

Echo

Basildon, Wickford & Billericay

Friday February 6, 2026

echo-news.co.uk

£1.10

P10



**RAPIST
JAILED
FOR SIX
YEARS**



P4

**SCHOOL CELEBRATES
OFSTED TURNAROUND**



**WIN cash to
refresh your
home**

P19

£20,000 PAYOUT FOR NURSE ABUSE VICTIM

Woman 'preyed on' at psychiatric ward

A PATIENT has been awarded a £20,000 pay-out after she was "preyed on" by a psychiatric nurse during a mental health crisis.

The victim, who is remaining anonymous, has shared her story after securing the settlement against Essex Partnership University NHS Trust.

By **SOPHIE ENGLAND**
sophie.england@newsquest.co.uk

She was targeted after being admitted to the psychiatric ward at Basildon Hospital more than a decade ago.

Joshua Hurst, abuse law expert at Simpson Millar, said: "Our client was at

her most vulnerable when she was admitted to hospital, but instead, she was failed by the very institution that should have protected her."

Paul Scott, the trust, said it offers "sincere apologies for distress."

FULL STORY: PAGE 5



The Fencing Centre

With Over 40 Years Of Trading, **THE FENCING CENTRE** Brings You A Brand New Location!!

Pop Down to **7 STOCK ROAD, SOUTHEND-ON-SEA**. We Offer Walk In Collections, Deliveries & Installations. **SELLING 5FT FEATHER EDGE PANELS** At **ONLY £29.50 + VAT**.

Call Or Pop In For A **FREE QUOTE**. **01702-344-200**

NEWS

Competition for young artists

YOUNG artists in Southend are being encouraged to showcase their skills as part of this year's City Day celebrations.

The City Day Secondary Schools Portrait Competition will take place at The Royals Shopping Centre on March 7, 2026, running from 10am to 5pm. Students in Years 7 to 11 from schools and colleges in the area are invited to apply.

Five students from each year group will complete a one-hour live portrait challenge using drawing or painting materials.

Stars of Slam anniversary

WRESTLING fans on Canvey are set for an energetic night of entertainment as a popular touring show arrives in the area.

The Stars of Slam Live Pro Wrestling event will take place at The Paddocks on March 21, 2026, starting at 7pm as part of the group's 10 Year Anniversary Tour.

The family-friendly show will feature wrestlers from the UK and overseas, promising big action, dramatic moments and lively crowd interaction.

Climbing festival

A climbing festival in Southend will offer an action-packed afternoon of challenges and entertainment.

The IndiBlock Stars finals will take place at Indirock on March 7, 2026, running from 1pm to 9pm as part of Southend City Day.

The event marks Indirock's fourth birthday and features fun climbing activities, giveaways and collaborations with area businesses.

Tickets to watch the evening finals cost £5 and include a free meal.

International Women's Day

WOMEN in Leigh are being invited to a special lunch celebrating empowerment and connection next month.

Lady McAdden Breast Cancer charity will host the event on March 6, 2026, marking the start of its new partnership with Paul Robinson Solicitors LLP.

The afternoon will include a two-course meal, raffles and a panel of women from sectors including media, fitness, law and marketing.

A spokesman for Lady McAdden said: "This event will be a celebration."

SOUTHEND MP SUPPORTS MORE AFFORDABLE YOUTH HOUSING



■ Housing - David Burton-Sampson, MP for Southend West and Leigh, with representatives of YMCA

A south Essex MP has voiced his support for a campaign focused on boosting affordable homes for young people.

David Burton-Sampson, MP for Southend West and Leigh, recently met with YMCA England & Wales to discuss the need for increased housing options across the country.

The organisation has launched a drive to create 10,000 affordable homes for young people by 2030.

Mr Burton-Sampson said he was proud to back the initiative and encouraged residents to learn more about the campaign.

He said: "Great to chat with the YMCA England & Wales about getting more affordable housing for our young people across the country."

"They've launched a fantastic campaign all about creating 10,000 affordable homes for young people by 2030, so that more young people can reach their potential!"

"Proud to show my support."

Ofsted praises school for huge improvement

A school previously at "rock bottom" has made "significant improvements" following a new Ofsted inspection.

In a report published this week, Mayflower High School, in Billericay, has been praised by Ofsted after an inspection in December.

The school had previously been rated "requires improvement" in its last inspection back in March 2023.

However, following changes to the headteacher, leadership and governance, Ofsted found the school has since made "significant improvements" and is a place where students now "flourish".

Headteacher Damian Lee hailed a positive transformation.

He said: "When we arrived three years ago, the school was in a bad way and parental confidence was at rock

By SOPHIE ENGLAND
sophie.england@newsquest.co.uk

bottom.

"At the start, it was tough because there were poor systems, students and staff did not feel valued and were not being guided in the right way and, therefore, behaviour was an issue.

"The children are the same children we had three years ago, they just are now being taught well in a better environment.

"We are really pleased with the work we have done, but we are nowhere near finished.

"The report acknowledges the great work we have done and the successes we have had, but we want more."

The report found how pupils' behaviour is "exemplary", and they are "polite and



■ Proud – Head Damian Lee with pupils at Mayflower High School

courteous".

Inspectors also highlighted how "bullying is rare because it is not tolerated by the school or by pupils themselves", and "learning is rarely disrupted".

Mr Lee added: "The potential here is so much higher than anywhere I have worked before.

"As good as this report is, it is just a snapshot of two days showing where we have come in the last three years.

"Imagine where we could be in another four or five years when they visit again.

"But, we do not do this for Ofsted, we do it for every student who comes through our door to ensure they have a great day every day.

"The potential is massive here.

"We will not slow down or stop.

"It is now about pushing on to the next level. We have just got started."

Ofsted added that "pupils are benefitting from the positive changes leaders are making", and how they "rise to the challenge of meeting higher expectations".