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Your **guide** to the

**NDNA Conference 2026**

**Transforming tomorrow: The power  
of early years today**

Titanic Hotel, Liverpool | Friday 5 June 2026

# Welcome to the

# 2026 NDNA Conference

## Transforming tomorrow: The power of early years today

We are delighted to welcome you to the NDNA Conference 2026, our flagship event for the early years sector.

We are thrilled to return to the iconic Titanic Hotel in Liverpool, bringing together nursery owners, managers and early years leaders from across the country for a day of inspiration, learning and connection. Last year I spoke about NDNA remaining like a lighthouse for the sector among the waves of change and challenges and now we want to look to the future.

This year's theme, "Transforming tomorrow: the power of early years today", reflects the vital role early years professionals play in shaping children's futures and driving positive change across society. The event will showcase how high-quality early education and strong leadership can have a lasting impact, not only on children, but on communities and the wider world.

We can't wait to hear from the amazing Professor Dr Ger Graus OBE whose own experiences spurred him to be a champion for all children and their rights the world over. Hear the latest updates from Ofsted and get to put your questions to Sir Martyn Oliver and Jayne Coward.

Be inspired by the incredible journey of Christian Lewis, who walked the length of the UK coastline starting with just £10, a broken tent and a sense of purpose. We will also ask a hand-picked panel of experts to explore the topic of safeguarding, discussing culture, cameras and challenging conversations.

We are delighted to welcome back education and political journalist Matilda Martin, who has written extensively about the early years sector and will chair our conference today. At the end of the day, I hope you return to your nurseries with new ideas and inspiration to put into place straight away.



Tim McLachlan,  
NDNA Chief Executive

Join in the conversation online! Share your views on social media. Please tag NDNA so we can like and share your posts and use our hashtag #NDNAConference

    @NDNAtalk

 NDNA  @NDNA

# How to get the most out of NDNA Conference

We're thrilled that you've chosen to spend your day with us and want to make sure you get the most out of your conference.



## Improve your practice...

around the neuroscience of why infants and young children learn best from slow-paced, predictable interactions, with Professor Sam Wass.



## Be more informed...

about the UK Government's priorities for early education and care with Olivia Bailey MP's session.



## Save time and money...

with our wide range of exhibitors offering high-quality products and services at discounted prices for your nursery in one place.



## Receive expert advice for peace of mind...

when visiting our early years helpdesk for advice and support and attending our early years business panel to explore current challenges and solutions.



## Have a stronger voice...

by sharing your views with Ofsted in their Q&A session and networking with like-minded professionals to build a collective voice.



## Support and nurture your staff...

by enabling your practitioners to access your on-demand virtual conference stream sessions around building babies brains, poetry, language, rhythm and rhyme, maths on a shoestring for all ages and escapade into provision.

Scan to access the virtual conference stream: [ndna.org.uk/VirtualConferenceStream](https://ndna.org.uk/VirtualConferenceStream)



# Leadership Stream

8.20am	<b>Registration and exhibition</b>
9.30am	<b>Chair's welcome</b>
9.35am	<b>NDNA address</b> Tim McLachlan, Chief Executive of NDNA, will give an update on the latest sector developments.
9.45am	<b>"Whatever the question, education is always the answer"</b> Professor Dr Ger Graus OBE will cover aspiration from an early age, how community and family provision is essential and how not every classroom has four walls.
10.30am	<b>When childhood glows: technology, brain development and broken bonds</b> Professor Sam Wass discusses the neuroscience of why infants and young children learn best from slow-paced, predictable interactions.
11.15am	<b>Exhibition and refreshments</b>
12.00pm	<b>UK Government's priorities for early education and care</b> Olivia Bailey MP will give an update on the UK Government's priorities for early education and care.
12.35pm	<b>Leading Gen Z: managing the next generation of early years professionals</b> Farah Farooq will explore how leaders can effectively engage, motivate, and retain Gen Z employees.
1.00pm	<b>Exhibition and lunch</b>
2.10pm	<b>Safeguarding: culture, cameras and challenging conversations</b> Discussion panel featuring Rob Allman, Area Operations Manager, London Early Years Foundation (LEYF); Rick Gardner, Managing Director, CPOMs; Gail Murphy, Early Years Development Manager, Designated Safeguarding Lead, NDNA; Sue Robb, Best Start in Life Champion and Sarah Sanger, CEO The Woodentops Nurseries, NDNA Trustee and NDNA London Network Chair. Chaired by Jane Haywood, NDNA Chair of Trustees.
3.00pm	<b>Exhibition and refreshments</b>
3.45pm	<b>Your chance to get your questions answered by Ofsted</b> Hear a short update and get your questions answered by Sir Martyn Oliver and Jayne Coward.
4.15pm	<b>Reflecting on my early years journey</b> Purnima Tanuku CBE will reminisce on her whole early years career as she bids farewell to NDNA.
4.25pm	<b>Walking the entire UK coastline</b> Christian Lewis will share his story of walking the UK coastline. Now as father to a three-year-old, hear how his nomadic family embrace outdoor learning, curiosity and connection with nature.
5.10pm	<b>Close</b>

Coming to our  
Awards evening?  
Get your gladrags  
on and join us from  
7pm!



