

SPEAKER & WORKSHOP DETAILS

AUTUMN CONFERENCE

02 DECEMBER 2025

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Association of Business
Leaders in Education



Morning Keynote and Workshops

Nick Bowen

After 10 successful years in the North East as Headteacher at St Benet Biscop Catholic High School, where Nick received the Queens Award for Enterprise Promotion, he moved to Barnsley to set up Horizon Community College.

As Principal Designate, he managed the closure and amalgamation of two failing schools to form a state of the art £50 million school for 2,300 students.

As Principal, he successfully navigated the school through significant change, experiencing all the issues above, yet managing to retain and recruit quality staff, get parents on board and significantly raise aspirations and outcomes for young people.

As Executive Principal, he managed the Barnsley Schools Alliance, leading on school improvement across the borough and led Horizon, one of the biggest secondary schools in the country, to be part of a hugely successful academy trust: HCAT

For many years, Nick was a Headteacher Ambassador for the Youth Sports Trust, the Women's FA and the Career and Enterprise Company. Nick is now a professional speaker who became the Professional Speakers Association 'Emerging Speaker of the Year' for 2025.



Keynote Overview- The Power of Belonging

Nick's keynote talk focuses on Authentic Leadership and how this creates a culture of Belonging, Dignity and Fulfilment enabling the perfect balance of Empowerment and Accountability to work its magic.

Nick has a powerful grasp of the story telling aspect of his message, exploring the lighter side of working in schools as well as bringing to life some of the colourful characters in those communities, whilst emphasising the importance of authentic leadership.

Workshop Overview - Making Difficult Decisions for the Right Reasons

Senior leaders often repeat the same mantras:

"We have no money."

"It's not in the budget."

"The government doesn't fund us enough."

"Funding cuts make it impossible."

Lack of money is the most common reason given for not doing what we want—or need—to do. But it isn't the only one:

"The unions won't allow it."

"Staff won't support it."

"It would take too long to consult."

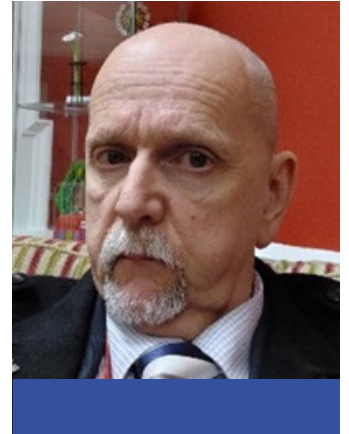
"Parents would go to the press."

The School Business Manager plays a vital role in helping headteachers move beyond these barriers—opening doors, removing obstacles, and focusing on solutions.

In this workshop, Nick Bowen will explore how leaders can stop shying away from perceived 'difficult' decisions, and instead invest in priorities and adapt systems to do what is right for their schools.

Workshop - HR Q & A – Dr Chris J. Whitmore, MA PhD (Keele) ILM L7 MCCT FloL, Schools People

CEO; HR and Employment Law Consultant and practitioner; Fellow of the Institute of Leadership, Fellow of the Association for Coaching; lifelong active trade unionist, historian, and HRM/ industrial relations academic; Chris has spent over 35 years in workplace advocacy, employment relations and employment law practice.



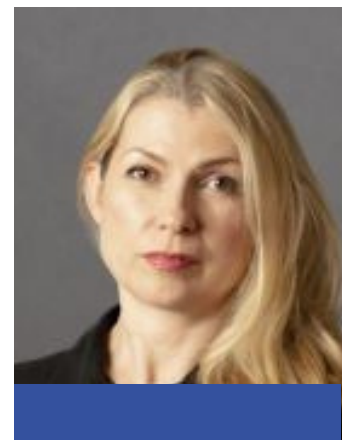
Workshop Overview

This one hour session will allow delegates to bring along HR or employment law questions they are dealing with. Chris Whitmore has over 35 years experience and will give actionable advice and guidance for you to take back to your school, academy or MAT.

Please note that this is an open session so not confidential. ABLE is trialling 1:1 confidential sessions with Chris at the spring conference on 11th March 2026.

