond, and say that ‘it’s what is in the syllabus.’”

“You literally got your information off a website, to learn about Islam.”

“At least get your work checked and

looked at by someone who is a Muslim.

Noor shares a similar opinion.

They also said: “Muslim women are often seen as exotic pets by islamophobes and Muslim men are seen as barbaric and violent creatures incapable of higher reasoning.”

“This is ironic, because the first ever college was actually founded by a Muslim woman.”

They also told SWL of something they went through when they travelled to their hometown.

They said: “I had several white men come up to me and imitate a ‘middle eastern’ accent.”

“They asked me if I wanted to do several awful things with them, and then made comments about what they thought my body looked like under my niqab and abaya. They started tugging on it and trying to pull it down.”

“The most frightening thing was that there were several white women who simply watched on the

sidelines.

“It was absolutely burned into my memory.”

According to Gallup, 52% of Americans and 48% of Canadians say the West does not respect Muslim societies. Smaller percentages of Italian, French, German and British respondents agree.

Noor shared their realisations on how people treat Muslims.

They said: “The act of islamophobia does not just harm those who are Muslims.”

“There are many people from western Asia and south-east Asia and other areas who are affected by it as well because they simply ‘look’ Muslim.”

“Islamophobia is deeply rooted in racism.”

“For many islamophobes it’s a race, not a religion.”

Previous students have come forward since the situation has happened at King Solomon Academy, telling Yasmin about their experiences.

Yasmin said: “They want everyone to be the same.”

“They clearly don’t respect other religions



**NOOR ON TIKTOK:** They always educate and inspire their large following on social media

because this isn’t the first time this has happened - this is just another example.”

One incident at the school involved trying to get the boys and girls to pray in a room together, which, islamically, can’t happen.

They claimed that the boys and girls praying separately causes ‘too much segregation’.

Google Reviews on the search aren’t too positive towards the school either.

One user called Remo Time said: “Honestly, I am angry that this school has not been punished or that the staff have not been changed.”

Another user, called Anisah, said: “I have heard terrible reports on how the staff at this school, including the headteacher, treats minorities.”

Yasmin said: “It doesn’t cause harm to the school, but they still want to enforce these rules.”

King Solomon

Academy say that they are reviewing the dress code as a result of the situation.

Max Haimendorf talked to SWL in a statement about their dress code policy.

He said: “We pride ourselves on welcoming and nurturing students of all faiths and none, and celebrating diversity is a fundamental part of who and what we are.”

