

LEADING WITH CLARITY AND COMPASSION IN TURBULENT TIMES



Senior Leaders' Conference

Park Plaza, London Victoria, SW1V 1EQ
Monday 9 June 2025

Contents	Page
Welcome	3
General Information	4 - 5
Programme	6
Speakers	7 - 10
Facilitators	11 - 12
Session Descriptions	13 - 15
Floorplan	17
Exhibitors	19 - 23

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Welcome

Welcome to the 2025 IAPS Senior Leaders' Conference.

We are delighted to welcome you to a day designed by Senior Leaders, for Senior Leaders – a rare opportunity to pause, reflect and grow in a space dedicated entirely to your leadership journey.

This year's conference theme, "Leading with clarity and compassion in turbulent times," invites us to explore what it truly means to lead with both purpose and humanity in an increasingly complex world. With challenge often comes opportunity – and today is about embracing both.

Throughout the day, you will hear from inspiring voices across the educational landscape as they explore leadership under pressure, authentic self-awareness, and the joy and courage it takes to lead well. You will also have the chance to engage in coaching-style breakout sessions, allowing you to apply the day's thinking directly to your own professional context.

We encourage you to come equipped with your school's mission, vision, and values, as well as your own job description and school development plan, to help ground today's sessions in your lived reality.

Whether you are joining us to strategise, connect with peers, or simply make space to think, today is yours.

Thank you for being part of this vibrant community of leaders. We hope the conversations, challenges, and insights shared today will stay with you long after you leave.



Conference Directors

Katherine Bluck

IAPS Head of Professional Development

Kathryn Gorman

Previous Head of an all-through IAPS school, Founder and Director of Clarion Education Ltd

General Information

Venue

Park Plaza, London Victoria, 239 Vauxhall Bridge Road, SW1V 1EQ.

The hotel is a 4-minute walk from Victoria railway/underground station and is within a mile of both Buckingham Palace and the Houses of Parliament.

Directions

By train: from King's Cross/London St Pancras International station, on the London Underground take the Victoria Line southbound towards Brixton. Alight at Victoria station and walk south on Wilton Road for 100 metres. Park Plaza Victoria London will be on your left.

By car: from Junction 1 of the M4, take the A4 signposted Central London. After 3 miles, turn right onto the A3220 signposted Central London (Westminster), Battersea. After 1.3 miles, continue forward onto the A3212 for Central London, Victoria, Vauxhall. Head west towards The Mall, exit the roundabout onto Whitehall/A3212, turn right onto Great Peter Street. At the roundabout, continue straight onto Greycoat Place /B323. At the roundabout, take the 1st exit onto Rochester Row/B324 and then turn right onto Vauxhall Bridge Road/A202. Park Plaza Victoria London will be on the right.

By taxi: to pre-book a taxi via the hotel please contact the concierge team in advance by calling +44 (0) 20 7769 9792 or by emailing vppconcierge@pphe.com

Registration

Attendees are requested to register at the IAPS desk, in the Victoria Lobby on Conference level 1. Refreshments will be available from 0845 in the exhibition area, the Beatrice Suite.

General Information

Badges

Name badges for all attendees will be provided and are colour coded. Please keep your name badge on for the entire duration of the event and make sure you return it to the registration desk before you leave.

Delegates - Black

Speakers and Facilitators - Yellow

Exhibitors - White

IAPS Officials - Red

Main Sessions

The keynote presentations will be held in the Victoria Suite, located on Conference Level 1. Delegates are respectfully requested to arrive promptly for the beginning of each session.

Breakout Session

The breakout session will be held in the Edward Suite rooms, located on Conference Level 2. This is an opportunity to experience group-coaching or mentoring on a real work challenge of your choice.

Exhibition

IAPS is committed to facilitating networking and business opportunities through a vibrant exhibition; offering products and services that can benefit schools of any size. The conference exhibition will be in the Beatrice Suite and the Victoria Lobby, which is where all refreshments will be served along with lunch, and delegates are encouraged to use these opportunities to engage with our exhibitors.

