



PPMA Excellence in People Management Awards 2021

Judges Biographies





Our judges hold senior leadership positions across Local and Central Government, 3rd Sector and Private Sector.

Judging takes place on Wednesday 19th May 2021

Our shortlisting announcement is being held on Wednesday 2nd June 2021

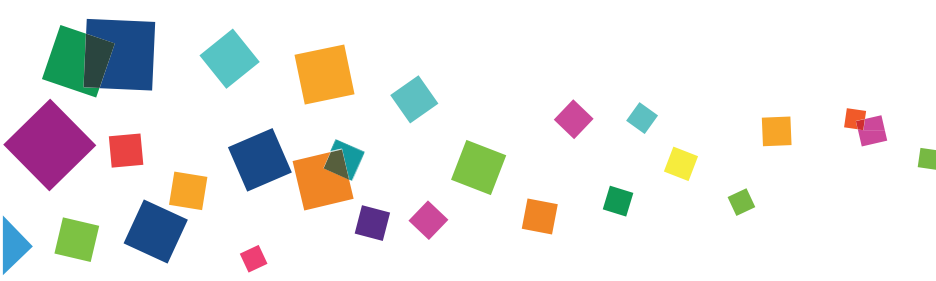
Winners will be announced in the lead up to our Virtual Conference in 2021

Introducing you to our judges

We are delighted with the new faces joining the judging process this year along with some of our 2020 judges returning for this years process.

Our judges are highly respected and recognised as experts in their fields and by their peers.





Judges Biographies

Juliette Alban-Metcalf **Chief Executive at Real World Group**

Juliette is a Chartered Occupational Psychologist and Chief Executive of Real World Group (a University of Leeds spin-out company). She is also Adjunct Associate Professor at the Centre for Sustainable Business and Enterprise, University of Southern Queensland.

Juliette has been working with Real World Group for the past 16 years, supporting leadership development with both individuals and groups up to Board level globally. She has a particular passion for positive psychology and diversity in leadership.

She has helped establish Real World Group's approach to Engaging Leadership, based on uniquely proven research involving tens of thousands of people across the world. This and subsequent research has established the common sense but often missing behaviours that distinguish leaders from managers.

Juliette consults on behalf of Real World Group with organisations from the UK, North America, South East Asia and the wider Asia Pacific region. She has authored a number of articles in practitioner and peer-reviewed journals, as well as book chapters. She is co-Chair of the Thought and Action Steering Group of the UK government-sponsored Engage For Success and on the editorial committee of the International Congress on Leadership, Management and Governance.

Stephen Bevan **Head of HR Research Development, Institute for Employment Studies (IES)**

Stephen Bevan is head of HR research development at IES with responsibility for developing innovative new projects and programmes with IES partners and other collaborators. Stephen returned to IES in April 2016 after spending 15 years as Director of Research and Managing Director at The Work Foundation.

Stephen has conducted research and consultancy on high performance work practices, employee reward strategy, performance management, staff engagement and retention, and 'good work'. He has a special interest in workforce health and wellbeing, having led a number of national and international projects focusing on workforce health and the impact of chronic illness on productivity and social inclusion. He is the Project Director of a major impact evaluation project for the Work and Health Joint Unit which is tracking the progress of health-led trials for people with mental health and musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs).

Stephen is an adviser to a number of UK government departments and has advised employers and policymakers in Europe, Asia-Pacific, Australasia and North America. He has received a special award from GAMIAN-Europe for his contribution to the field of mental health and employment and is a reviewer for several academic journals, including The Lancet. Stephen is a regular columnist for HR Magazine, a judge at the Global Healthy Workplace Awards and an adviser the government's Mental Health and Employment Review. He is a Board Member of the European HR Director's Circle and a member of the Britain's Healthiest Company expert advisory group. Stephen has appeared in HR Magazine's list of Most Influential HR Thinker for the past ten years. He has been an honorary professor at Lancaster University Management School since 2010.



Judges Biographies

Trudy Birtwell

**Head of Leadership & Organisational Development,
Solace**

Trudy has been Head of Leadership and Organisational Development at Solace since 2011. She leads and manages a range of successful programmes and assignments with Solace clients and is quick to establish effective and successful working relationships with clients to understand their requirements and to co design and provide appropriate solutions that deliver added value.