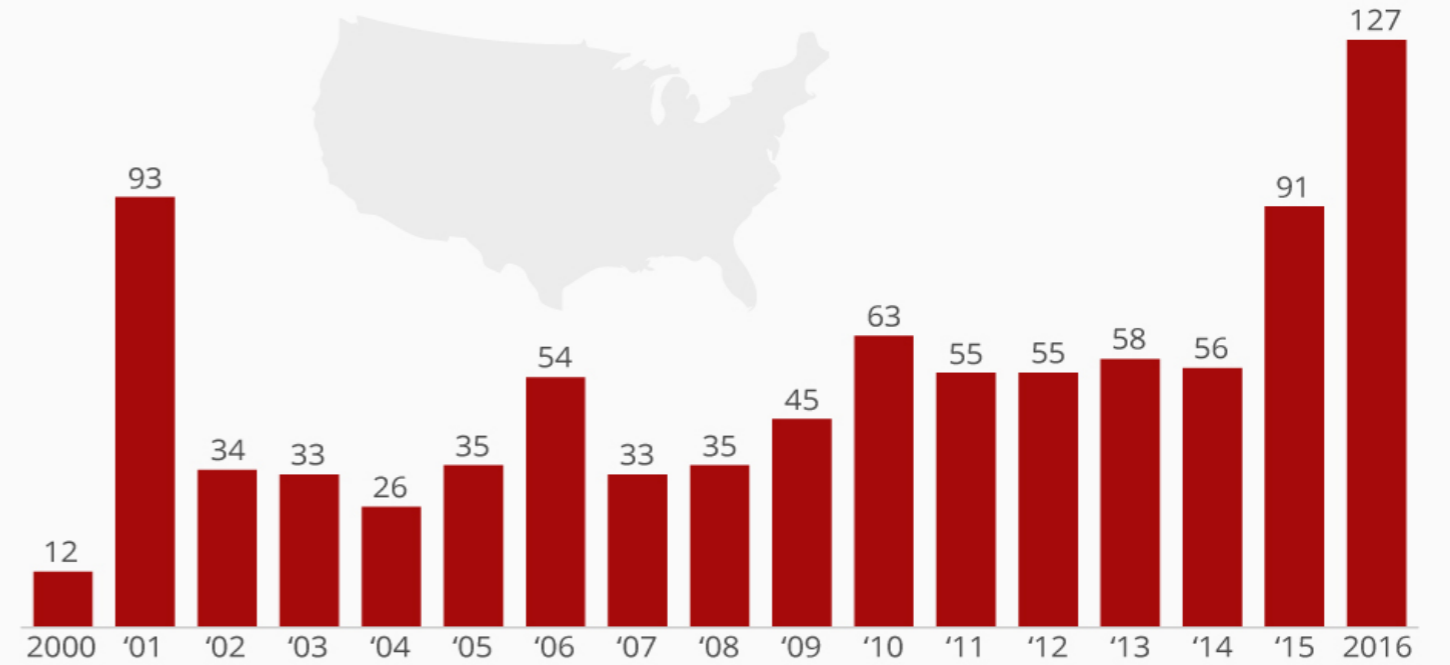
“This is a sensitive issue and, like all schools, we try to strike the right balance in adherence to religion.”

“While this review is undertaken, we have made temporary exceptions to our current face covering rule.”

According to the current school dress code, as seen by SWL, students are able to submit requests to wear particular items of clothing for cultural reasons to their Head of Year, who will check to see if they ‘match sixth-form expectations.’

## Anti-Muslim Assaults In The U.S. Are Increasing

Number of anti-Muslim assaults in the U.S. reported to the FBI



@StatistaCharts Source: FBI/Pew Research Center



**ANTI-MUSLIM ASSAULTS:** Since the early 2000’s, assaults against those who are Muslim are increasing. At the time of 9/11, this was at its highest, going up and down in intervals, and reaching a new high in 2016. Research credit to Statista and PRC.

**THE PRIME MINISTER:** Boris Johnson and Rishi Sunak, Chancellor of the Exchequer visited KSA in April of 2021, taking a look at how it has supported students after and during the pandemic, meeting with the headteacher after.



**IN THE CLASSROOM:** How do our religion lessons help teach us about other religions and the way we should respect them?



# The five best Portuguese restaurants in south west London

By: Mariana Viveiros

Looking for a place to eat? Here are the five best Portuguese restaurants that you can visit in South West London.

**A Toca – Vauxhall**  
 A Toca is a Portuguese restaurant in Vauxhall. It has a variety of exceptional dishes prepared by a Portuguese chef, such as Grilled sirloin steak “Mirandesa Style”, Cod with cream, and a mix of sun-dried slated cod oven baked with onions, sliced boiled egg, and potatoes. A Toca was launched in the '80s by owners of the restaurant, Fernando Marques and Gabriel Jesus. It shows the richness of Portuguese Cuisine and wines, and serves the Portuguese community already established in London. Location: 343 Wandsworth Road, London SW8 2JH



MEATY: All sortes of meat with rice and chips, from the restaurant A Toca

**O Cantinho de Portugal – Stockwell**  
 Only the freshest and most authentic Portuguese Cuisine is served at the O Cantinho de Portugal, and its 20 years' experience shows in the quality and taste of the food. The restaurant is family-run and established within the Portuguese community, and its owners take pride and care in every customer's experience. Some of their best dishes are grilled bass, fresh grilled squid and traditional Portuguese steak, laid in a bed of fried potatoes, Portuguese pork, clams with pickles, olives, and coriander. Location: 137 Stockwell Road, London SW9 9TN