## Conference Chair

Matilda Martin is a Political Reporter at PoliticsHome with a specialism in education. Before joining PoliticsHome, Matilda was a Senior Reporter at Tes (Times Educational Supplement) magazine. She has written many early years features, covering NDNA's research and is familiar with the sector's challenges.

# Your speakers



**Professor Dr Ger Graus OBE** is a renowned figure in the field of education across the globe. Ger champions the cause of equity, progress, purpose, creativity and innovation in children's learning. Driven by his famous mantra that "Children can only aspire to what they know exists", he champions the cause of equity, progress, purpose, creativity, and innovation in children's learning.



**Tim McLachlan** is NDNA's Chief Executive, supported by the Board of Trustees he leads the strategic direction of NDNA. He represents the private, voluntary and independent nursery sector to local and national governments across England, Scotland and Wales at the highest level, meeting regularly with ministers, senior civil servants, parliamentarians and local authorities.



**Professor Sam Wass** is a child psychologist and neuroscientist who studied at Oxford, London, and Cambridge. He studies typical and atypical development, including ADHD, Autism, anxiety and collaborates on international projects studying early development.



**Olivia Bailey MP** is the Minister for Early Education and Equalities and MP for Reading West and Mid Berkshire. She worked in policy and public opinion research, and held senior roles in a range of think tanks and research bodies.



**Farah Farooq** is the Founder and Director of Bright Bees Nursery Group and Scope Training. With over 15 years experience, she leads settings in deprived areas and works closely with authorities and employers to strengthen workforce development.



**Sir Martyn Oliver** started as His Majesty's Chief Inspector at the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills in January 2024. Sir Martyn has also previously held Trustee positions for the Office for Students (OfS), Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), Confederation of Schools Trusts (CST) and for the David Ross Education Trust (DRET).



**Jayne Coward** has worked at Ofsted for 16 years, both as an inspector and senior manager. Before joining Ofsted, she worked in local authority, leading on the development of a variety of early years initiatives, including the Sure Start programme.



**Purnima Tanuku CBE**, led NDNA as Chief Executive and latterly as Executive Chair from 2005 until March 2026. For more than two decades she was a familiar campaigning figure for the early years sector and the voice of PVI nurseries across the UK.



**Christian Lewis** completed a six-year, 19,000-mile walk around the entire UK coastline in July 2023, raising over £500,000 for the charity SSAFA. His story is one of endurance, adaptability, and turning setbacks into opportunities.

# Brilliant benefits from Hope for **NDNA** members

NEW

15%  
OFF

15% off  
every order

20%  
OFF

20% off one  
order per year

Up to  
70%  
OFF

Up to 70% off over  
350 essentials



Free delivery with  
no minimum spend

**HOPE**  
is all you need

T&C's apply see website for details

Hope are proud to be NDNA's corporate partner.  
Claim your NDNA member benefits today  
Simply visit [hope-education.co.uk/NDNA](https://hope-education.co.uk/NDNA) or call us on  
0345 120 2055 and we will do the rest for you.



# Get your business ready for anything

Work smarter, not harder with Citation's all-in-one HR and Health & Safety support, delivered by people who really believe in your early years business.



**Documentation sorted for you** – including contracts, handbooks, and policies, and stored online in Atlas for you to distribute to your employees



**Tribunal and safety enforcement protection** – up to £1.5million a year



**24/7 expert advice line** – round the clock access to HR and Health & Safety experts



**Fire risk assessments** – Fire safety made easy with annual fire risk assessment support



**Atlas** – our smart onestop business service hub



**Policies and procedures** – All the HR and Health & Safety templates you need for peace of mind



**Certified e-learning** – Hundreds of courses to quickly and easily train and upskill your people in all key areas



**Cyber security services** – to protect your data and systems

As a Citation client, you could be...

**93%**

less likely to face an employment tribunal claim from your employees\*

**47x**

less likely to face an HSE enforcement notice\*

**61%**

less likely to have a reportable accident\*

**7x**

less likely to suffer a major accident in the workplace\*

\*vs national averages

## Let's get you ready for anything

Citation are here to help you save time, stress and money. From helping you complete the correct risk assessments and draft the right policies to helping you train your people, Citation are here to take the complication out of compliance.