She leads their partnership work with DCLG, LGA, INLOGOV, PPMA and a range of other strategic partners. Trudy is also a professional HR/OD practitioner with over 18 years' experience of working at board and executive level. She is a strong leader able to inspire and motivate individuals and multidisciplinary teams.



Mike Burton

Editorial Director of The MJ

Mike is former editor of The MJ (Municipal Journal) and now editorial director of The MJ Group along with its other associated local government products and titles such as The MJ Awards, MJ Future Forum, mj.co.uk, LocalGov.co.uk, Surveyor, Local Government News and Municipal Year Book, which are all event organisers. He is also board director of Hemming Group Ltd.

He has been writing and reporting about local government and the wider public sector for over 25 years and speaks at the chair of numerous public sector conferences. He distilled his experiences into his first book The Politics of Public Sector Reform from Thatcher to the Coalition, published in June 2013 by Palgrave Macmillan.

His new book The Politics of Austerity: A Recent History (Palgrave Macmillan) looks at how the UK, the USA, the eurozone, the Baltic States, Canada and Sweden managed their public finances during economic downturns in the past 40 years.



Judges Biographies

Naomi Cooke

Head of Workforce, LGA

Experienced Negotiator and Policy Professional with a demonstrated history of working in industrial relations, pensions and public sector industries. Skilled in Individual Representation and Collective Bargaining; Pension Provision and Regulation; Team Leadership; Media Relations; and Public Speaking.



Steve Davies

Head of Workforce, London Regional Employers & PPMA President 2020

Steve has been a member of the PPMA since the early 2000's and became the Chair for London in 2013. He was a key member of the PPMA board for many years and took on the roles of Treasurer and Secretary in 2016. He was Vice President for the regions in 2018 to 2019.

Steve is a highly respected and experienced HR Director, having worked across a number of London Boroughs. Steve is now the Head of Regional Employers for London Councils where he acts as the Strategic workforce lead for London Councils, supporting London Boroughs to improve London's public services across the capital through delivery, commissioning, management, transformation and innovation. He has worked for London boroughs in HR all his career and held senior HR positions for many years including director level HR management positions in two London boroughs.



Judges Biographies

Emily Drake

Head of Payments Systems & Registrars, Tameside Council & PPMA Peer into the Future joint Winner 2020

Emily has worked at Tameside MBC since leaving Warwick university with a degree in Biological Sciences and a short stint as a cow girl in Australia! Starting as a Graduate HR Advisor, Emily has moved around the organisation giving her a wealth of experience in operational management, business improvement and HROD initiatives. She has played a key role in workforce change projects over the years. Her most recent role as Head of Payments, Systems and Registrars is a mixed bag and one that provides a blend of transactional and frontline services and IT focussed transformation projects. Her most current challenge is lead for the organisation's workforce reform project in response to COVID-19. Emily is so excited to be part of PPMA's awards judging panel this year and seeing even more amazing talent that the public service HROD community has to offer.



Shawonna Gleeson

Deputy Director HR, Manchester City Council & PPMA Peer into the Future joint Winner 2020

Shawonna is currently the Deputy Director of HR and OD at Manchester City Council where she started her HR career as a graduate trainee. Since then she has held a range of roles and led a range of areas including Operational Services, Workforce Change and Business Partnering before taking up her current role. Shawonna leads on a number of corporate and cross organisational projects around workforce change and equalities which are her passion. Having been joint winner of the Peer Programme she is now really excited to join our judging panel and cannot wait to see the talent in our sector.



Judges Biographies

Leatham Green

Interim Executive Director, PPMA

As longstanding members and PPMA friends will know, we typically have a Vice President. To harness the increased opportunities developing for PPMA, we have decided to review our structure and governance. Whilst we do this we have taken the decision to appoint an Interim Executive Director.

Leatham is the founder of the Mindful HR Centre and a highly respected and a multiple award winning public sector HRD Director. He is respected as a leader who can deliver sustained and substantial transformation. He believes that we should treat human beings as human resources to get the very best out of them. Being mindful in how we treat people and how we enable them to be mindful of themselves will ensure we can harness the power of our public service workforces.



