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ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE



Thursday 23rd - Friday 24th April 2026

The Hilton Birmingham Metropole NEC

# Day 1 Thursday 23 April 2026 The Hilton Metropole – Birmingham NEC

Time	Session	Speaker	Location
09.00 – 10.00	Conference Registration & Networking		Reception
10.00 – 10.10	Pam Parkes, PPMA President Welcome		Queen’s Hall
10.10 – 10.50	Opening Keynote	<p><b>Leading for Meaningful Impact</b></p> <p>This opening keynote explores leadership in today’s changing social, economic, political and technological landscape. Attendees will gain insight into navigating complexity, inspiring teams, and shaping organizations that make a positive difference.</p> <p><b>Joanne Roney CBE</b>, Managing Director of Birmingham City Council</p>	Queen’s Hall
10.50 – 11.30	Keynote	<p><b>Local Government Today: Challenges, Reforms, and Financial Priorities -</b></p> <p>Join Graeme McDonald, Managing Director of SOLACE, for an insightful overview of the current landscape in local government. This session will cover key issues including local government reform (LGR), financial pressures, and emerging priorities. Attendees will gain expert perspectives on navigating the challenges facing councils today and understanding the strategic decisions shaping the future of local public services.</p> <p><b>Graeme McDonald</b>, Managing Director, SOLACE</p>	Queen’s Hall
11.30 – 12.00	Coffee & Sponsor Networking		<b>Exhibition Space</b> Princes Hall
12.00 – 13.00	Fringe Sessions	<p><b>Employment Rights Act: What It Means for Employer–Union Relations</b></p> <p>This session explores how the Employment Rights Act may reshape workplace expectations, consultation processes, and collective negotiations. The discussion will highlight key implications for both employers and unions, offering practical insight into maintaining constructive, collaborative relationships in a changing regulatory environment.</p> <p><b>Alison Thompson</b>, Head of People and Employer Services, Local Government East (LGE)</p>	<b>Breakout Rooms:</b> Queen’s Hall
		<p><b>Moving from retributive to restorative justice – an introduction to Hounslow’s Resolution Framework</b></p> <p>Hear about Hounslow’s journey to transform its approach to conflict resolution and creating a happier workplace, driven by the organisation’s values. Come along to this session to hear Steve and his team talk about the challenges and rewards for implementing this culture shift, and hear about the lessons learned. You will even have the opportunity to apply the approach in practice through a short interactive session.</p> <p><b>Steve Walker-Whitehead</b>, Director of People, Equality and OD, <b>Yuri Panferov</b>, Employee Relations Manager &amp; Alison Ford, Strategic Projects Partner at the London Borough of Hounslow</p>	Hampton Room
		<p><b>Creating a Thriving Culture at Pace</b></p> <p>This session will tell the inspiring story of how Runnymede Borough Council was able to transform their culture from having received a Best Value Notice that specifically referenced culture, within 12 months. Join Kate Enver, Corporate Head of Comms, HR &amp; OD at Runnymede Borough Council and Juliette Alban-Metcalf, Chief Executive, from Real World Group who will be sharing insights from how Runnymede harnessed leadership across the Council to achieve such a critical and positive improvement under immense pressure.</p> <p><b>Juliette Alban-Metcalf</b>, CEO, Real World Group &amp; <b>Kate Enver</b>, Corporate Head of Comms, HR &amp; OD, Runnymede Borough Council</p>	York Room
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch and Conference Exhibition Networking		<b>Exhibition Space</b> Princes Hall
14.00 – 14.50	Keynote	<p><b>Insights on Local Government Reform and Leadership</b></p> <p>In this keynote, Theresa Grant OBE shares her extensive experience in leading local government through major reforms and reorganisations. Drawing on decades of frontline leadership, she offers practical insights on effective leadership, navigating complex structural changes, and ensuring transformation delivers real impact in today’s challenging local government landscape.</p> <p><b>Theresa Grant OBE</b></p>	Queen’s Hall
14.50 – 15.15	Tea break and Conference Exhibition Networking		<b>Exhibition Space</b> Princes Hall
15.15 – 16.15	Closing Keynote	<p><b>Chief Executives Panel: Navigating Today’s Public Service Challenges</b></p> <p>A distinguished panel of chief executives will explore the most pressing issues shaping the world of work in public service. From workforce transformation and leadership challenges to policy changes and organisational resilience, this session offers candid insights, practical perspectives, and forward-looking strategies from some of the sector’s most experienced leaders.</p> <p><b>Mark Rogers</b>, Chief Executive, Leadership Centre   Care Leaver Covenant Champion   Interim Chief Officer Sussex and Brighton Combined County Authority, <b>Stephen Moir</b>, Chief Executive of Cambridgeshire County Council, <b>Dawn Carter-McDonald</b>, Chief Executive, Hackney Council and <b>Shokat Lal</b> - Chief Executive, Sandwell Council</p>	Queen’s Hall
18.30 – till Late	<p><b>PPMA Excellence in People Management Awards 2026 and Gala Dinner</b></p> <p><b>Hosted by Alistair Williams</b></p> <p>Founder of Creation Consultancy, is a seasoned leadership consultant, coach, and facilitator, bringing insight, energy, and a warm presence to our awards ceremony.</p>		Queen’s Hall