TASTY TARTS: Pastel de Nata, Portuguese custard tarts

**Costa do Estoril – Battersea**  
 This is a traditional Portuguese restaurant in the heart of the Lavender Hill, Battersea, open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. It offers an exciting menu of Seafood, Fish, Steaks and grills which include pork belly, codfish in the oven, mixed seafood rice, and delicious cream custards tarts. It also includes a bar and coffee shop as well as the restaurant itself. Location: 117 Lavender Hill, London SW11 5QL



FISHY: Prawns like those you could find at Costa do Estoril. Credit: Boo Lee via Flickr



YUMMY: Some traditional Portuguese food. Credit Su-May via Flickr

**Caravela Restaurant – Battersea**  
 Caravela is all about the experience of its wide collection of foods and enticing meals that satisfy the palate. With ties to Portugal traced back through the family, Caravela Restaurant has matched exquisite Portuguese wines with all the traditions of local Portuguese food. The menu consists of a variety of tapas and other typical dishes, such as salted cod cooked in various ways, grilled octopus, fresh fish, steaks, and loads more. Location: 145-149 Battersea High Street, London SW11 3JS



FRIED: Some fried fish with chips and salad. Credit Keith Williamson via Flickr

**Stella's Café and Restaurant – Twickenham**  
 Stella's Cafe is a family-run restaurant with family values firmly imprinted into everything served, with homemade recipes inspired by the region of Alentejo, Portugal. With a passion for food from a very young age, it was always a dream of Stella's to own a restaurant. This dream became a reality in 2016 when, along with her two sons, Stella's was launched.

The specialties are Grilled Cuttlefish, Salted Cod with Cream, and a Rack of Ribs.



STICKY: Grilled octopus. Credit Word Ridden via Flickr

# Summer hair and makeup trends for 2022

By Luran O'Toole

The new season is fast commencing, and we are here to help with some hair and makeup trends that are a must try for summer.

The change of season means you may want to change up your hair and makeup routines.

Summer is a time where people tend to prefer a fresher look and sheer bases that are light and dewy.

Clare Pinkney, a celebrity makeup artist said: "Gold eye-shadow is back again this year, a glimmer-

ing shade matched with a sultry bronze or black eyeliner.

"Viscart Petite Fours Eye Palette in Praline, offers four shimmering shades for a bronzed goddess look.

"Fluffy natural brows are current, gone are the perfectly drawn in brows!

"Natural is the word, hourglass Arch Brow Volumising Fibre Gel is an easy effortless way to create fluffy brows in seconds.

"Hair trends are seeing the return of the fishtail braid and



**HANNAH ON SET:** The makeup artist believes that people should not feel the need to stick to trends as it is more important to feel confident space buns, two fun styles to keep you cool in the Summer heat.

"Great for days when you don't want to wash your hair, use a dry shampoo to create texture and hold like Living Proof Perfect Hair Day or apply a texture paste before braiding such as EIMI Rugged Texture Matte Texturizing Paste."

According to the spring/summer beauty trend report by The Dots consumers embraced natural textures and colour in 2021.

Clare who studied art originally worked in Cosmetics Retail Management at Alders Department

Stores in Croydon but she decided to retrain at one of London's top makeup schools to become a freelance makeup artist.

In 2021 the British Beauty Council worked with the UK government to champion women in business particularly in the beauty sector and offer support after Covid.

Makeup artist Hannah Paul who mostly works in music admitted that Covid hugely affected her business, but it gave her the time to advance her training.

Hannah, who has toured with musician's PJ Harvey and Marina said: "I am loving the current

lip trends such as a glazed lip.

"With mask wearing having been reduced lips are making a comeback, the glazed lip combines my favourites of lipliner and lip gloss.

"Going for the bronzed look is all about layering, I wouldn't jump straight in with a dark foundation as it doesn't look real.

"Use a shade a little bit warmer than your skin tone and build warmth with a bronzer.