Programme - Monday 9 June 2025

0900	Registration, refreshments and exhibition
0930	Let's be honest. An honest reflection on the world we are leading in, its challenges and some of the reasons to be optimistic despite it all - Katherine Bluck and Kathryn Gorman
1000	Pants on the outside leadership - Liz Robinson
1045	Refreshments and exhibition
1115	Who are you? - Rachel McGill
1200	70 acres at your school, so what? - Bish Muir
1245	Lunch and exhibition
1310	Strategies to Monitor Student Wellbeing and Assess Impact - Jon Ford, youhq
1345	Performing under pressure - Dr Leo Dudin
1430	Breakout: An opportunity to experience group-coaching or mentoring on a real work challenge of your choice
1530	Break and exhibition
1545	Finding the joy! - Dr Emma Kell
1630	Reflections of the day - Katherine Bluck

Speakers



Katherine Bluck

Katherine Bluck is a distinguished educational leader known for her unwavering commitment to fostering independence and resilience in young learners. Currently serving as the Head of Professional Development at IAPS, in previous roles she has been a Head of two IAPS schools as well as held leadership roles at Lambrook and the Stephen Perse Foundation.

Katherine exemplifies clarity and compassion in her leadership, with a passion for guiding teams through the complexities of modern education with a steady hand and a warm heart. Her leadership style is characterised by strategic thinking, empathy, and a deep commitment to the personal and professional growth of her colleagues and students.

Kathryn Gorman

Kathryn is an experienced education leader and consultant, with over 25 years in both the independent and state sectors, including as Head of an all-through independent school. Her leadership has been shaped by times of complexity and crisis—including the Covid-19 pandemic, where she championed compassionate values-led approaches to strategic decision-making and cultural change.



Now Founder and Director of Clarion Education, Kathryn works with schools, trusts, and public benefit organisations to strengthen leadership, governance and culture. Her consultancy supports leaders to navigate uncertainty with clarity and confidence—always with people at the heart of the process.

Kathryn is a certified workplace mediator and accredited investigator and is currently training as a Level 7 Executive Coach. She is Chair of Governors of a primary school serving a diverse community and Chair of Education at a leading independent performing arts school. Kathryn also serves as a Non-Executive Director of an online alternative provision for neurodiverse young people.

A Fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching and contributor to policy forums and think tanks, Kathryn believes the future of leadership lies in collaboration, kindness and courageous curiosity. She holds a Masters in Educational Leadership and School Improvement from the University of Cambridge.

Liz Robinson

Liz Robinson, CEO and co-founder of multi-academy trust Big Education, is dedicated to changing how education is delivered in England, motivated by her belief in the transformative power of schools. Liz looks to create a holistic education that integrates academic learning with personal development and practical skills to impact on the wider community. At her former school Liz used her values to radically reshape the culture and shift the approach to help empower others into thoughtful action. She later co-founded Big Education to unite like-minded individuals, promoting collaboration and innovation, utilising her core values to advocate for radical change in the education sector. Liz emphasises that all significant change is rooted in great leadership, which is the focus of her Big Education Leadership Programme.



Rachel McGill

Rachel McGill, co-founder of Resilient Leaders Elements, is on a mission to make world-class leadership development accessible to all by equipping people with the tools they need to succeed. After becoming the youngest captain in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps at 23, Rachel has attained almost 30 years of leadership development experience. As co-founder of Resilient Leaders Elements, Rachel promotes exploring the different foundations and facets of resilient leadership, fostering development through challenges and feedback loops. She specialises in developing resilient leaders through training and supporting next-level leadership coaches and consultants to make measurable differences in how individuals lead themselves and others.



Bish Muir

Bish Muir's introduction to marketing began with a Fairy Liquid advert when she was five, sparking a lifelong passion that has shaped her career. She has 30 years of experience, and has worked with renowned clients such as Marks & Spencer, BP, and Unilever. Bish holds a Level 6 Diploma in Marketing from the Chartered Institute of Marketing, which has equipped her with advanced knowledge. After 25 years in a commercial setting, she transitioned to the independent school sector, first as a marketing manager, then as Director of External Relations. Bish is now a freelance Marketing and Admissions consultant, supporting schools with their strategies and recruitment.