## Day 2 Friday 24 April 2026 The Hilton Metropole – Birmingham NEC

Time	Session	Speaker	Location
08.30 – 10.00		Conference Registration and Networking Exhibition space – Princes Hall	Reception <b>Exhibition Space</b> Princes Hall
10.00 – 10.10		<b>Day 1 and 2 Reflections with Sandra Farquharson, New PPMA President</b>	Queen's Hall
10.10 – 10.50	Day 2 Opening Keynote	<b>Harnessing AI and Emerging Technologies to Transform the Public Sector Workforce</b> Artificial intelligence and emerging technologies are transforming how public sector organisations attract talent, boost workforce efficiency, and deliver services. In this session, Eddie Copeland, Director of the London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI), explores how HR and OD professionals can harness these tools responsibly and strategically to enhance people processes, build digital capability, and drive smarter public services. <b>Eddie Copeland</b> , Director of the London Office of Technology and Innovation ( <b>LOTI</b> )	Queen's Hall
10.50 – 11.15		Tea break and Conference Exhibition Networking	<b>Exhibition Space</b> Princes Hall
11.15 – 12.00	Fringe Sessions	<b>Employment Law: Key Updates and Implications</b> This session provides a concise overview of current employment law developments and their impact on workplaces. Attendees will gain practical guidance on compliance, employee rights, and best practices to navigate legal challenges effectively. <b>Sean Hick</b> , Partner and <b>Claire Gilbert</b> , Legal Director, Capsticks	<b>Breakout rooms</b> Hampton Room
		<b>Equal Pay: Advancing Fairness in the Workplace</b> This session explores the principles, challenges, and practical steps for achieving equal pay. Attendees will gain insights into legal requirements, strategies for addressing pay gaps, and ways to foster a fair and inclusive workplace culture. <b>Luann Donald</b> , Senior Adviser Workforce, Local Government Association (LGA) and <b>Caroline Nugent</b> , Senior Executive Human Resources, Nu-GenHR Ltd	York Room
		<b>Celebrating Excellence: Meet the PPMA Peer &amp; Rising Star Winners</b> A celebratory and interactive session showcasing the outstanding winners of the PPMA Peer, Rising Star and one to watch talent programmes. This session offers a chance to hear directly from participants about their journeys, key takeaways and the impact the programmes have had on their professional growth. A warm and celebratory discussion that highlights the value of developing and championing emerging talent across our sector. Led by <b>Julie Biggs</b> , Awards and Talent Programme Manager, PPMA	Queen's Hall
12.00 – 12.45	Day 2 Closing Keynote	<b>Lessons That Must Be Learned: Reflections from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry</b> In this powerful closing keynote, Mark Hardingham shares critical organisational learning emerging from the public inquiry into the Grenfell Tower fire. Drawing on first-hand involvement and national leadership experience, he explores what the tragedy revealed about system failures, culture, governance, leadership responsibility and organisational resilience. This session invites public sector leaders to reflect on how these lessons can translate into meaningful change across their own organisations, strengthening accountability, improving cross-agency collaboration, and ensuring that learning is not only captured, but acted upon. A thought-provoking and essential discussion for anyone committed to public service improvement. <b>Mark Hardingham</b> , CBE QFSM	Queen's Hall
<b>Conference close – Sandra Farquharson, New PPMA President</b> GRAB AND GO LUNCH			