"Use a large brush and buff in circles, focusing on areas of the face that catch the sun; cheeks, nose and forehead and don't forget your ears and neck."



**HEADSHOT:** Makeup artist Clare Pinkney teachers makeup sessions for charities

# Presenter Jane Hill praises TV's 'It's a Sin'

By Michael Phillips

BBC Newsreader Jane Hill has described her excitement about the hit TV show 'It's A Sin' appearing on our screens and how hard it is for LGBTQ+ people to come out to their parents.

The 52-year-old, who regularly presents the BBC News at One, said she was thrilled that Russell T Davies had written Channel 4's 'It's A Sin'.

The newsreader, who is herself openly gay, also compared it to the craze of Line of Duty because she thought everyone would be watching it and talking about it Hill said: "There is no way I could not watch something that has so profoundly affected our community.

"There so little still on TV, I think, that reflects gay life, and we have to soak up every single thing we get because there's still not much of it and there's particularly not much of it for gay women.

"We are so poor-

ly represented on TV, even today, that I think anything that has a gay or bi element to it I will soak it up and most gay women I know would say the same thing because we don't have much that's tailored to us so we have to seek it out wherever we can find it.

"I'm trying to think about whether I had a single friend who didn't watch 'It's A Sin', actually.

"I also loved it because it made me quite wistful. I struggled so much to deal with my sexuality, although this was more about men not women, I watched it not for the first time thinking oh Jane this is how you should have been living your life in your 20s!"

"I thought the drama was good at showing the fear/hysteria at the time." She recalled a conversation with a younger friend who told her she didn't realise the misconceptions which featured in the program about people thinking that



**REGRETS:** The BBC's Jane Hill wishes she'd come out earlier.

you could catch the HIV virus through touching which was later found to be untrue.

We spoke about the moment when in the drama Ritchie's mum meets his best friend Jill and tells her that he has died despite both hers and his wishes to see him before he died.

Part of the reason for this was because she could not accept the identity of her son.

Hill said: "It was a real heart in the mouth moment.

"I thought that was the ultimate cruelty. "There are still thousands of young gay men and women who are ostracised by their families today. Coming out today is not necessarily easy just because it is 2021.

"It's still not always fine. I know gay people coming out today and their parents really struggle with it, really really struggle with it and even if they come round in the end there is no way they go oh yay you're gay its fine.

"It's not a ten-minute conversation. It's still a massive problem today sometimes for cultural reasons sometimes for religious reasons.

"I know because I do a lot of charity events and I go to a lot of LGBTQ+ events and I still to this day have people in their early 20s coming up to me telling me their woes because they've just come out to their family and their family has been very hostile about coming to terms with it all. and dealing with it."

# The Roman Empire

By Logan Forbes

When Russian President Vladimir Putin made the decision to launch a full-scale invasion on Ukraine, the consequences to the sporting world were significant.

In response to the Putin regime, numerous sporting events that were originally planned to take place in Russia have either been postponed or moved elsewhere as a show of solidarity to Ukraine.

However, the most striking ramification to the world of sport from Putin's declaration of war on Ukraine, was on Chelsea owner, Roman Abramovich, whom he is accused of having close ties to. Abramovich, a



**ROMAN ABRAMOVICH:** Abramovich looking glum as the sale of his most prized asset is soon to become inevitable. Credit: Wikipedia Commons

billionaire Russian oligarch, bought Chelsea Football Club from Ken Bates back in 2003 for £140 million.

During his tenure at the club, approaching 19 years, it has been hugely successful. Under Abramovich's

ownership, Chelsea have won every trophy possible there is to win at club level. The 21 trophies at-



**VLADIMIR PUTIN:** Putin's decision to invade Ukraine has hit the sporting world heavily. Credit: Wikipedia Commons

tained during his time included five Premier League titles, five FA Cups, three League

Cups, two Champions Leagues, two Europa Leagues, two Community Shields, a UEFA Super Cup and most recently, the trophy that was the only one missing from Chelsea's trophy cabinet, the FIFA Club World Cup.

