

Voluntary Organisations Disability Group Annual Conference 2026



Wednesday 3 June 2026

Eastside Rooms, 2 Woodcock Street,
Birmingham, West Midlands B7 4BL

vodg.org.uk/vodg-annual-conference-2026

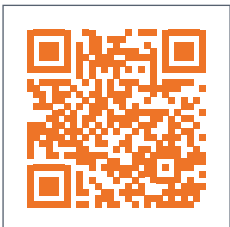
#VODGConf26

Every pound matters

Since the Iran conflict, rising costs and inflation have placed even greater pressure on social care providers already operating under strain.

We help organisations take control, so you can deliver measurable savings while safeguarding quality of care.

Come and talk to us at our stand



marrprocurement™
INTEGRITY. FAIRNESS. QUALITY.

Talk to us to discover how the Marrgo procurement platform is helping providers stay resilient in these challenging times

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Welcome to the VODG Annual Conference 2026

We are delighted to welcome you to VODG's flagship event of the year – a vital moment for leaders across the voluntary sector to come together, reflect, and look ahead.

This year's conference brings senior leaders and chief executives from across the country together in one shared space to connect with peers, exchange ideas, and explore the opportunities and challenges shaping our sectors. At a time of significant change, the conference offers a chance to step back from day-to-day pressures and focus on what's strong, values-led leadership looks like now – and in the future.

Across the programme, you'll hear from inspiring speakers, take part in interactive workshops, and engage in thought-provoking panel discussions. Sessions will tackle key strategic issues facing our organisations, from leadership and workforce reform to innovation, technology and the responsible use of AI. Just as importantly, they are designed to create space for honest conversation, shared learning and practical takeaways you can apply within your own organisation.

Alongside the formal programme, the conference offers structured and informal opportunities to connect, renew existing relationships and build new ones. These

moments of conversation and collaboration are at the heart of VODG's community – strengthening our collective voice and shared impact.

We hope you leave the conference feeling informed, energised and connected, with fresh perspectives and renewed confidence in the power of collaboration. Together, we can positively influence the environment in which support services operate, strengthening impact across our sector.

We're very glad you're here.



“Connecting with thoughtful, values-driven leaders across the sector is always energising. I'm grateful to be part of VODG's membership community, where shared learning and collaboration continually strengthen our work.”
Andrew Willets, Chief Executive,
The Orpheus Centre



Programme

08.30-17.00	Sponsors/Exhibition
08.30-9.50	Delegate Registration
10.00-10.10	VODG Welcome Rhidian Hughes , Chief Executive, VODG Room The Belmont Suite
10.10-11.10	OPENING PLENARY
	Viewfinder 2026 Navigating Change in Social Care Insights from the Viewfinder Survey Tom Noon , Chairman and Founder, Cordis Bright Room The Belmont Suite
11.10-11.30	Break and Refreshments
11.30-12.30	SESSION – SLOT A
A1	Commissioning for the Future Julie Bass (chair) , Chief Executive, Turning Point Ru Anwar , Partner, Trowers & Hamblins Kevin Davis DL , Non-executive Director, NHS Birmingham and Solihull Alex Fox OBE , Chief Executive, Community Catalysts Room Belmont One
A2	At the Table Leadership in IT Procurement Sanjay Shah (chair) , Former Director of Finance now supporting several charities as a Trustee Rachel Clay , Chief Strategist Public Sector, Softcat Kate Doodson , Chief Transformation, Performance and Digital Officer, Brandon Trust Christoph Marr , Managing Director, Marr Procurement Hari Punchihewa , Chief Financial Officer, Look Ahead Room Belmont Two
A3	SEND Futures What do the SEND Reforms Mean for Specialist Support? Rachel Perrin (chair) , Charity Director, Newlife The Charity for Disabled Children Lynette Barrett , Chief Executive, National Star Cllr Natalie McVey , Deputy Chair, Local Government Association James Watson-O'Neill , Chief Executive, Sense Room Belmont Three and Four
12.30-13.30	Lunch
13.30-14.30	SESSION – SLOT B
B1	Reserves, Risk and Reputation Making Confident Calls in the Public Eye Angela Murphy , Chief Executive, FitzRoy Stuart McKay , Partner, MHA Room Belmont One

