

Day One: Thursday 10 July

TIME	MAIN AUDITORIUM (Rosalind Franklin Room)	
9.00 to 9.45	Registration. Sign in at reception	
9.45 to 9.55	Welcome and introduction (and housekeeping)	
Session 1		
9.55 to 10.15	Welcome to Bristol The Leader of Bristol City Council, Cllr Tony Dyer, will welcome delegates to Bristol, and share his thoughts on the importance of effective communications.	
Session 2		
10.15 to 11.10	The glue that binds us In an era defined by division and discord, how can councils build, repair and maintain cohesion in their communities? • Tamara Kodikara, London Borough of Barnet, • Graham Ceccarelli, Bristol City Council • John Smith, Bristol City Council, • Johnathan Schroder, London Borough of Barnet	
11.10 to 11.25	Break and refreshments	
Session 3		
11.25 to 12.10	THE ROSALIND FRANKLIN ROOM	ANNEXE
	Finding your way through the complexities of local government reorganisation • Jonathan Carr-West, Chief Executive of LGIU (Local Government Information Unit) • Simon Jones, Executive Director of Communications, Westco • Peter Elliot, Head Of Communications and Engagement at Somerset Council • Georgia Turner, Communications consultant • Abbey Cortazzi, Head of Transformation Communications at Surrey County Council	An inspector calls...Helping your organisation shine through inspection and peer challenge. • Matt Nicholls, Head of Communications Improvement at the LGA • Jayne Taylor Head of Communications at St Helens Borough Council
Session 4		
12.10 to 13.00	Keynote – Dawn Carter McDonald, CE of Hackney Council Personal account of her journey to the top as a Black woman, and how does she think comms teams can help councils support more black people into leadership roles.	
13.00	Delegates move to To Youyou for lunch	
13.00 to 14.15	Lunch with opportunities to explore We the Curious.	Runch! Lunchtime run around landmark locations.
Session 5		
14.15 to 15.00	What’s your strategy for tackling dis- and mis-information? Hear from award-winning counter-misinformation communications expert Shayoni Lynn on how we can all protect our organisations and communities from the rise in mis- and dis-information	
15.00 to 15.15	Are you, or someone you know, a future leader? Hear from past and present Future Leaders about their experiences of LGcomms’ outstanding development programme.	
15.15 to 15.20	5 minute break to allow for room change for breakout sessions.	

Day One: Thursday 10 July (Continued)

TIME	MAIN AUDITORIUM (Rosalind Franklin Room)		
Session 6			
15.20 to 16:00	3 x breakout rooms with Q&A facilitated panel discussions led by LGcomms exec members. Three options to choose from. Focus on you and your career.		
	THE MAURICE WILKINS ROOM	THE FRANCIS CRICK ROOM	THE ROSALIND FRANKLIN ROOM
	Coaching: what's your strategy for you? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ruby Bhattal of Ruby Bhattal Coaching• Georgia Turner of Georgia Turner Communications.	Thinking about freelance? <p>The pros and cons of having a portfolio career.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anna Caig, former Head of Comms, and current historical fiction author, communications consultant and marketing trainer.	Decoding confidence: The seven habits to lead well and live well <p>A lively and honest fireside chat exploring the challenges and triumphs of building confident leadership in today's fast-paced world. The session will help delegates understand how to unlock their inner confidence, reduce self-doubt and boost wellbeing from the inside out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advita Patel, Comms Rebel• Johnathan Schroder, Barnet Council
16.00 to 16.15	Break and refreshments (change rooms as needed)		
Session 7			
16.15 to 17.00	3 x breakout rooms with Q&A facilitated panel discussions led by LGcomms exec members. Three options to choose from:		
	THE MAURICE WILKINS ROOM	THE FRANCIS CRICK ROOM	THE ROSALIND FRANKLIN ROOM
	Why recruitment and employee brand are a comms team's business <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Polly Cziok, Executive Director Change and Innovation, Merton Council• Anthony Lewis, Tile Hill, Public Sector Executive Recruitment	The importance of authentic leadership, and not hiding your personal life at work <p>How sharing your real-life experiences and challenges with colleagues, and in internal comms, can help generate more empathy and goodwill in the workplace.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will Godfrey, CE of Bath and North East Somerset Council• Jeni Harvey, Director of Communications at Rochdale Boroughwide Housing	Future comms team <p>Maximising the impact of your digital marketing partnerships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Andrew Hadfield-Ames, Southend Council• Daniel Hare, e-shot• Helena Hornby, Orlo• John-Paul Danon, CAN• Michael Stringer, Surrey County Council• Sophie da Silva, Wandsworth Council
17.00 to 17.05	5 minute break to return to auditorium		
Session 8			
17.05 to 17.45	Closing session Q&A with delegates		
17.45	CLOSE OF DAY ONE and move to drinks reception		
18.30 – Late	Drinks reception, The Cocktail Club, Corn Street, Bristol		