In his first season as Chelsea owner, Abramovich pumped more than £150 million into player transfers which culminated in significant improvement on the pitch.

Chelsea finished second in the league behind Arsenal's invincible side and in the same season reached the Champions League semi-finals.

That immediate statement of intent by Abramovich has been evident throughout his period as owner.

Over £2 billion was spent on transfers



**CHAMPIONS:** Chelsea lifting the FIFA Club World Cup after defeating Palmeiras 2-1. Credit: Wikipedia Commons



**SANCTIONS:** Abramovich has been heavily sanctioned. Credit: Wikipedia Commons

alone, demanding success at the highest level rather than using the club to make a profit, a characteristic supporters admired.

However, in spite of the success within the last 19 years and Abramovich departing as the most successful owner in modern English club history, Chelsea now find themselves with an unknown future.

Abramovich's assets being frozen by the UK government as well as significant sanctions being placed on Chelsea which include prohibiting the club from selling further match-day tickets or participating in the transfer market, meant that it was in the best interests of the Russian billionaire to put his most prized asset up for sale before the damage became irreparable.

Shortly after the news broke that Abramovich was selling the club, he released a statement saying: "I would like to address the speculation in media over the past few days in relation to my ownership of Chelsea FC.

"As I have stated before, I have always taken decisions with the club's best interest at heart.

"In the current situation, I have therefore taken the decision to sell the club, as I believe this is in the best interest of the club, the fans, the employees, as well as the club's sponsors and partners."

The rest of the statement acknowledges the ongoing crisis in Ukraine and revealed that Abramovich has set up a charitable foundation where all net proceeds from the

sale will be donated for the benefit of the victims of the war in Ukraine.

The Abramovich period at Chelsea has been widely debated throughout his stint as owner for good and bad, but there is no denying that the Russian influenced a big change in club ownership when he arrived in English football in 2003.

Football finance expert, Kieran Maguire, said: "The Abramovich era changed ownership models, bringing in the concept of trophy assets at high financial costs to owners."

On the topic of club ownership, the new owner of Chelsea will inherit the same issues Abramovich faced, in particular, with the plans around stadium expansion.

Opting to expand Stamford Bridge or relocating to another venue will prove expensive for prospective buyers who will have to factor that in mind when making their decision to purchase the club.

Stamford Bridge currently holds a capacity of 41,837 which is much lower than that of their London rivals West Ham, Tottenham and Arsenal, who all have bigger, modern stadiums that can hold in excess of 60,000 people.

Maguire said: "The main inherited issues will be in relation to the stadium and either moving to a new one or expanding Stamford Bridge, both of which are expensive."

Maguire further hinted at the Tracey Couch report, giving credence to Chelsea's finances in which it voices that many clubs



**STAMFORD BRIDGE:** Chelsea's home ground holds a capacity of 41, 837 which is significantly lower than their London Premier League rivals. Credit: Wikipedia Commons

are one owner or one owner financial catastrophe.

Raine Group, the merchant bank in control of the sale of Chelsea, have been in touch with three shortlisted bidders for the club which include American billionaire, Todd Boehly, British businessman, Sir Martin Broughton and part-owner of the Boston Celtics, Steve Pagliuca, but Todd Boehly's consortium is expected to be named as the preferred bidder.

Chelsea fans will be anticipating a quick, smooth sale of the club so that normality can resume as soon as possible.

Chelsea member,

Ewan, said: "The sanctions have obviously hit the club hard financially.

"Having reduced crowds as a result of ticket sales being suspended has perhaps affected the team's performance a little bit through the reduced atmosphere.

"For myself even as a member it is often very difficult to get tickets so there is no real change for me. Chelsea will always be my club and sanctions or no sanctions will not change that." Out of the nine Premier League fixtures Chelsea have played since the sanctions were implemented, they have a record of five victories, one draw and three defeats.



**TROPHIES:** Chelsea's bus parade after winning the UEFA Champions League in 2012 defeating Bayern Munich on 5-4 penalties. Credit: Wikipedia Commons

# Stats show Chelsea are a better team when Mason Mount plays

By Logan Forbes

Chelsea statistically perform better as a team when academy product Mason Mount is involved in the action.

