



3 – 28 March 2025

# EdCon 2025 programme

Redefining education's boundaries through  
innovation, collaboration and creativity

**EdCon**  
**2025**

**Browne**  
**Jacobson**

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## Live sessions

A selection of keynotes, panel discussions and interactive workshops all delivered live and exclusively via the EdCon2025 platform.

Topics span the breadth of our key themes. Dates and timings for each session will be released soon.

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| Theme                        | Title   | Overview   | Speakers  |
|------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Collaborating and connecting | A high performance culture                                  | This session will explore how best to work together to create a high performance culture in your school/Trust.   | <b>Emma Hughes</b><br>Head of HR<br><br><b>Tom Wallace</b><br>Deputy Head of HR Services  |
| Collaborating and connecting | How forging strong alliances will drive sector change       | In this session, we'll explore the emerging role of trusts as civic leaders and how forging strong alliances can bring about meaningful sector change and improvement.   | <b>Charlotte Antoniou</b><br>Partner<br><b>Lydia Michaelson-Yeates</b><br>Legal Director<br><b>Sam Henson</b><br>Deputy Chief Executive, NGA<br><b>Steve Rollett</b><br>Deputy Chief Executive, CST |
| Creativity and innovation    | A proactive approach to data protection                     | Explore innovative strategies and best practices for managing data protection proactively, ensuring that your school not only complies with regulations but also enhances the safety and privacy of your stakeholders.   | <b>Claire Archibald</b><br>Legal Director<br><br><b>Natalie Borrington</b><br>Governance Leader, Aston Community Education Trust  |
| Creativity and innovation    | Creative solutions for managing difficult employees         | Delve into the art of managing difficult employees through the lens of creativity and innovation. From personality clashes and unmeritorious grievances to the misuse of whistleblowing procedures and disciplinary avoidance, explore how to minimise the impact on team dynamics, productivity and morale. | <b>Sarah Linden</b><br>Senior Associate<br><br><b>Sarah Ashley</b><br>Senior HR Consultant  |
| Developing people            | Nurturing diversity and inclusion with Hemisphere Education | Explore how Hemisphere Education's innovative digital CPD programme in racial literacy uses evidence-based strategies, real-life examples and actionable solutions to support school staff to understand, safeguard and nourish minority ethnic students and foster a more inclusive school environment.     | <b>Tom Lyas</b><br>Head of Resourcing at Browne Jacobson<br><br><b>Yasmina Kone</b><br>Hemisphere Education   |

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| Developing people | Cultivating resilience: Fostering a speak-up culture                        | We explore the current whistleblowing climate, emphasising the importance of cultural reviews and the cultivation of a speaking out culture within organisations. We also consider progress in other sectors and what schools and trusts can learn from the NHS. | <p><b>Emma Hughes</b><br/>Partner</p> <p><b>Polly O'Malley</b><br/>Partner</p> <p><b>Helen Badger</b><br/>Partner, Health sector at Browne Jacobson</p> |
| Horizon scanning  | Strategic absence management; focusing on the rise of mental health absence | In this session we'll explore tips and techniques to manage the rise in absences related to mental health; particularly long term.   | <p><b>Tom Wallace</b><br/>Deputy Head of HR Services</p> <p><b>Tanya Jackson</b><br/>Senior HR consultant</p>   |
| Horizon scanning  | AI and safeguarding: Identifying risks and embracing opportunities          | Delve into the dual facets of AI in safeguarding—highlighting the potential risks and vulnerabilities that AI introduces, while also showcasing how AI can be a powerful ally in enhancing safeguarding measures.  | <p><b>Dai Durbridge</b><br/>Partner</p> <p><b>Bethany Paliga</b><br/>Senior Associate</p>   |
| Horizon scanning  | Redefining education's boundaries: Exploring the big priorities             | In this live panel discussion, we'll explore, debate and forecast the key priorities that will shape the education landscape over the next three years.  | <p><b>Nick Mackenzie</b><br/>Partner</p> <p><b>Cathie Paine</b><br/>REAch2</p>  |



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## On-demand light bites

Short and sweet, these videos are a great way to dip in whenever you have a few minutes to spare. Our expert team cover the key takeaways for a range of topics, in five-minute video shorts.