Workshop - AI Compliance – Clare Wilson, Head of Digital Traded Services – CIPPe, CIPM, LL.B (Hons) Lond, MSETDerbyshire County Council

Formerly one of our Service Managers and Education Data Hub Team Leader, and a senior leader and teacher in both FE and Secondary, Clare's background as a DPO, an author, senior examiner, teacher trainer and teacher of law, makes her uniquely placed to understand the impact of data protection legislation on the management and governance of a school.



Workshop Overview

Whether we like it or not AI is here and rapidly becoming a fact of life. In order for schools to embrace and harness the potential of AI, it is essential to take strategic control, incorporating principles, practices, tools and governance.

This session will cover: - What is AI - Regulation & the regulators - AI governance, Principles and Policy - Personal data collected by AI - Where to get started - DPIAs

Afternoon Keynote and Workshops

Keynote – Pam Burrows – Be the Pick of the Bunch!

Pam Burrows has been helping leaders and teams stress less and perform better for over 30 years, both locally and internationally. She has travelled globally delivering researched behaviour change strategies to blue chip companies. With one of her key customers, she was awarded a European Health and Safety award for reducing stress in the workplace. She is a qualified Nursery Nurse, Social Worker, a Master Practitioner in Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) and a Neuro-Science Professional. She blends this range of knowledge with techniques that empower positive behaviour change and increase wellbeing. Pam is an inspiring facilitator. Her sessions are interactive and energising. She is a Fellow of the Professional Speaking Association (PSA).



Find more information about why Pam is the 'People Booster' at

www.pamburrows.com

See Pam's feel good techniques at

www.youtube.com/c/pamburrowspeoplebooster

Let's connect on LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/pamburrowspeoplebooster

Keynote overview

With tools for Presence, Impact, Confidence, Kick-Ass influence.

You're spinning plates, solving problems, and holding it all together—but who's holding space for you? In this energising and empowering keynote, we'll explore how to step out of survival mode and into your full leadership presence, without burning out or selling out.

Learn practical tools to:

- Communicate with confidence and be heard in senior leadership conversations
- Set boundaries that protect your time and boost your status
- Make small, powerful mindset shifts that change how you're perceived
- Lead with authority, while staying true to your values

Whether you're ready for the next step in your career or simply want to feel more in control and appreciated, this session will reconnect you to your calm power and leave you recharged, respected, and ready.

Workshop - The Quiet Power of Presence: Influence Without the Overwhelm

Ideal for introverts or those tired of trying to 'prove' themselves. Discover how to lead with presence, inspire confidence in others, and elevate your influence - without raising your voice or raising your stress.

Workshop - Budget Planning – Vicky Butters, SAAF

Vicky brings over 25 years of experience in delivering strategic, operational, and transactional financial management support to schools, academies, and multi-academy trusts. Her experience has been built through her current role as Assistant Director at SAAF Education, as well as her previous position within Nottingham City Council's School Finance Team. Vicky has also stepped in as Acting CFO for several trusts, further demonstrating her versatility and leadership in the sector. She has extensive knowledge of school and academy finance and supports clients in many functions, including annual budget setting, medium-term plans, and forecasting.



Workshop Overview

School budgets are complex, with income arriving from multiple sources and timelines that don't always align. This workshop will help School Business Leaders gain clarity and confidence in understanding and managing funding streams.

We will explore the difference between financial and academic years and why this distinction matters when planning and forecasting. Participants will learn how to identify both core and additional income, including formula-based grants and other funding sources, and how to interpret funding statements with confidence.

The session will also focus on practical strategies for accurate forecasting across the school or academy financial year, enabling leaders to plan effectively, maximise resources, and support long-term priorities.

Workshop: Dedicated Delegate Networking

This session is your opportunity for uninterrupted networking with peers, away from the usual agenda structure. Instead of a formal workshop, the time is yours to make valuable connections, share experiences, and discuss the issues that matter most to you.

The format is completely free-flowing: create your own discussion groups with fellow delegates, take the chance to revisit exhibitors you may have missed, or simply enjoy relaxed conversations with colleagues.

Spaces will be open throughout Eastwood Hall — from the Lawrence Suite and exhibition area to the seating spaces — giving you the freedom to connect in a way that suits you best.

Use this time to strengthen your professional network, exchange ideas, and take away insights you can put into practice back in school.