According to data collected since the start of the 2020/21 season, Chelsea have won 62% of their games in all competitions when Mount is playing compared to 52% when he is not, a 10% difference in the win rate.

Craig, a Chelsea season ticket holder, feels that the team look a more fluid side

when Mount is playing and that he possesses the skills to become a future captain of the club.

He said: "Mount would always be in my starting 11 if he is fit."

"We seem to click better as a team when he is playing and his work-rate off the ball is fantastic. The energy and commitment he shows whenever he plays is what fans love."

"Coming up through the academy, he knows the club inside out and I think he has plenty of leadership qualities

to captain the team in future."

Additionally, Chelsea's points per game (PPG) and goals per game are better when Mount is selected. Chelsea average 2.05 PPG and 1.82 goals per game with the midfielder playing.

In comparison with when Mount is not selected, Chelsea average 1.92 PPG and 1.68 goals per game which shows Chelsea to be more of a threat with Mount in the side and pick up more points.

Individually, Mount



**IMPORTANCE:** Mount is key for Chelsea. Credit: Wikipedia Commons

has racked up 23 goals and 19 assists in 103 Premier League

appearances under two different coaches, Frank Lampard and

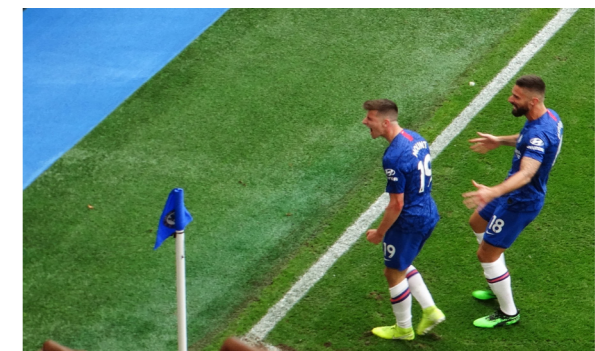
Thomas Tuchel. However, the data suggests he has contributed more to the attack under the

German.

During his stint playing under Lampard, Mount averaged 279.9 minutes per goal or assist and during his 80 games played, he scored 11 times including 10 assists.

At this stage in the season so far, Mount is averaging 174.4 minutes per goal or assist under Tuchel and is already sitting on seven goals and eight assists for the season.

Craig said: "Over the last year, he has arguably been our most consistent player. "With Mason you



**GOALS:** Mount is in a rich vein of form this season. Credit: Wikipedia Commons

always know what you are going to get.

"He is nowhere near his prime yet and if he keeps on putting in consistent performances like he has done this past year it's

going to be exciting to see what he can do in four or five years time when he will be hitting his peak."

The stats suggest that if Tuchel can nurture Mount and keep the

midfielder fit, Chelsea have a better opportunity of winning games and ultimately, lifting trophies.