Suzanne Hudson

LGA – Senior Adviser – Workforce and Policy

Suzanne is a senior workforce adviser for the Local Government Association in England and Wales. Her role is primarily to identify issues and develop HR solutions for implementation across the sector.

Her previous employment was at the London Borough of Croydon, where she managed and delivered a range of HR projects, including negotiating and introducing a managed system for interim staffing, staff benefits, tendering and outsourcing, major organisational change and performance management processes.

Prior to this employment she worked for Thameslink Rail Ltd where she was responsible for organisational change and development within a private rail company.

Suzanne has extensive experience in organisational redesign and change. She also has experience dealing with partnerships and new models of delivery. She has over 17 years' experience of managing change within HR, specifically involving senior managers.

Prior to joining Thameslink Rail Ltd, Suzanne was a lecturer in French and Economics at Southbank University.



Judges Biographies

Dr Andrew Larner Chief Executive IESE

With more than 25 years' experience in improving public services, iESE's Chief Executive is an acclaimed transformation expert not just in the UK but internationally - with a breadth of experience working with local authority models around the world.

During the past 15 years he has led the growth of iESE from a small social enterprise start-up to the sector's leading transformation partner – working with hundreds of authorities around the UK, and supporting the delivery of more than £1billion in savings.

He has also worked with public services around the world – he supported authorities in China to modernise their management systems during rapid change, while in Hungary he supported the development of legislation and IT systems to manage a burgeoning property market. As such, he has probably got a wider view of public service operating models than any other expert in the sector.

A sector-leader on information management and the information society, with a doctorate in balancing rights in information, Andrew's use of digital technology to link authorities together and deliver joined up services was among the first in the world in public services. He is also the founder of iESE.

Rob Moss Editor, Personnel Today

Rob Moss has been editor of Personnel Today since 2010 when the HR title became an exclusively online publication. He joined the magazine in 2006 as online editor, having previously written in the optical and energy markets. He's interested in how new HR technologies can transform organisations, and emerging models of employment and their impact on the workplace and society in general. He has also written extensively about how gender equality can be improved through family-friendly HR policies. He hosts and manages the Personnel Today Awards and is responsible for recruiting experts to the judging panel.



Judges Biographies

Caroline Nugent

Director of HR & OD at the Financial Ombudsman Service

As part of the executive, Nugent is responsible ensuring the Financial Ombudsman Service manages its statutory role as well as personally leading the people and diversity and inclusion strategy throughout the organisation. The service has approx. 3500 employees and contingent workers. Nugent is also a NED and Trustee of the CIPD.

She is also a PPMA past president. With more than 30 years of experience in HR, Nugent understands the challenge of workforce and OD issues during significant organisational change.

She is a fellow of the CIPD with qualifications in HRM, executive coaching, EI, leadership mentoring, psychometrics and workplace and employment mediation.



Paul O'Brien

Chief Executive, Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE)

Paul O'Brien is the Chief Executive of the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE). Based in Manchester, APSE has 250 local authorities in membership. He is the chair of the APSE 2030 Local Government Commission, which will report its findings in 2021 on the future of local government across the UK.

Paul has commissioned and contributed to over 100 APSE research publications on topics as diverse as housing, energy, finance, scrutiny, commercialisation and devolution. APSE, through its on-going research collaboration with De Montfort University delivered a Knowledge Transfer Partnership, which Paul chaired, this was awarded 'outstanding' status by the Economic and Social Research Council.

Paul has represented APSE on numerous government advisory bodies and working groups at Westminster. He currently sits on the Parks Action Group, led by MHCLG, chairing the skills and knowledge workstream. He was previously the independent facilitator of the Northern Ireland Local Government Reform Joint Forum and was a member of the Scottish Executive Health and Physical Activity Council.

Paul was named in the LGC magazines 100 most influential in local government. He is a columnist with the MJ magazine and regular contributor to numerous local government publications. Paul was previously APSE's Principal Advisor (Scotland), and has over 30 years' experience in local government. He is a Fellow with the Royal Society of the Arts. He completed an MBA at Glasgow Caledonian University po'brien@apse.org.uk



Judges Biographies

Ben Plant

Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development, oneSource

In this role he is responsible for providing HR and OD services to Havering and Newham councils, which together employ more than 7,000 staff to deliver public services across east London.