Dr Leo Dudin

Dr Leo Dudin has 15 years of experience in education, but began his career in industry before retraining to teach chemistry at Abingdon School. He then moved to Uppingham School as Head of Chemistry and later Head of Science, completing an MEd in Educational Leadership at the University of Cambridge. His experience in teaching and tutoring within a co-educational boarding school has provided a passion for ensuring that academic challenge and pastoral care co-exist, and for fostering trusting working relationships between pupils and staff. In his position as Deputy Head Academic at Oakham School, Leo works to shape the culture and climate of learning, encouraging optimism within academic journeys and maintaining a balance between high academic standards and exemplary pastoral care.

Dr Emma Kell

Dr Emma Kell has over 25 years of experience as a teacher and leader in UK schools and is the founder and director of Those That Can Ltd. She has written several articles, blogs and books on the joys and challenges of teaching and completed her doctorate on teacher wellbeing and work-life balance. Emma works with professionals within and beyond the world of education to provide research-based, practical sessions to promote wellbeing and effectiveness. She believes in helping people to be the happiest, most efficient and authentic versions of themselves and is passionate about the link between wellbeing and success. Emma aims to encourage fulfilment by reminding people that the key to success is following their moral compass and knowing their worth.



Facilitators



Elizabeth Draper

An experienced educator and curriculum consultant, Elizabeth Draper brings over 15 years of teaching and leadership across primary and secondary education. As Head of Humanities at Willington Prep School and a local authority governor, she specialises in curriculum design and development. Her collaborations with the BBC, Nickelodeon Jr, and SkyTV reflect a unique ability to blend classroom insight with creative industry innovation, producing engaging, curriculum-rich content that inspires young learners and supports strategic educational vision.

Alice Heywood

Alice has held several senior roles across many areas at the Stephen Perse Foundation for a number of years. As Director of Educational Strategy, Alice uses her experience to drive innovation and creativity across to keep the Foundation's Junior Schools in Cambridge and Saffron Walden at the forefront of education.

As a member of the Executive Alice has also been involved in projects with the finance, IT and human resources teams. She is also a team inspector for ISI. As an experienced coach and mentor, Alice looks forward to facilitating discussion about developing and emerging strategies with you.





Tory Gillingham

Tory has been supporting and working for AMCIS since April 2004. Before becoming the AMCIS Managing Director, Tory spent 11 years working in independent schools' marketing; firstly as Marketing Director at Pocklington School and then as Marketing and Development Director at St Peter's School, York, where she spearheaded the formation of the St Peter's School Foundation.

With her extensive experience in independent schools marketing and her time as Managing Director, Tory is able to answer many of the questions and queries raised and asked by members who call her on the AMCIS Helpline.

Session Descriptions

Kathryn Gorman – **Let's be honest**

In a time of volatility, expectation and ever-shifting priorities, leadership in independent Prep schools can feel both energising and exhausting. This opening session invites a moment of collective honesty: about the world we are leading in, the complexities we navigate daily and the quiet pressures that rarely make it into strategic plans.

Through reflection, real world insight and a hopeful but grounded lens, Kathryn Gorman, Founding Director of Clarion Education Ltd, will explore how senior leaders can stay calm amidst the noise - and why there are still plenty of reasons to be optimistic. This isn't about sugar-coating reality; it's about naming what is hard, reconnecting with purpose and preparing to consider practical strategies to lead with integrity, clarity and hope.

Liz Robinson – **Pants on the outside Leadership**

This session will invite reflections on how we 'show up' as leaders in schools. It will explore senior leaders' relationship to vulnerability and the need to always 'have the answers'. Delegates will explore the idea of being more open about their challenges and how this can balance with giving a sense of confidence in their leadership and making others feel safe. Liz will share some of her own experiences and invite delegates to share their own reflections.

Liz will provoke delegates to 'ask bigger questions' about what school could, might or should be. This will encourage deep thought about some of the fundamental questions about the why, what and how they 'do' school, challenging assumptions.

Moving beyond the superhero archetype of leadership, Liz will both model and invite reflections about how senior leaders show up in their roles and how to bring their authentic identity to work with them, including exploring the mental model that everyone has to be 'ok' all the time. This will be a thought-provoking and personal session intended to disrupt some thinking and hopefully inspire further thought and action.

Rachel McGill – **Who are you?**

During this interactive session Rachel will facilitate an exploration of the four Resilient Leaders Elements so that participants understand their strengths and areas for development in the context of Resilient Leadership.