Day Two: Friday 11 July

TIME	MAIN AUDITORIUM (Rosalind Franklin Room)	
9.00 to 9.40	Registration. Sign in at reception	
9.40 to 9.50	Welcome and introduction (and housekeeping)	
Session 1		
9.50 to 10.15	Keynote: What good comms looks like - valuable benchmarking data to help improve communications • Mandy Pearce, Owner of Seashell Communications and former CIPR President	
Session 2		
10.15 to 11.00	THE ROSALIND FRANKLIN ROOM	ANNEXE
	Using film well to help deliver on your campaign objectives and maximise engagement • Geoff Cowart, Strategic Lead for Communications and Communities, Hammersmith & Fulham Council • Steve Maud, Founder and Creative Director at Cloud Nine Media • Katia Hérault, Cloud Nine Media	Supporting your communities through a crisis Learning from the Bedfordshire gas explosion and the Heathrow power outage. • Leanne Ehren, Head of Communication and External Affairs, Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service • Claire Halliwell, Manager for Communications and Communities, Bedford Borough Council • Emma Gilbertson, Head of Communications, Hillingdon Council • Neelum Bains, Media, campaigns and digital content manager, Hillingdon Council
11.00 to 11.20	Break and refreshments	
Session 3		
11.10 to 12.40	Unconference! Back by popular demand - your chance to tell us what’s keeping you awake tonight, and use the collective power of Academy to solve your problems and share solutions.	
12.40	Delegates move to To <i>Youyou</i> for lunch	
	Lunch	Runch! Lunchtime run around landmark locations
Session 4		
13.45 to 14:30	“Rats the size of cats!” The Birmingham bin strikes have been the biggest local gov news story of 2025 - find out how Birmingham coped with the hysterical headlines and media scrutiny, and supported staff and residents with effective comms and engagement through this challenging time. • Rishi Shori, Birmingham City Council’s Deputy Chief Exec	
14:30 to 14:35	Break to allow for room change for breakout sessions	

Day Two: Friday 11 July (Continued)

TIME	MAIN AUDITORIUM (Rosalind Franklin Room)		
Session 5			
14.35 to 15.20	3 x breakout rooms with Q&A facilitated panel discussions led by LGcomms exec members with topics		
	THE MAURICE WILKINS ROOM	THE ROSALIND FRANKLIN ROOM	THE FRANCIS CRICK ROOM
	Empathy for your LDR How councils and Local Democracy Reporters can understand each other's worlds for better outcomes. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jeni Harvey, Vice-chair LG Comms• Alex Seabrook, LDR covering Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council	Building positive relationships with elected Mayors to benefit your area <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Camilla Mankabady, Director of Strategic Communications and Corporate Affairs, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority• Louis O'Halloran, Account Director at Inflect• Carly Davis, Head of External Communications, Lewisham Council	Beyond the numbers: Social media benchmarking for strategic impact This interactive session will give you a deeper understanding of social media benchmarking by going beyond just the numbers. We'll be discovering how measuring sentiment and emotion can transform your strategies and build a higher level of public trust. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hannah Hill, Orlo
15.20-15.25	Delegates return to main room		
Session 6			
15.25 to 16.10	Is internal comms dead? Our expert panel debates the place of internal communications in a world dominated by social media. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helen Reynolds, owner of Comms Creatives• Nicola Chalmers, Internal Communications Manager, Manchester City Council• Jessica Roberts, internal communication and culture consultant, Jessica Roberts Communication• Raju Miah, Hounslow Council		
16.10 to 16.15	Final words and close of LGcomms Academy 2025		