Programme

13.30-14.30	SESSION – SLOT B
B2	<p>Delivering the Housing Options Disabled People of All Ages Need Kamran Mallick (chair), Chief Executive, Disability Rights Imogen Blood, Founder and Researcher, Imogen Blood & Associates Laurence Guinness, Chief Executive, Variety, The Children’s Charity Paul Smith, Chief Executive, Elim Housing</p>
Room	Belmont Two
B3	<p>Leading Through Critical Incidents Steve Veevers (chair), Chief Executive, Hft Joe MacIntyre, Account Director, Alder Holly Spiers, Chief Executive, Walsingham Support Jonathan Taylor, Director, Head of Corporate Risks, Health & Care, Howden Laura Welchew, Partner, Trowers & Hamblins Jackie Williams, Task Force Executive, Delphi Care Solutions</p>
Room	Belmont Three and Four
14.30-15.30	SESSION – SLOT C
C1	<p>We’ve lost interest! How to Make Your Money Work Harder Antonia Cavalier, Client Director, CCLA Sharika Sharma, Head of Business Development, CCLA</p>
Room	Belmont One
C2	<p>Beyond Sleep-ins and Checks How Night-time Care Redesign Can Unlock Workforce Stability, Cost Control and Better Outcomes Jonathan White, Sales Director – UK, Adaptive Care</p>
Room	Belmont Two
C3	<p>Neighbourhood Health Lessons from Mental Health Oonagh Smyth (chair), Chief Executive, Skills for Care James Halden, Chief of Staff, NHS Essex/Essex Integrated Care Board Chris Hampson, Chief Executive, Look Ahead Jane Hughes, Chief Executive, Mental Health Matters (MHM)</p>
Room	Belmont Three and Four
15.30-16.00	Break and Refreshments
16.00-16.45	CLOSING PLENARY
Room	<p>Closing Panel: AI at the Heart of Leadership Shaping the Choices We Face Together Helen England (chair), Chief Executive, Brandon Trust Michelle Corrigan, Chief Executive Officer, Digital Care Hub Ian Drew, Scale and Channel Director, Microsoft David Leslie, Director of Ethics and Responsible Innovation Research, The Alan Turing Institute</p>
Room	The Belmont Suite

Opening Plenary

10.10–11.10 The Belmont Suite

Viewfinder 2026 | Navigating Change in Social Care Insights from the Viewfinder Survey



Tom Noon

Chairman and Founder,
Cordis Bright



This session presents the headline findings from the 2026 Cordis Bright and VODG Viewfinder survey, providing a timely, evidence-based snapshot of the pressures, risks and opportunities facing social care organisations today. Drawing on the latest data, we will explore the implications of recent government policy changes, evolving regulatory expectations, and emerging workforce trends – and what this means for VCFSE providers supporting disabled people of all ages.

Tom Noon will reflect on the key themes and insights from the survey, before opening the floor to a facilitated discussion with VODG members. Together, members will consider the practical implications for their organisations and the wider sector, identify shared priorities, and outline tangible actions to influence policy, strengthen provision, and shape a more sustainable future for social care.



Session – Slot A

11.30-12.30 Belmont One

A1 Commissioning for the Future



Julie Bass (chair)
Chief Executive,
Turning Point



Ru Anwar
Partner, Trowers &
Hamlins



Kevin Davis DL
Non-executive
Director, NHS
Birmingham and
Solihull



Alex Fox OBE
Chief Executive,
Community Catalysts



The need to reframe commissioning and deliver change has never been more pressing, with rising demand, costs and staff vacancies. A model of asset-based commissioning based on co-production, trust, collaboration and person-centred outcomes is emerging, but it remains too rarely a reality. Our panel of experts will share their reflections and provocations on how effective commissioning can no longer just exist in pockets but is essential to the future of VCFSE delivery of care and support.