As a result, participants will be able to describe who they are and what they do in the context of resilient leadership, understand their strengths and areas for development, and have increased confidence in 'who they are' in the context of resilient leadership.

Following the session, delegates will continue to have access to Rachel's Resilient Leadership Development Programme™ for two weeks, giving them an opportunity to engage with the development tools and 360-degree feedback assessment contained within it.

Bish Muir – **70 acres at your school, so what?**

With increased competition across the independent Prep sector, relying on clichés is no longer enough. This practical session explores how schools can identify their unique selling proposition (USP), embed it within their culture, and communicate it clearly to both internal and external audiences.

Featuring round-table discussions and delegate feedback, the workshop will equip senior leaders with clear, actionable strategies to take back to their schools—helping them articulate what makes their offering distinctive and ensuring it shines in a crowded marketplace.

Leo Dudin – **Performance under pressure**

Senior leaders in education face pressure, whatever their school context. What helps in the moment, and longer term? What can we do to help ourselves and our teams?

This session draws on Leo's professional experiences of middle and senior leadership in several schools, and on theories and approaches from a range of experts. In addition to learning from successful school

leaders, delegates will explore how leaders in medicine, search and rescue, the military, performance sport and executive coaching survive and thrive under pressure.

Through discussions, delegates will learn the core concepts of pressure management and develop practical ways to stay buoyant and effective in their roles.

Dr Emma Kell – **Finding the joy!**

In this session we will have the opportunity to reflect on our achievements, connect to our sense of purpose, and feel authentic pride in our achievements alongside our teams.

Topics covered during the session include reflecting on what delegates and their teams have achieved; connecting to their values and moral purpose; perspective and the negativity bias; gratitude and focusing on what makes delegates feel lucky; and the power of humour.



**Oracy for
Schools**

Help every student find their voice

Practical principles for an
immediate impact



What do Prep schools say?

The training was really valuable. There are few things more effective than teachers being able to observe other teachers (particularly when teaching their classes) to help develop their own practice and build confidence with teaching a subject that they are unfamiliar with. Staff really enjoyed the interactive nature of the INSET on the final afternoon!

**Crystal Waldmeyer, Deputy Head,
Orchard House School**

"Watching Tom's workshop I was amazed at how it hit EVERY box about oracy. It was brilliant to see such practical strategies."

Abby Brooks, Kimbolton Prep School

"Working with Tom was a joy! Our workshop gave me an opportunity to reflect on my own teaching, and to consider a different approach to topics. A term later, and I can see that the children enjoyed exploring a history topic in a different way. Tom's work has helped to develop the pupils' curiosity, thinking, confidence in expressing an opinion, and an awareness of different perspectives and viewpoints."

**Beverley Gayton, Deputy Headteacher,
Sarum Hall**

Thanks to Tom's workshops we saw improved communication skills, enhanced speaking and listening, more respect for what others are saying, deeper thinking about topics being covered!