Ready to get started with us? Come and see us at our stand or scan the QR code to find out more.



# Our sponsors



## Hope

For almost 130 years, Hope has been dedicated to supporting schools, nurseries and educators in inspiring future generations.

Hope believes the people who nurture young minds are some of the most important people on earth.

We listen and understand the challenges and aspirations you face, which is why we've curated the most innovative and extensive range of products to help make your lives easier. Whether it's for art, for maths, for furniture, for support or for ideas, Hope is all you need.

Visit [www.hope-education.co.uk](http://www.hope-education.co.uk) or call 0345 120 2055.



## Citation

At Citation, we specialise in supporting early years providers by simplifying your HR & Employment Law and Health & Safety compliance. With 30 years of experience supporting settings like yours, we help nurseries stay compliant, keep up with regulations and achieve best practice. Let us handle the admin, so you can nurture young minds. NDNA members get 10% off new client contracts so call for a quote today.

Visit [www.citation.co.uk](http://www.citation.co.uk) or call 0345 844 1111.

# Our exhibitors



## Christie & Co

Christie & Co is the leading specialist advisor for buying and selling businesses in the childcare and education sector.

We offer unrivalled expertise across professional services for childcare and education business and property, with our services underpinned by in-depth market intelligence and accreditation from the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors.

Visit [www.christie.com](http://www.christie.com) or call 0333 034 1751.



## Community Playthings

Children need simple, natural environments that promote open-ended, imaginative play. Since 1947 Community Playthings has designed and manufactured solid wood furniture and play equipment, drawing on expertise from childcare professionals across the UK and internationally. Our products inspire play, support all aspects of child development and come with a 15-year warranty.

Visit [www.communityplaythings.co.uk](http://www.communityplaythings.co.uk) or call 0800 387 457.



## Cool Milk

Cool Milk is the UK's leading provider of FREE milk to early years settings. Family-owned with over 26 years of experience managing the government free milk scheme. We partner with 400+ local independent dairies, farmers and suppliers to supply milk to all nursery groups and schools, both large and small.

Visit [www.coolmilk.com](http://www.coolmilk.com) or call 0800 3213248.

# The NDNA exhibition



## CPOMS

CPOMS is the leading safeguarding software for early years. Securely record, track, and manage concerns with ease. Trusted, intuitive, and built to support safer, more responsive nurseries.

Visit [www.cpoms.co.uk](http://www.cpoms.co.uk) or call 01756 797766.



## Eczema Outreach Support

Our UK-wide community supports and connects those navigating young lives with eczema, from birth to 25 years, through crisis and beyond. Our personalised support, specialist education and helpful resources are easy-to-access and completely free - because one child's future lost to eczema is one too many.

Visit [www.eos.org.uk](http://www.eos.org.uk) or call 01506 840395.



## eyworks Ltd

The only all-in-one nursery management software built to grow with you. eyworks gives you the tools, resources, and stability to build resilient, thriving settings.

Modular by design, you can start with the modules you need today and add more as your nursery grows, without paying for features you don't use.

Visit [www.eyworks.co.uk](http://www.eyworks.co.uk) or call 0330 088 2008.



## Judge's Demand

Judge's Demand specialise in recovering unpaid nursery fees. NDNA members receive a special 50% discount and only pay £300.00 + vat to register. We work on a completely no win no fee basis. Email [info@judgesdemand.co.uk](mailto:info@judgesdemand.co.uk) for more info. We can take away the hassle and frustration of collecting unpaid fees.

Visit [www.judgesdemand.co.uk](http://www.judgesdemand.co.uk) or call 0151 329 2138.



## Maths Champions, Millie's Mark and National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)

Maths Champions is a 12-month online professional development programme designed to build early years practitioners' knowledge and confidence in supporting children's mathematical development.

Millie's Mark is the gold standard in paediatric first aid for early years.

NDNA is the national charity supporting day nurseries - we are dedicated to making a difference. Visit our early years helpdesk for support and advice.

Visit [www.milliesmark.com](http://www.milliesmark.com), [www.ndna.org.uk](http://www.ndna.org.uk) or call 01484 407070.



## Nuuri

Nuuri is a new platform helping nurseries attract families by transforming how they're discovered online. By creating a powerful digital shop front and improving the pre-enrolment experience, Nuuri supports your digitalisation journey - giving you back time and helping you stand out to the right parents.

Visit [www.nuuri.co.uk](http://www.nuuri.co.uk).

# The NDNA exhibition



## Owen Froebel Limited

Day Nursery Brokerage with a difference! Owen Froebel offers a consultative approach working closely with Sellers ahead of sale to maximise value and get the kind of sale they want. Whether Buying or Selling, clients can expect full support the whole way through, from agreeing a sale, to handing over the keys.

