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David Pickthall Stripped of MBE Honour

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— Categories: *Crime*



Following his conviction for abusing children across a period of more than four decades, former choirmaster and music teacher David Pickthall has been stripped of his Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE).

The 66-year-old from Cheveley, near Newmarket, loses the honour this week, as confirmed by the Cabinet Office, after being jailed for a string of child sex offences. The revocation of his MBE, originally awarded in 2015 for services to education and charity, marks the latest development in a case that has shocked communities in Suffolk and Essex.

Pickthall is currently serving a 12-year prison sentence after admitting to 29 separate offences last November. These include 16 counts of indecent assault, 10 counts of voyeurism, and three counts of making indecent images of children. The abuse took place between 1980 and 2021 and involved 19 victims, most of them boys.

He formerly lived at Cheveley Park and held respected roles as a music teacher in Brentwood and a choirmaster in Havering, Essex. Investigators say he used his trusted position to exploit young people, often isolating them in private settings or inviting them to stay at his home.

Prior to his arrest in 2021, Pickthall had been found to be engaging in sexually explicit conversations with a 15-year-old boy on the messaging app Telegram. A search of his property later uncovered disturbing videos and images of young males.

One of his victims, now in his 50s, previously spoke about the long-lasting trauma caused by the abuse, stating: “At the time, the physical and the sexual side of it was really unpleasant, but that isn’t what stuck with me. I would say that 90% of the damage he did to me was psychological.”

Essex Police describe the scale of Pickthall’s crimes as “horrifying” and praise the courage of the survivors who came forward. The revocation of his MBE comes as part of the UK government’s procedure to strip honours from individuals whose conduct brings the system into disrepute.