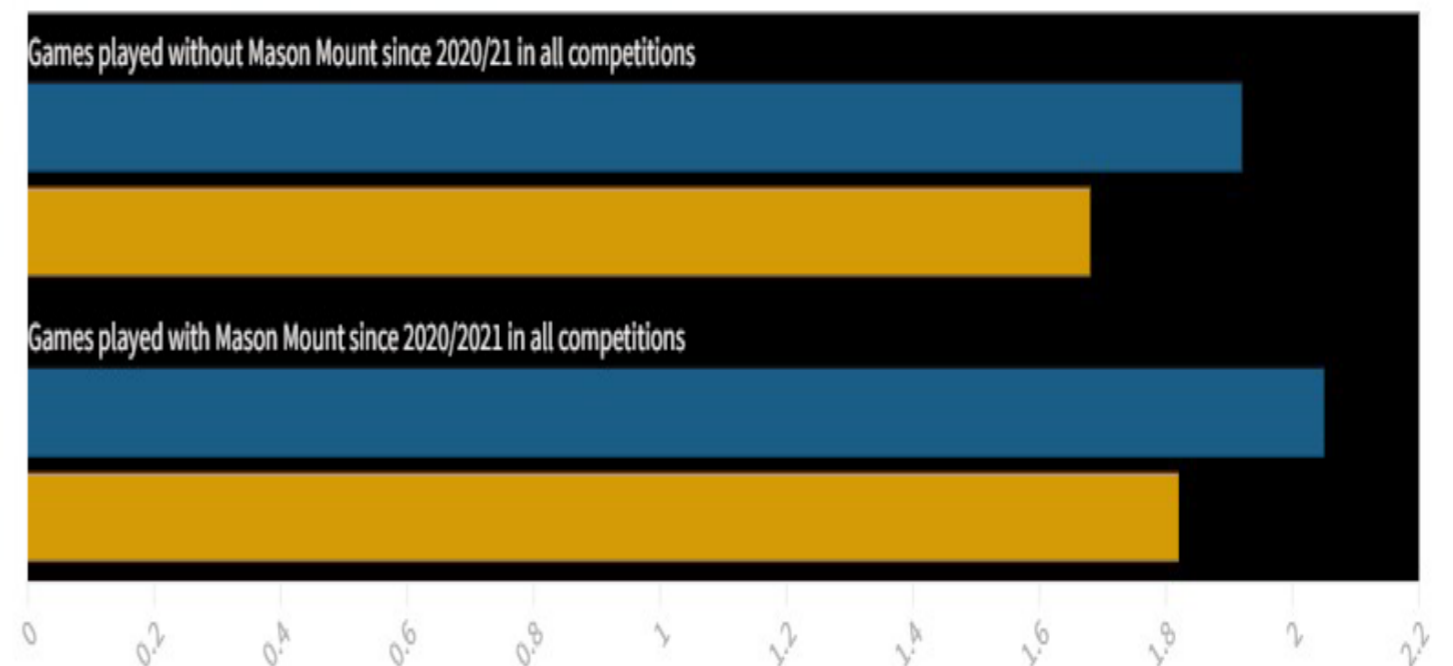
**ASSISTS:** Mount is on 19 assists this season. Credit: Wikipedia Commons

Minutes per goal or assist under Frank Lampard Minutes per goal or assist under Thomas Tuchel



LAMPARD VS TUCHEL: Mount's minutes per goal or assist are better under Tuchel (orange) compared to Lampard (green)

Points per game Goals per game



# Gymnastics sessions made free for kids



**SESSIONS:** Richmond Gymnastics are providing free taster sessions for children in primary school with disabilities.

Richmond Gymnastics offered free taster sessions last month for children in primary school with disabilities or additional needs, writes Logan Forbes.

The taster sessions allowed children to explore different themes within gymnastics including jumping, rolling and climbing.

As well as that, children were able to choose where they spent their time and what they would like to try with the



**RICHMOND GYM:** Sessions delivered to over 1,800 children support and guidance from Richmond Gymnastics' team of coaches.

Their marketing manager Katie Delpoit explained that gymnastics can offer a range of mental and

physical benefits.

She said: "Gymnastics is a great sport for both physical and social development.

"As well as strengthening growing bones, targeting all the muscle groups and improving flexibility, it can help reduce behavioural and emotional disorders.

"It also helps build self-confidence, determination and better communication skills."

Richmond Gymnastics deliver sessions to over 1,800

children and young people as well as providing disability and inclusion gymnastics that offers children the opportunity to get involved with sport activities.

Delpoit said: "It is vital children with different needs are included as it gives them the same opportunity as others to improve their health, have fun and develop social relationships and friendships.

"It is also important that they feel a sense of achievement

and independence.

"Gymnastics can provide children with all of those things, whilst promoting a healthy, active lifestyle."

The free taster sessions were held at the Richmond Gymnastics Association (RGA) Centre in Kew.

Delpoit said: "We hope it will encourage more children to get involved with sport and give them the opportunity to try new skills and make friends."



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## The fall of Abramovich's empire