Session – Slot A

11.30-12.30 Belmont Two

A2 At the Table | Leadership in IT Procurement



Sanjay Shah (chair)
Former Director
of Finance now
supporting several
charities as a Trustee



Rachel Clay
Chief Strategist Public
Sector, Softcat



Kate Doodson
Chief Transformation,
Performance and
Digital Officer,
Brandon Trust



Christoph Marr
Managing Director,
Marr Procurement



Hari Punchihewa
Chief Financial
Officer, Look Ahead



As digital systems become central to the delivery and sustainability of social care, IT procurement has become a critical leadership issue. For CEOs and boards, decisions about digital investment have long-term implications for care quality, workforce effectiveness and organisational resilience.

This session brings together a panel that reflects the full ecosystem of procurement and digital change. Rounded in real-world experience, the discussion will examine common challenges faced by CEOs: defining system requirements, achieving value for money, managing implementation risk, ensuring interoperability, and building digital capability across the workforce.

The session will close with a concise set of practical takeaways, with each panel member offering two or three top tips for leaders approaching IT procurement and digital investment.

Session – Slot A

11.30-12.30 Belmont Three and Four

A3 SEND Futures | What do the SEND Reforms Mean for Specialist Support?



Rachel Perrin (chair)
Charity Director,
Newlife The Charity for
Disabled Children



Lynette Barrett
Chief Executive,
National Star



Cllr Natalie McVey
Deputy Chair,
Local Government
Association



James Watson-O'Neill
Chief Executive, Sense



While the principles of SEND reforms are laudable, the potential impact on specialist support is concerning. The mainstream focus, potential introduction of a price cap and funding bands mean the provision many children and young people rely on will need to significantly change, impacting outcomes, pathways and the viability of existing support. This session invites speakers to share their insights on what current SEND reforms mean for VCFSE provision, organisational change issues and the opportunities that ensure essential provision is not lost.



“We are a long-standing member and supporter of VODG, and our affiliation brings us many benefits. VODG are always quick to respond to any sector issues, listen to their members and offer many opportunities for members to connect with one another to share experiences, both the good and the bad. We work in a sector that is not without its challenges and that opportunity to connect with others is so important.”

Rachael Dodgson, Chief Executive,
Dimensions

Session – Slot B

13.30–14.30 Belmont One

B1 Reserves, Risk and Reputation | Making Confident Calls in the Public Eye



Angela Murphy
Chief Executive,
FitzRoy



Stuart McKay
Partner, MHA



Reserves are now a visible marker of organisational judgement and resilience. CEOs must justify them to boards, regulators, commissioners and the media – often facing criticism for holding either too much or too little.

This session reframes reserves as risk capacity and explains what SORP 2026 will mean for transparency and reporting. Drawing on sector insights, it highlights common leadership pitfalls and how strong organisations link reserves directly to risk.

Aimed at senior leaders, the session focuses on financial judgment and clear communication in high-profile, contested environments.



Session – Slot B

13.30-14.30 Belmont Two

B2 Delivering the Housing Options Disabled People of All Ages Need



**Kamran Mallick
(chair)**
Chief Executive,
Disability Rights



Imogen Blood
Founder and
Researcher, Imogen
Blood & Associates



Laurence Guinness
Chief Executive,
Variety, The
Children's Charity



Paul Smith
Chief Executive, Elim
Housing



Good quality housing, in the right place, is essential to people's quality of life. Many disabled people and families cannot access the housing they need because of countless barriers including a shortage of appropriate housing options, adaptations and archaic funding rules. We also know that a lack of community capacity, including housing options, means families end up in unsuitable temporary accommodation, and too many people with mental health conditions, a learning disability and autistic people are admitted to and remain in hospital settings, for far longer than is needed.

However, solutions do exist and this session explores how different ways of working are rewriting the rules and freeing up resources to meet disabled people's needs so they can live the lives they choose.



