

News

Homes at risk of rainfall flooding

MORE than 1,500 homes in Wickford are at risk of rainfall flooding, according to the latest data.

They are among a number of homes in the county whose residents Essex County Council is offering thousands of pounds in protective measures.

The Environment Agency data collated by Essex County Council comes after East Anglia saw its wettest February since records began, while England saw its eighth wettest winter.

Rainfall flooding, also called surface water or pluvial flooding, is caused by excessive rainfall which overwhelms drainage systems.

In Wickford 1,558 residential homes have a one per cent annual risk of flooding.

The data is based on flood risk today and does not factor in future climate change allowances, which are set to further increase the number of properties at risk.

The Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral report shows the number of Essex homes at risk of flooding could double by 2050.

UK Climate Projections anticipates that, by 2070, average winter rainfall could increase by 35 per cent in high emission scenarios across the UK. Rainfall intensity is also expected to increase by 25 per cent.

The data on properties currently at risk was collated by the county council as it offers the Property Flood Resilience (PFR) grant to eligible Essex homeowners.

Residents could bolster their homes with up to £8,000 in flood protection measures offered by the PFR grant, which is funded via the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC).

Protective measures include self-closing air bricks, reinforced flood doors, non-return valves, pumps and flood barriers.

The PFR grant is being delivered by Lakeside Flood Solutions for Essex residents who have or may experience flood water entering their homes.

Lakeside Flood Solutions has completed installations in 197 properties across Essex since 2018.

Residents can check their property's flood risk online to see if they are able to apply for the PFR grant.

They will be asked to contribute to their flood protection measures if they exceed the £8,000 afforded by the grant.

Essex County Council offers free and practical advice at <https://flood.essex.gov.uk/what-to-do-about-flooding>.

Primary school's head 'proud' of praise from Ofsted after inspection

A "HAPPY and welcoming" Brentwood school has been recognised by Ofsted to be offering children a "flying start" to their education.

Ofsted inspectors visited Larchwood Primary School, in Larchwood Gardens, Pilgrims Hatch, for two days in July.

Inspectors said pupils enjoy attending school, behave well, love the "extensive" extra-curricular activities and know how to maintain healthy lifestyles.

They stated the refined curriculum has identified the knowledge children need to learn and understand, expecting pupils to apply their knowledge to "increasingly complex learning", highlighting the high expectations the school is proud of.

They also found:

■ Pupils to be kind and respectful of each other.

■ Reading to be a "highlight of the school day".

■ Children making a "flying start" in Reception – "this is because staff are experts at identifying and supporting their needs".

■ "Interactions between children are of an incredibly high quality. They are kind and happily take turns such as when choosing their favourite snack from the fruit bowl".

■ High-quality enrichment opportunities.

"The school identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities with precision".

The report said: "Pupils enjoy attending this happy and welcoming school. Staff expect pupils to work hard and they do. They know why 'achievement and enjoyment' are important goals. The ethos of the school shines through as pupils model their six school values. This helps to prepare pupils well for their next stage of learning."



Pupils at Larchwood Primary School in Brentwood



Under the new Ofsted framework, the school has been graded as 'outstanding' in the areas of personal development and Early Years provision.

Quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, and leadership and management have been confirmed as 'good'.

Head teacher Steve Bowsher said:

"We are very proud of our school and our children and are glad that Ofsted has recognised all the wonderful things we do as a school.

"We are a highly effective school and this report has just confirmed that. Larchwood has been massively oversubscribed for years because families like what they see for themselves when they walk through our doors.

"The report was a nice way to start the summer, when we have a busy schedule of building work beginning to further improve the facilities we offer.

"We have been looking forward to September and another exciting year at Larchwood."

Appeal to parents over secondary education

PARENTS and carers of Year 6 pupils are being encouraged to apply for their child's secondary school place for September 2025.

The window for secondary school applications is open until the national closing date of October 31 this year.

Parents and carers can submit their applications at www.essex.gov.uk/admissions.

The website includes information on different schools and their admissions criteria.

Applications made after October 31 will be considered once all on-time applications have been determined.

This means applying late could reduce the chance of a child being offered a place at their preferred school.

When submitting their applications, parents are encouraged to:

- Visit their preferred school.
- Carefully consider each school's admissions criteria.
- Consider how their child will get to and from school.
- Use all six preferences on their application.

Councillor Tony Ball, Essex

County Council cabinet member for educationexcellence, lifelong learning and employability, said: "We're keen to maintain our excellent record of securing preferred places for Year 7 pupils in Essex.

"But we can only do this if parents complete their child's secondary school place application correctly and by the deadline."