Visit [www.owenfroebel.co.uk](http://www.owenfroebel.co.uk) or call 024 7601 3929.



## Petit Wagon

Petit Wagon, an Edinburgh based company, is transforming child mobility with the Beetle: a foldable and compact stroller wagon that weighs only 17kg and seats four children. It offers interactive seating with a snack tray, detachable seats, a winter shell, and can be customised with your nursery logo.

Visit [www.petitwagon.com](http://www.petitwagon.com) or call 0131 210 0199.



## Teaching Personnel

Teaching Personnel is the UK's trusted partner in education recruitment. Since 1996, teachers and classroom support staff have trusted Teaching Personnel to help them find rewarding roles in UK schools. Their mission is simple: to make a real difference every day through staffing, tutoring, and supply.

Visit [www.teachingpersonnel.com](http://www.teachingpersonnel.com).



## Tradebridge

Financing for Nurseries. Grow with confidence - flexible, reliable funding built for early years providers. Invest in your team, setting and future, so your children and your business can thrive. Smooth cash flow between funding cycles. Cover costs like refurbishments or wages. Invest in environments and training. Financial breathing room - without risking personal assets. Speak to us today to find out how we can help.

Visit [www.tradebridge.com](http://www.tradebridge.com) or call 020 7313 8088.



## Veale Wasbrough Vizards

Nurseries and early years providers operate in a highly regulated sector, balancing changing government funding models, safeguarding obligations, and staffing challenges. Our specialist education lawyers provide clear, practical legal advice on regulatory compliance, employment law, inspections, and property matters, helping nurseries remain resilient and focused on delivering high-quality early education.

Visit [www.vwv.co.uk](http://www.vwv.co.uk) or call 0117 925 2020.



## Widgit

We are Widgit, a software company with a passion for symbols-based communication. We empower individuals to express themselves independently, aiding comprehension and understanding across any environment. Our Widgit Online and InPrint software give users access to over 20,000 symbols designed to meet the unique needs of symbol users worldwide.

Visit [www.widgit.com](http://www.widgit.com) or call 01926 333680.

# Latest updates and offers from NDNA

Find out more on our website or ask about our offers and products at our NDNA and Millie's Mark stand in the exhibition today!

## Special offer bundles

Make huge savings on online training with our online course bundles.

The member exclusive core training bundles include 20 essential and mandatory training course titles heavily discounted for NDNA members. Our range of courses includes safeguarding and child protection, food hygiene and working with babies. With no expiry date on your purchase, NDNA's online bundles are ideal for making long term savings on your training budget.

You will receive one enrolment key that identifies learners as working for your nursery.

For more details please go to the website:  
[www.ndna.org.uk/OnlineTraining](http://www.ndna.org.uk/OnlineTraining)

## Inspection consultancy: From compliance to confidence

### NDNA In-house Support

NDNA offers two packages of support for settings to develop confidence and reassurance that they can meet renewed Ofsted inspection framework standards. Each visit is carried out by an independent advisor who will spend time in your provision reviewing current practice.

The packages are not just about compliance. They are there to help settings demonstrate quality practice confidently under scrutiny.

This **standard package** covers all areas of provision reviewed in line with the Early Years Inspection framework. Whilst, the **bespoke package** focuses on specific area chosen by you.



#### The benefits include:

- An opportunity for all staff to experience an independent external evaluation of practice across your provision
- Empowers practitioners to review and develop their own practice
- Demonstrates to parents and professionals the setting's commitment to developing high-quality practice for all children
- Provides a comprehensive review of practice, giving practical ideas and strategies to further quality, tailored to your setting's needs.

Note: The focus of NDNA's support is on the quality of provision and not business consultancy (staffing, finance, premises, etc).

#### Full day standard package

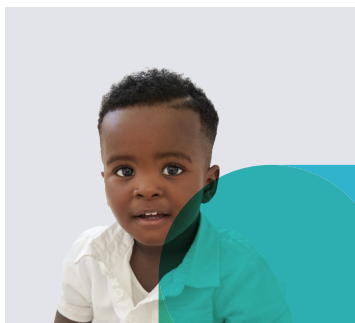
Members - £870.00 Non-members - £1,116.00

#### Full day bespoke package

Members - £870.00 Non-members - £1,116.00

Scan to find out more:

[www.ndna.org.uk/InspectionConsultancy](http://www.ndna.org.uk/InspectionConsultancy)



25 courses for £330



50 courses for £550



100 courses for £830



250 courses for £1,655



500 courses for £2,760



Proudly sponsored by:



**Thank you for joining us**

**at NDNA Conference 2026**

We hope you have a fantastic day engaging with our speakers, visiting our exhibition and learning from your early years peers.

Please fill in our feedback forms and let us know your thoughts before you leave.