Session – Slot B

13.30-14.30 Belmont Three and Four

B3 Leading Through Critical Incidents



Steve Veevers
(chair)
Chief Executive, Hft



Joe MacIntyre
Account Director, Alder



Holly Spiers
Chief Executive,
Walsingham Support



Jonathan Taylor
Director, Head of
Corporate Risks,
Health & Care,
Howden



Laura Welch
Partner, Trowers &
Hamblins



Jackie Williams
Task Force Executive,
Delphi Care
Solutions



When a serious incident occurs, responsibility quickly narrows – and ultimately rests with the CEO.

This session puts CEOs at the table with the people they most need in the first critical hours: legal, insurance, delivery partners and peers who have lived through it themselves. Through a live scenario and candid, member-level discussion, we explore the leadership calls that cannot be delegated, the trade-offs that define outcomes, and the personal judgement required when scrutiny is at its highest.

Rather than rehearsing processes or playbooks, this session focuses on the human and strategic dimension of crisis leadership: what CEOs are personally accountable for, how competing advice collides in real time, and which early choices shape reputational, legal, and financial outcomes long after the incident itself has passed.

Session – Slot C

14.30–15.30 Belmont One

C1 We've Lost Interest! How to Make Your Money Work Harder



Antonia Cavalier
Client Director, CCLA



Sharika Sharma
Head of Business
Development, CCLA



In today's higher interest rate environment, many not-for-profits are holding significant sums of money in low-yield bank accounts, limiting their financial potential. This session explores why so much organisational cash remains idle, the risks of a passive approach, and how a more strategic approach to managing money can strengthen financial resilience and better support core mission and services.

Session – Slot C

14.30–15.30 Belmont Two

C2 Beyond Sleep-ins and Checks | How Night-time Care Redesign Can Unlock Workforce Stability, Cost Control and Better Outcomes



Jonathan White
Sales Director – UK,
Adaptive Care



For many organisations, night-time care has evolved by habit rather than design. The result is an operating model that strains staffing, limits scalability and disrupts sleep, dignity and wellbeing – while offering leaders little visibility or assurance.

This CEO level session examines night-time care as a strategic transformation opportunity rather than a service level problem. Using real-world examples from the UK and internationally, Adaptive Care will show how providers are redesigning overnight care through proactive monitoring, remote support and new workforce models – delivering measurable improvements in safety, productivity and quality at scale.

The focus of the session is not technology itself, but the leadership choices required to move from presence-based care to data informed, needs-led systems that are sustainable, regulator ready and fit for the future.

Session – Slot C

14.30-15.30 Belmont Three and Four

C3 Neighbourhood Health | Lessons from Mental Health



Oonagh Smyth
(chair)
Chief Executive, Skills
for Care



James Halden
Chief of Staff, NHS
Essex/Essex Integrated
Care Board



Chris Hampson
Chief Executive, Look
Ahead



Jane Hughes
Chief Executive,
Mental Health
Matters (MHM)



Neighbourhood Health is one of the government's hot topics, but what role can social care play in its delivery and success? Real-world examples from mental health, housing and elsewhere provide helpful insight into how much of the support already being delivered across social care contributes to neighbourhood health and offers huge potential to address the health inequalities faced by disabled people and their families.



Closing Plenary

16.00-16.45 The Belmont Suite

Closing Panel: AI at the Heart of Leadership | Shaping the Choices We Face Together



Helen England (chair)
Chief Executive,
Brandon Trust



Michelle Corrigan
Chief Executive Officer,
Digital Care Hub



Ian Drew
Scale and Channel
Director, Microsoft



David Leslie
Director of Ethics and
Responsible Innovation
Research, The Alan
Turing Institute



Artificial intelligence is reshaping expectations for organisational leadership at an unprecedented pace. For CEOs, the challenge is no longer simply understanding the technology but navigating the strategic, ethical and cultural decisions that will determine whether AI strengthens – or undermines – organisational purpose, trust and performance.

In this high-level panel discussion, leaders from across research, technology, regulation, health and the voluntary sector will explore the real choices facing organisations in 2026. Moving beyond hype, the conversation will examine how AI is influencing governance, productivity, risk management, workforce change, and the relationship between organisations and the people they support.

