

The background of the entire page is composed of various abstract, organic shapes in a palette of red, pink, light blue, dark blue, green, orange, and yellow. In the top left corner, the National Literacy Trust logo is displayed within a dark blue, book-like shape.

**National
Literacy
Trust**

Change your story

Inclusive Libraries Conference

**Exploring Race, Culture and
Identity with Children and
Young People in the Library**

Sheffield: 24 September 2026

London: 30 September 2026

Welcome to the Inclusive Libraries Conference, where we are gathering to celebrate the role of libraries in fostering empathy and inclusivity through children's literature.

We have a fantastic line up of speakers, activities and workshops for you to enjoy. As we explore innovative strategies and share best practices, we hope you will bring your own experiences and expertise to conversations throughout the day, whether you work in a school, in a public library, or in another role in the education or literary world.

Together we can make our libraries safe, welcoming places for young people to explore race, culture, identity, and intersectionality.

Please take care of yourselves and each other throughout the day. We have a quiet space available should you need to step away, just ask someone with a National Literacy Trust lanyard to point you in the right direction.

Thank you for joining us!

#InclusiveLibraries

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Schedule

Timing	Session	Location (Sheffield)	Location (London)
9:00 – 9:30	Arrivals, registration Tea & Coffee	Reception/bar area	Library/café
9:30 – 9:40	Welcome	Main Room (High Tor 2)	Library
9:40 – 10:10	Keynote: David Larbi	Main Room (High Tor 2)	Library
10:20 – 11:40	Morning workshops		
	Community Conversations with Dr Darren Chetty	High Tor 3	Child classroom
	Nothing About Us Without Us: What young people want from an inclusive library	Main Room (High Tor 2)	Library
	The Quilt of Welcome with Professor Sabine Little	High Tor 4	Browne classroom
11:50 – 12:20	Keynote: Tola Okogwu	Main Room (High Tor 2)	Library
12:20 – 13:20	Lunch	Downstairs dining hall	Café and courtyard
13:20 – 14:40	Afternoon workshops		
	Building a Good Book Collection: the how and the why	Main Room (High Tor 2)	Child classroom
	Libraries as Trojan Horses for Change with Lit in Colour	High Tor 3	Library
	Patchwork Stories with Sita Brahmachari	High Tor 4	Browne classroom
14:55 – 16:15	Community Conversations with Dr Darren Chetty	Main Room (High Tor 2)	Library
16:15 – 16:30	Close	Main Room (High Tor 2)	Library

Keynote speakers



David Larbi

David Larbi is a writer, creator and poet from London. Through his experimentation with diverse platforms and forms of expression, he has built an online community of over 1 million people across social media platforms and a dedicated readership, all based on his explorations of introspection and emotional connection.

David's first book *Frequently Happy* is a Sunday Times Bestseller, and was selected as a Waterstones Nonfiction Book of the Month in February 2026. He was also named Heathrow Airport's first ever Poet-in-Residence in celebration of the airport's 80th birthday this year. Superseding all is his deep love for words, and his desire for anyone who comes across his work to leave feeling better for it.



Tola Okogwu

Tola Okogwu is an award-winning and best-selling children's author whose work includes the *Onyeka*, *Daddy Do My Hair* and *Bim Blake* series. A passionate literacy advocate, Tola has donated over two thousand books and founded the Read Bold, Wide and Beyond initiative, which encourages children to build reading confidence, explore diverse genres and formats and connect reading to their wider interests. Tola lives in Kent, England with her husband and two daughters.

Morning workshops

Community Conversations with Dr Darren Chetty

Join colleagues from across the school and library sectors to explore rich questions about how racism impacts our work, the role we play within those systems, and how we can resist, supporting ourselves and each other to create anti-racist spaces. Dr Darren Chetty will facilitate and guide these conversations with discussion prompts and thematic links, drawing on the wealth of expertise and experience in the room. Whether you are just beginning to develop your anti-racist practice or have decades of experience, we welcome your perspectives.