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| Collaborating and connecting | Strengthening SEND: Collaborative pathways across sectors                                | Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision is a critical area within education that benefits greatly from innovative, cross-sector collaboration. As we observe an encouraging trend of partnerships between the independent sector, trusts, and Local Authorities (LAs), there's a growing recognition of the untapped potential in broadening these collaborations to include other pivotal sectors such as health and social care. | <b>Laura Thompson</b><br>Senior Associate  |
| Collaborating and connecting | Working together to safeguard children   | Delve into collaborative strategies for managing high-level school safeguarding cases involving the police and social care.  | <b>Vicky Wilson</b><br>Senior Associate  |
| Collaborating and connecting | Partnership Power: Elevating education through strategic collaboration                   | Featuring key insights from Browne Jacobson and the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), this discussion delves into the practical and transformative power of strategic partnerships in the education sector and why they are now more important than ever.  | <b>Mark Blois</b><br>Partner<br><br><b>Julie McCulloch</b><br>Senior Director of Strategy, Policy & Professional Development Services, Association of School and College Leaders |
| Creativity and innovation    | Three steps to cut your complaints management time                                       | How adopting a fresh mindset and creative approach to complaints management will save staff and governor time and stress and safeguard the home-school relationship.   | <b>Vicky Hatton</b><br>Senior Associate  |
| Creativity and innovation    | Innovating to boost recruitment and retention  | The education sector is facing a critical challenge in recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers and support staff. Traditional approaches to terms and conditions may no longer suffice in the current landscape, necessitating creative and innovative solutions.   | <b>Tom Wallace</b><br>Deputy Head of HR Services   |
| Creativity and innovation    | Fostering inclusion: Creative and innovative approaches to supporting transgender pupils | As schools strive to create inclusive environments for all students, understanding how to support transgender pupils in compliance with the Equality Act becomes crucial. This includes sensitive areas such as changing rooms, toilets, and during residential visits.  | <b>Hayley O'Sullivan</b><br>Senior Associate   |

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| Developing people | Cultivating excellence: Empowering your data protection champions                 | Effective strategies for recognising potential data protection champions, equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge and fostering an environment that encourages innovation and proactive data protection practices. | <b>Bethany Paliga</b><br>Senior Associate   |
| Developing people | Future-proofing your safeguarding team  | The essentials of talent development within the safeguarding context, to secure a resilient, adaptable and skilled team ready to meet the challenges of tomorrow.   | <b>Dai Durbridge</b><br>Partner   |
| Developing people | Top 5 Takeaways from EdCon 2025: Redefining Education's Boundaries                | Our experts share their highlights and top takeaways from this year's EdCon 2025.   | <b>Mark Blois</b><br>Partner<br><b>Polly O'Malley</b><br>Partner<br><b>Emma Hughes</b><br>Partner |
| Horizon scanning  | Navigating new directions - how Labour Government reforms will reshape employment | Explore the practical implications of what the Employment Rights Bill and other proposed changes to employment law will mean for schools and their staff.   | <b>Emily Armistead</b><br>Associate (FCILEx)  |



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## Articles and other EdCon insights

These EdCon-exclusive supporting articles provide you with background reading and further details on the topics we'll be discussing during the conference. They provide a valuable point of reference and source of insight from our team of education lawyers and HR specialists.

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| Theme                        | Title   | Overview  | Speakers  |
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| Collaborating and connecting | What can schools learn from businesses on handling parental complaints?               | An interview with HSBC's ex-commercial manager.   | <b>Vicky Hatton</b><br>Senior Associate   |
| Creativity and innovation    | Making AI work for you  | Artificial Intelligence (AI) stands at the forefront of innovation, offering unprecedented opportunities for schools. In this article, we'll explore what schools can do now to prepare for the change to come.   | <b>Claire Archibald</b><br>Legal Director   |
| Developing people            | Neurodiversity and Well-being Development in Schools                                  | We'll explore the intersection of neurodiversity and well-being, offering insights into how schools can embrace these principles to foster a culture of acceptance, understanding, and growth.  | <b>Hayley Rivens</b><br>HR Consultant   |
| Developing people            | Leadership development: A crucial step in transitioning from teaching to senior roles | Leadership development is crucial for those stepping into these key roles within educational institutions and there are unique challenges and opportunities presented when transitioning from a teaching role to a position within the senior leadership team in a school or trust. | <b>Tom Wallace</b><br>Deputy Head of HR Services  |
| Developing people            | #EdInfluence podcast: in conversation with inspiring leaders                          | Nick Mackenzie hosts a special retrospective with colleagues and fellow executive coaches Emma Hughes and Iain Blatherwick. Together, they reflect on the highlights, recurring themes and hard-hitting ideas shared by guests throughout Series 3 of #EdInfluence.                 | <b>Nick Mackenzie</b><br>Partner<br><b>Emma Hughes</b><br>Partner<br><b>Iain Blatherwick</b><br>Partner |

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| Horizon scanning | Trends in school exclusions and implications for the future of education | The issue of school exclusions remains a pressing concern, with indications that challenges may intensify. This trend is particularly significant in light of the increasing recognition of the intersection between Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and the rates of school exclusions.   | <b>Philip Wood</b><br>Senior Associate                                 |
| Horizon scanning | School Leaders Survey and what you are telling us                        | Research for this survey was carried out during October 2024 with respondents representing over 1,650 schools, collectively responsible for nearly 1 million pupils from across all regions of England. In this survey, we also revisit two key issues for the sector for a more detailed look – Artificial Intelligence and SEND. Both sections will give leaders food for thought when planning their priorities and approaches in 2025. | <b>Nick Mackenzie</b><br>Partner<br><b>Heather Mitchell</b><br>Partner |

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