Bringing together perspectives from cutting-edge innovation, independent analysis and frontline operational experience, this session offers delegates a rare opportunity to hear honest reflections on what's working, what isn't, and what leaders must prioritise next. Expect provocation, practical insights, and clarity on the decisions you should make now to future-proof your organisation.

With Thanks

Key Sponsor and Strategic Partner



This year marks the tenth anniversary of the VODG/Marr Procurement partnership. It's extraordinary what two organisations with shared values can achieve.

Marr Procurement is a values-led business, specialising only in social care procurement, with a reputation for integrity and fairness. The Marr team have worked with seventy care

groups, delivering material, auditable savings without compromising on care or quality. The demand for marrgo, the social care buying website, has risen sharply since the Iran conflict as care providers need to mitigate increasing costs. marrgo gives social care providers access to competed, vetted and trustworthy suppliers with low prices, introduces real visibility of spend and absolute cost control.

Gold Sponsors



At CAF Bank, we are dedicated to meeting the banking needs of charities and social enterprises.

Through providing current accounts and savings accounts, facilitating transactions globally, and lending to maximise positive impact, everything we do at CAF Bank is designed to help our 14,000-strong community of customers help those who turn to them.



AI is reshaping our world – and communities everywhere are rising to meet the moment. We're working to ensure that AI helps expand opportunity, strengthen institutions, and solve real-world problems. By connecting educators, non-profit leaders, and learners with the support they need, we can help elevate whole communities.

Putting people first, we are committed to ensuring AI serves everyone.



Voluntary Organisations Disability Group

Introducing the Inaugural VODG Directors' Conference 2027

17 March 2027, 08.30-17.00
Eastside Rooms, Birmingham

A New Era for VODG Director Professional Networks

A refreshed conference format bringing together all VODG director-level professional networks in one collaborative event – while maintaining each network's distinct focus.

One Conference. Five Networks. 100 Delegates.

HR | Operations | Digital | Housing | Finance

Connect, collaborate and shape the future of leadership across our sector.

CEOs, share with your team and be part of a stronger, connected community – supporting the people who support others every day.

vodg.org.uk/directors-conference-2027

Upcoming Chief Executive Events

VODG CEO Summit – 5 November 2026

Taking place in Parliament, booking opens soon. Save the date!



With Thanks

Strategic Partner



Adaptive Care is a market-leading healthcare technology provider specialising in acoustic and visual monitoring solutions that enhance night-time care and reduce unnecessary physical checks. With 45 years of experience supporting multi-site healthcare organisations, our technology helps improve safety, dignity and sleep quality while enabling care teams to respond proactively, work more efficiently and deliver person-centred support with greater confidence.



As Strategic Corporate Partners to VODG, Delphi Care Solutions supports not-for-profit care providers to achieve and maintain outstanding CQC compliance. Our team of former CQC inspectors and registered managers delivers mock inspections, quality audits, policy reviews, and registered manager coaching – giving your organisation the expertise and confidence to focus on what matters most: the people you support.



Your charity works tirelessly to support others, let us support you.

Our specialist charity team delivers tailored insurance solutions built for complex environments enabling you to focus on others. With deep sector expertise, market access and proactive claims support, we help charities stay resilient, compliant and financially secure. Whatever your mission or operational complexity, we make sure you have the right protection when it matters most.



Smart, ambitious and entrepreneurial, MHA is the professional services partner for growth-focused organisations. A UK member of Baker Tilly International, we combine local expertise with global insight. With over 30 years' experience supporting charities, social enterprises and not-for-profits, our specialist team delivers tailored audit, tax and advisory solutions focused on now, for tomorrow.



Trowers & Hamlins is proud to continue its near decade partnership as VODG's strategic legal partner. Our leading health and social care team supports charities, providers and VODG members nationwide, combining deep sector insight with practical advice. We look forward to conversations at the conference and seeing you at our stand to discuss sector challenges, pressures, governance, people, property and commercial priorities.