Prior to joining oneSource Ben was director of transformation and HR at Waltham Forest Council, where he led a diverse range of corporate functions, including policy, insight and service design as well as HR and OD. He was responsible for the design and delivery of major change programmes, which achieved financial benefits in excess of £20 million. He also led significant reform of the HR function and increased staff satisfaction with the service by more than 30%.

During his time at Waltham Forest Ben oversaw the council's innovative collaboration with YPO to create [the Local Government Resourcing Partnership](#), which provides public sector organisations with easy access to a wide range of HR services. He also pioneered the introduction of extended maternity and paternity leave for any employee who has a baby born prematurely. This award-winning policy – the first of its kind in the UK – generated national headlines and inspired a wide range of employers to follow suit, including Sony Music, the Greater London Authority, and the BBC.

Neisha Porter

Organisational Development Partner & PPMA HR Rising Star Winner 2020

Neisha has more than 12 years' experience working in public sector focussing on people. She prides herself in creating a culture that promotes inclusivity, employee engagement and behaviours that align to organisational values.

Working at the London Borough of Southwark she has made tremendous strides in increasing employee engagement through a pragmatic approach built on employee qualitative and quantitative data. Taking a human centred focussed method to build relationships, gain trust and an understanding of the perceptions and lived experiences of Southwark's workforce. She is skilled with the ability to connect with, collaborate, and horizon scan to develop initiatives that meet organisational needs. These skills have been pivotal in increasing staff survey response rates with frontline staff at Southwark from 12% to 57% through innovative ways of engagement, leading the culture element of the adult mental health transformation and leading the Investors in People Gold accreditation.

Neisha is experienced in delivering a variety of graduate, apprenticeship and internship programmes taking a creative approach to ensure there is diverse lived experience within the cohorts, with a particular focus on attracting local people for local jobs. She is truly passionate about developing existing her workforce, coaching and mentoring colleagues to help them realise their full potential.

Recognising the importance of networks, Neisha has embedded networking opportunities for senior managers, managers, developed an apprenticeship network and promote self-supporting equalities groups to raise their profile.



Judges Biographies

Helen Scott **Executive Director, UHR**

Helen has worked in higher education since 1991, and moving from Oxford to be HR Director at Sussex. She has been working for UHR since 2004, and works with the Executive Committee to lead the organisation. So if you want to get involved, have an idea, or are a new HR Director, then be sure to get in touch.

Claire Symonds **Chief Executive, London Borough of Barking & Dagenham**

Claire is currently the Acting Chief Executive of the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham. Her substantive role at the authority saw her being responsible for the performance and contract management of the day to day delivery of all Council services in accordance with service agreements (corporate plan) and contractual obligations. She is also the champion of the customer experience across the Council's mixed economy of service provision.

Claire provides professional leadership and has developed a centre of excellence for all commercial matters in the Council. Additionally, she provides operational management leadership to all inhouse service operations so that day to day performance objectives are achieved.

She has played a key leadership role in developing the business case for, and implementation of a new Council structure as part of Barking & Dagenham's Ambition 2020 transformation programme. Leading on the creation of a number of new service delivery blocks and wholly owned companies. At the same time managing a number of council services which required significant improvement including Housing, Environmental Services and back office services.

Claire is the lead officer in developing a new commercial ethos that exploited the benefits of this new structure and created an eco-system of opportunities through the interrelationships between the new commercial entities. She was responsible for the development of a new governance structure that supports this new kind of Council, including the creation of a Shareholder Panel to protect the Council's interest as single shareholder and an Investment Panel that appraises all investment opportunities.

Claire oversaw the creation of new 4 Year Medium Term Financial Strategy based on her Authority's new model of income / demand. Claire was also the lead officer when her Authority developed a new performance framework which enables the Council to judge if the new structure is working.

Claire is responsible for the negotiation and implementation of a smooth exit from the Council's Joint Venture with Agilisys which has run a number of services including IT, Revenues and Benefits Procurement and customer services, all of which will be returning to the Council.

