Welcome to the...

NAFIS Conference and Awards 2026

NAFIS

National Association of
Family Information Services



coram
Family and Childcare

NAFIS Conference and Awards 2026

Day 1 Tuesday 10 November

10:00 — **Welcome**
Lydia Hodges
Head of Coram Family and Childcare

10:10 - 10:40 — **An update on the Best Start in Life Strategy**
Charlotte Hollom
Head of Delivery, Best Start in Life,
Department for Education

10:40 - 11:10 — **Meeting and exceeding the GLD target - Moving the Box**
James Hempsall OBE
Managing Director, Coram Hempsall's

11:10 - 11:40 — **Break**

11:40 - 12:10 — **Findings from a regional early years workforce data project**
Lucie Stephens
Associate Director, Research,
Early Education and Childcare Coalition

12:10 - 12:45 — **School-age childcare strategy**
JJ Clark
School-Age Childcare Strategy Lead,
Department for Education

12:45 - 13:45 — **Lunch break**

13:45 - 15:00 — **FIS Forum with Maryam Makki and Paul Herbert (NAFIS Co-Chairs)**
An opportunity to raise any issues or concerns your Family Information Service is experiencing and gather ideas, support and advice from other FIS colleagues

Day 2 Wednesday 11 November

10:00 — **Welcome**
Lydia Hodges
Head of Coram Family and Childcare

10:10 - 10:40 — **'What price is free? The price effects of England's childcare reforms' research**
Dr Joanna Clifton-Sprigg
Senior Lecturer (Associate Professor), Department of Economics,
University of Bath

10:40 - 11:10 — **Update from Ofsted**
Zoe Hodgson (Senior Policy Officer) & Lucy O'Farrelly (Policy Officer)
Early Years Regulatory Policy and Practice, Regulation and Social Care Directorate & Early Education Policy Team, Ofsted

11:10 - 11:40 — **How will the SEND reforms affect families?**
Liz Devlin, Legal Team Member, IPSEA
IPSEA is a charity that offers free, independent legal advice and support to families of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities

11:40 - 12:10 — **Break**

12:10 - 12:50 — Choose ONE of the two workshops below:

Workshop 1
Ellie Grace
CFC
Reviewing the impact and reach of your FIS. This workshop will look at how to review the work of your FIS, evidence reach and impact and bring about change in your local authority.

Workshop 2
Dan Sutch
CAST
How to engage families and share information about your FIS in a new world of AI. Practical advice on ways to ensure trusted FIS information reaches your local families.

12:50 - 13:20 — **NAFIS Awards & close of conference**
Presentation to the winners of this year's NAFIS Awards
- Best Community Engagement Award
- Best Family Information Service Directory Award
- Best Local Offer Directory Award



Please note that this agenda is subject to change and may be amended as necessary.

Speakers

Day 1 - Tuesday 10 November



Charlotte Hollom is head of Local Authority Best Start in Life delivery at the Department for Education (DfE), in a jobshare with Laura Street. Charlotte and Laura head up a team of regional leads who connect with every local authority in the country to help support progress towards their GLD targets and improve outcomes for children and families. Previously, Charlotte has worked in a variety of roles in DfE, including most recently as Programme Director for Best Start Family Hubs.



For over 30 years **James Hempsall** has worked in the children's services sector driving service improvement, effecting change, and leading national implementation of key Government programmes in pre-school learning and childcare. James' work has focused on improving learning outcomes for all children with a particular emphasis on least advantaged children, parental employment, equalities and anti-discriminatory practice. James' career has been spent supporting organisations across the public, private and voluntary sectors to develop high quality and sustainable childcare, and support families to break the cycles and symptoms of disadvantage and poverty.



Lucie Stephens is the Associate Director of Research at the Early Education and Childcare Coalition. Lucie steers the Coalition's research, supporting collaborations among member organisations and leading applied research with strategic authorities including Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and the North East Mayoral Strategic Authority (North East MSA). She has worked on co-produced childcare and early education provision since 2012 and was instrumental in the co-design of the Coalition during its development phase.



JJ Clark is a strategy and policy leader in the Department for Education, where he leads work on the future of School-Age Childcare in England. His role focuses on identifying and developing new ways to help families benefit from affordable, accessible and enriching childcare, building on programmes such as free breakfast clubs, wraparound childcare and holiday activities and food provision.

JJ previously held policy positions in early years and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Alongside his work in government, he is undertaking a doctorate in education, with broader academic interests in social and family policy.



Paul Herbert is currently the School-Age Childcare Lead and FIS Manager in the East Riding of Yorkshire, where he has worked for 19 years within various roles across the early years team. Although the two roles are very different, they compliment each other in regards to ensure sufficient places are available across the county and that both PVI and school provision are equally sustainable. The role with NAFIS is one he says he enjoys as the FIS are an "unsung" team across LAs, providing vital support, advice and guidance for parents, carers, professionals and settings.



Maryam Makki is the Family & Information Manager for Reading Borough Council. She manages Reading's Family Information Service, and leads the SEND Local Offer and the digital development of Best Start in Life Family Hubs. Passionate about service improvement and digital transformation, she works collaboratively with parent carers, young people, and partners to develop inclusive, accessible services that make a meaningful difference to people's lives.

A committed member of the National Association of Family Information Services (NAFIS) since 2010, Maryam actively promotes collaboration and the sharing of best practice to strengthen Family Information Services and improve outcomes for families locally and nationally.

Speakers

Day 2 - Wednesday 11 November



Dr Joanna Clifton-Sprigg is a Senior Lecturer in Economics at the University of Bath. Her research is in labour and gender economics, with a particular interest in family policy, migration and education. She uses applied microeconometric methods to study how public policies affect individuals and families, and her recent work has examined parental leave and childcare policy in the UK.



Zoe Hodgson is a Senior Policy Officer working in the Early Years Regulatory Policy and Practice team at Ofsted. She is responsible for coordinating a variety of projects and communications across regulatory policy, including registration and enforcement areas.



Lucy O'Farrelly is a Policy Officer working in the Early Education policy team at Ofsted. She is responsible for coordinating a variety of projects and communications relating to early years inspection policy, including supporting the development of the renewed education inspection framework for settings registered on the Early Years Register.



Liz Devlin is a member of IPSEA's Legal Team. She provides legal support to new and existing volunteers and supervises and monitors the advice provided on IPSEA's helplines. She also delivers SEND Law training to parents, carers and professionals across the country. As part of IPSEA's Policy Team, Liz gets involved in both local and national policy work and contributes to creating content which is shared on IPSEA's social media platforms. Liz's role includes reviewing and updating the IPSEA website to ensure information is kept current and she enjoys creating new website resources for parents and young people to use, such as template letters.



Dan Sutch is Co-founder and Director of CAST (wearecast.org.uk), a charity that works to ensure the voice, presence and influence of civil society in the technologies that affect us all. CAST works with nonprofits, charities and funders to ensure worthwhile uses of digital, design and AI across their services, strategy and governance and works with sector leaders, funders and government to make this happen.



Ellie Grace is Programmes and Development Manager at Coram Family and Childcare. Ellie leads a suite of programmes including Parent Champions; working closely with local authorities to improve outcomes for families and children. Ellie's background spans early years, arts education, community engagement and parent and youth participation.

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Stay in touch with Flora and Alicia who co-ordinate the NAFIS membership:



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