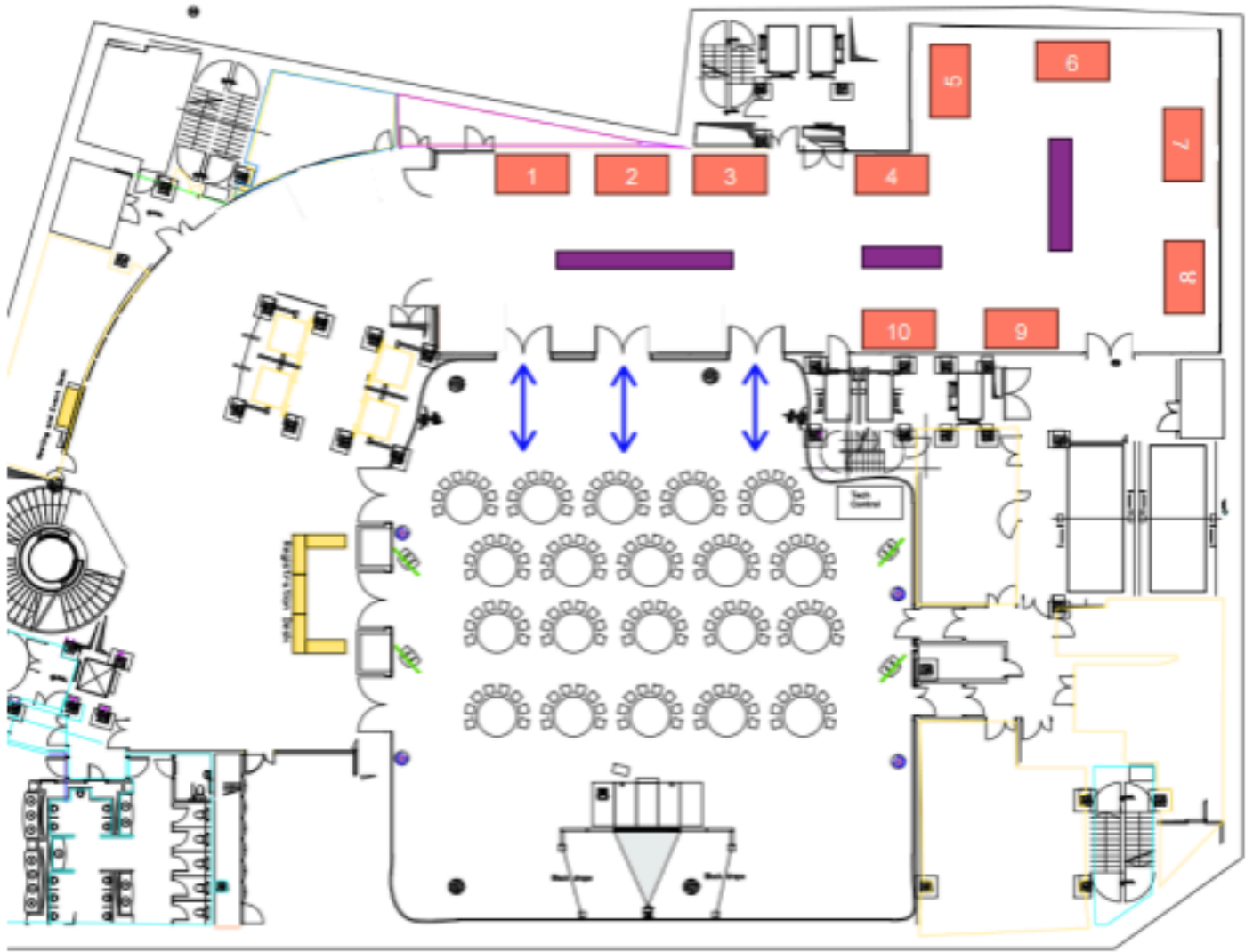
Sara Wilson, Assistant Head, Weston Green

Get your free resources:
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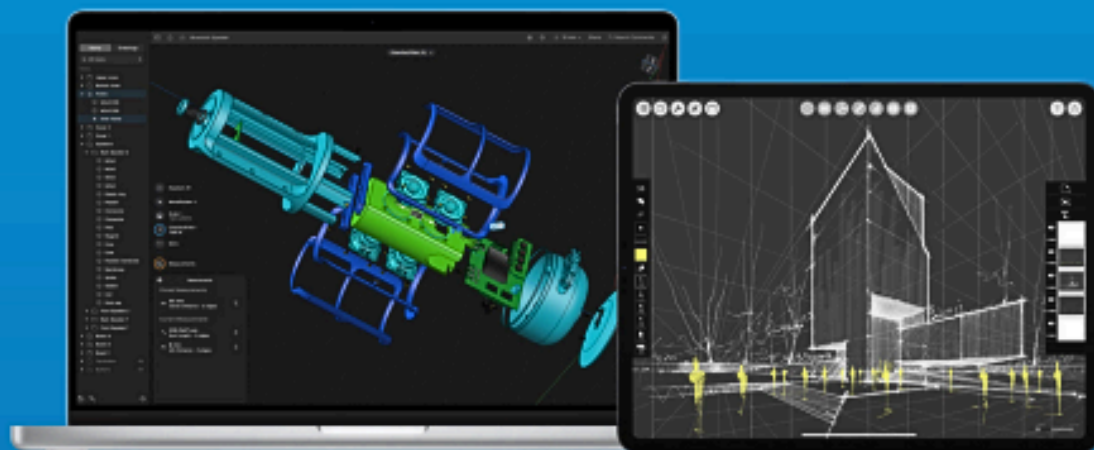
Floorplan



Albion



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Albion is a one-stop-shop for everything Apple. We've supplied and supported educational institutions with Apple technology for over 35 years. From class sets to 1:1 deployments, we're here to help you and your prep school.

