

# Conference Programme

## DFN Project SEARCH Conference 2026: Building Bridges



Join us for this year's DFN Project SEARCH Conference 2026, where we'll be celebrating the theme *Bridging Futures* and the vital connections that help transform lives. As we look to support 10,000 young adults with a learning disability, who are autistic, or both into work by 2030, why not join us to discover how every job secured becomes a bridge to independence and opportunity?

### Day One Agenda 21 April

### 21-22 April 2026

The Eastside Rooms, 2 Woodcock Street, Birmingham, B7 4BL

10:00	Arrival and check in
11:00	Welcome - Mark Hudson, Chair of Board of Trustees & Kirsty Matthews, CEO of DFN Project SEARCH
11:25	Keynote (supporting the core objectives of the conference)
11:45	Panel (exploring themes central to the conference objectives)
12:20	Awards
12:45-14:00	Lunch, networking and marketplace

### Our Afternoon Workshops

Our afternoon workshops will focus on a variety of sessions across five core strands. Ahead of the conference, you'll have the opportunity to pre-book the workshops you wish to participate in. You'll rotate around rooms to attend your chosen workshop, with 15 minute comfort breaks scheduled inbetween each session.

#### Session 1

14:00-15:00

#### Session 2

15:15-16:15

#### Session 3

16:30-17:30

### Our Strands

Advocacy & Engagement

Programme Essentials

Looking to the Future

Inclusive Employment

Networking

#### Example Workshop!

Why We Give Back:  
Young Advocates  
Driving Change

#### Example Workshop!

What Does Good  
Inclusive  
Recruitment Look  
Like?

#### Example Workshop!

Outcomes Session:  
Insights From Our  
Longest Serving  
Programmes

17:30

Close - prepare for evening Awards Ceremony and Gala Dinner

# Awards Ceremony and Gala Dinner

Join us for our highly-anticipated Awards Ceremony and Gala Dinner on the evening of 21 April...

 The Eastside Rooms

 19:30 – Midnight



With a special performance from the Queen Alexandra College Collective, a music group from Queen Alexandra College in Birmingham, which supports a diverse range of student abilities and needs.

## Day Two Agenda 22 April

 The Eastside Rooms, 2 Woodcock Street, Birmingham, B7 4BL

09:00

Welcome & Awards

09:45

Panel

10:30–11:00

*Break, networking and marketplace*

11:00–12:00

Advocacy & Engagement

Programme Essentials

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**Example Workshop!**

Intern Recruitment

12:00–13:15

*Lunch, networking and marketplace*

13:15–14:15

Advocacy & Engagement

Programme Essentials

Looking to the Future

Inclusive Employment

Networking

**Example Workshop!**

Regional/Country Meeting - Opportunity to Network

14:15–14:30

*Break, networking and marketplace*

14:30

Closing Remarks

15:00

Conference Finish