With Thanks

Partners

**Anthony
Collins**

Anthony Collins is a specialist law firm with a clear purpose – to improve lives, communities and society. Our health and social care team act for social care providers across the full range of legal issues.

Peridot

Peridot Partners is a values-led Executive Search firm, recruiting inspiring leaders across the third sector and specialising in senior appointments for purpose-driven organisations in Learning Disabilities, Physical Disabilities, Autism and Mental Health.

**rwk
goodman**

RWK Goodman's Health & Social Care team are recognised market leaders, with in-depth knowledge and experience in the sector. Our aim is to get to know your business and become the strategic advisors you trust.

 **SUCCESSFUL
EVENTS**

Successful Events offers VODG members a zero-cost global venue finding service for conferences and events. With extensive experience working with associations, we secure competitive rates with venue partners and provide tailored proposals, saving you time and money.

 **utility aid**

At Utility Aid we secure charities and not-for-profit organisations across the UK the best possible service agreements on your water, gas and electricity. We support, advise and negotiate on your behalf.

 **WorkBuzz**
The Power of Real-World Employee Insights

We help leaders of social care and voluntary organisations measure and improve employee and volunteer engagement. WorkBuzz is built to provide clarity on how to turn employee and volunteer feedback into meaningful action.

With Thanks

Exhibitors



Access Social Care provides specialist legal advice and training to organisations who provide direct support to people who access social care.

CAMPBELL TICKELL

Campbell Tickell is a trusted social purpose consultancy helping leaders across housing, health, care and public services tackle complexity, strengthen organisations, and deliver lasting change with integrity, collaboration, and strategic rigour for over 25 years.

CCLA

CCLA is one of the largest charity fund managers in the UK. Our ambition is to deliver trusted, responsibly managed, strongly performing products and services aligned to our clients' values and purpose.



Cohesion is a social care recruitment and retention consultancy, helping organisations reach, engage, and retain people who create lasting impact. We do this through expert consultancy and tailored recruitment solutions that build sustainable, values-driven teams.

bild

Bild is a national charity that, for 50 years, has protected and supported the rights of people with learning disabilities. We want a more fair and equal society where everyone has the same rights and opportunities.

carehires.

Care Hires gives you full control over agency use, compliance, shift fulfilment and spend. So every service runs with less risk, and staffing never takes time, focus or energy away from care.

Charity bank

Charity Bank is the loans and savings bank owned by and committed to supporting the social sector. It uses its savers' money to provide much needed loans to UK organisations working to drive positive social change.



HSF Health Plan helps employers improve wellbeing, retention and recruitment through affordable employee benefits, including a health cash plan, EAP and discount platform, helping employees claim back everyday healthcare costs, as the trading arm of a registered charity.

With Thanks

Exhibitors



iplicit is a cloud accounting platform built for charities. It automates admin, delivers real-time financial insights, and is trusted by over 200 charities so your team can focus on impact, not spreadsheets.



Lester Aldridge is a leading full-service law firm headquartered in the Central South in addition to a London office. The firm advises UK and international businesses, from fast-growing companies to entrepreneurs and established corporations.



Log my Care is a care management platform for forward-thinking LD providers. We help teams spot change earlier, reduce reactive work, and make confident decisions – supporting better outcomes and experiences for the people they support.



The Touch Account from Money Carer offers simple, innovative controls for people who need support, while maintaining independence over how they manage their money. Pay with wearable devices or a fingerprint card – no PINs needed for confidence at checkout.



Social Investment Business is a specialist social investor and adviser, providing loans, grants and support to charities and social enterprises, helping them become financially resilient, grow their impact, and better serve communities.



Tile Hill is an award-winning executive search, interim and board recruitment firm, known for exceptional candidate care and deep networks across the public sector and civil society – helping organisations appoint leaders and trustees who make a lasting difference.



Ready to make technology work for your mission?

Microsoft Elevate is committed to delivering affordable and innovative solutions to help nonprofits tackle the world's biggest challenges.





Voluntary Organisations Disability Group

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