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Exhibitors



Thank you to all of our exhibitors. We are fortunate to have attracted a wide range of companies with products and services relevant to our sector and encourage delegates to take every opportunity to engage with the exhibitors; browse the resources and sample the products.

Exhibitor	Stand No.	Logo and link
<p>The Chelsea Psychology Clinic is a leading private service based in London, offering expert, evidence-based psychological and psychiatric treatment for children, adolescents, adults, couples and families. Our schools' team delivers bespoke psychological and organisational support from targeted student interventions to whole-school wellbeing strategies. We work in close partnership with staff, families & leadership teams to create meaningful, lasting change within school communities.</p>	1	
<p>Albion Computers is a one-stop-shop for everything Apple. We've supplied and supported educational institutions with Apple technology for over 35 years. From class sets to 1:1 deployments, we're here to help you and your Trust. We're approved suppliers on the CPC and HE Apple frameworks.</p>	2	

Exhibitor	Stand No.	Logo and link
<p>M:Tech</p> <p>is the UK's leading extracurricular music technology and creative composition course for children aged 7–13. We teach the fundamentals of music composition theory, with young learners composing soundtracks to engaging multimedia projects including movie trailers and TV adverts. We are proud to be the Official Music Partner of IAPS.</p>	3	 <p>m:tech</p> <p>Inspire Create Compose</p>
<p>iSAMS</p> <p>With rising costs, evolving transport needs, and increasing parental expectations, managing school transport is more challenging than ever. As the independent school transport specialists, our 5Rs Framework helps you reduce hassle, raise satisfaction, recruit students, retain families, and reduce costs, delivering a seamless, strategic solution that strengthens admissions, retention, and efficiency.</p>	4	 <p>isams</p> <p>By IRIS</p>

Exhibitor	Stand No.	Logo and link
<p>Oracy for Schools</p> <p>have been supporting schools develop their students' oracy skills for over fifteen years. We continue to work week-in, week-out with schools in various ways - from free resources, to workshops, to INSET. We've something for every budget and school context. Come see us at our stand today.</p>	5	 <p>Oracy for Schools</p>
<p>Innermedia</p> <p>is a digital agency with global experience in the independent school sector. We deliver tailored marketing strategies, creative websites, and innovative AI-driven tools to support parent questions, track enquiries and attribute leads to marketing budgets. Trusted by over 200 schools, we ensure long-term success through creative solutions and exceptional service.</p>	6	

Exhibitor	Stand No.	Logo and link
<p>Boost 11+</p> <p>is an agile AI-powered, adaptive maths learning platform designed to give personalised learning for entire classes preparing for the 11+. Using intelligent algorithms, it identifies each pupil's strengths and areas for improvement, tailoring practice and challenges to their needs.</p>	7	
<p>IAPS Digital Academy</p> <p>is a fantastic new opportunity providing a wide selection of flexible high-quality courses. With more than 150 school CPD and statutory and compliance training courses available, written and regularly updated by subject specialists, staff in all roles can take an active role in their professional learning, engage in thoughtful reflection and rise to new challenges.</p>	8	

Exhibitor	Stand No.	Logo and link
<p>Pret-a-Portrait</p> <p>proudly provides an outstanding photography service to top schools around the world; based on excellent photography, quality customer care and a uniquely creative approach to portraiture. With over 20 years of experience photographing individuals, families, large groups, events, and corporate imagery - our expert team ensures a professional and memorable photography experience.</p>	9	
<p>youHQ</p> <p>The youHQ digital platform safeguards whole-school wellbeing and provides students and teachers with the tools to flourish. Trusted by thousands of users, youHQ unlocks meaningful insights into emotional health, SEND, and personal development - through validated questionnaires, values-based goalsetting, snapshot surveys, wellbeing curriculum, and helpful CBT-style resources.</p>	10	



Thank you for booking on to our
Senior Leaders' Conference 2025



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