Dr Darren Chetty is a specialist in philosophy for children (P4C), antiracist education and children's literature based at University College London Institute of Education. He contributed to the best-selling book *The Good Immigrant* (2016). He advises on CLPE's Reflecting Realities and Penguin / Runnymede Trust's Lit in Colour, and is a regular judge for children's books awards.

Darren has authored and co-authored a number of acclaimed titles including: *What Is Masculinity? Why Does*

It Matter? And Other Big Questions with Jeffrey Boakye (Wayland 2019), *Beyond the Secret Garden? Racially Minoritised People in British Children's Books* with Professor Karen Sands O'Connor (English Media Centre 2025), and *Our Wales: A People's History* with Martin Johnes (Rily) which will be published in November 2026. His debut picture book, *I'm Going to Make a Friend*, illustrated by Sandhya Prabhat (Little Tiger) was published in 2025.

Nothing About Us Without Us: What young people want from an inclusive library

Young people know exactly what makes a library feel like a place of welcome – or a place that isn't for them.

In this hands-on, interactive session, Participation People's Young Consultants co-facilitate alongside Antonia Dixey to share what inclusion, representation and refuge look and feel like from their side of the desk. You'll hear directly from young people, try out a simple consultation activity you can run in your own library, and leave with practical tools for putting the children and young people who use your space at the heart of the decisions about it.



Antonia Dixey is the Founder and CEO of Participation People (the UK's leading youth engagement consultancy) and a keynote speaker delivering future relevance by bringing unfiltered youth insights into decision-making.

With over twenty years' experience, she's worked with The Salvation Army, Vodafone, Accountex, National Lottery, Kenya Airways, Mobile World Congress, European Parliament and beyond. Last year Antonia connected 1,250 young people with 8,000 professionals – building solutions with young people, not just for them.

The Quilt of Welcome with Professor Sabine Little

This workshop will explore how to integrate multilingualism, artifactual literacy, and storytelling. The Quilt of Welcome was created for the city of Sheffield, with nearly 400 children choosing words in their home and heritage languages that make them feel happy, welcome, and safe. The quilt has led to somewhat of a movement, facilitating teachers to incorporate multilingualism and multilingual stories into the classroom, whilst encouraging children to bring their whole selves to school. In this workshop, we will begin by outlining the history and purpose of the quilt (including logistics of making one), before creating and sharing ideas for the classroom.



Sabine Little is Professor of Literacy and Multilingualism and a multilingual storyteller at the University of Sheffield, where her work focuses on how multilingual children navigate their identity and literacy development – and how we can support them.

Afternoon workshops

Libraries as Trojan Horses for Change: Exploring how school libraries can promote a reading culture

This workshop from Lit in Colour, a social impact programme from Penguin, explores how school libraries can act as ‘Trojan Horses’ for change, extending their impact across the wider school and connecting young people with books by authors of colour.



Jess Tacon was an English Teacher for ten years and a SENCo for two. She was also a freelance Education Consultant and now leads the Lit in Colour Programme at Penguin UK Books. Lit in Colour is a programme from Penguin Books that aims to support primary and secondary schools to make the teaching and learning of English Literature more inclusive of authors of colour and to connect more young people to books by authors of colour to read for pleasure.



Binita Naik is a publishing professional, currently working within Penguin Random House’s Social Impact team on Lit in Colour, with a background in audiobooks. She is passionate about improving access to books and championing inclusive storytelling, with a particular interest in how different formats can help stories reach and resonate with wider audiences.

Building a Good Book Collection: the how and the why

Join leading literacy charities the National Literacy Trust and CLPE in exploring how to build a fantastic book collection, with diversity and inclusivity at its core. Hear from author and influencer Claire Linney as she shares her top picks for an Inclusive Library. Whether you work in a school or public library, this workshop will offer you the opportunity to consider your book collection, how to build, justify and protect it.



Claire Linney is a children's author who has become a go-to for diverse book recommendations for kid and teens. A lifelong reader, she is passionate about advocating for more diverse representation in literature. She also writes children's books that bring figures from Black British history to life in fast-paced, time travel adventures. Her debut children's book *Time Tub Travellers and the Silk Thief* won the Ink Book Prize 2024, was the Reader's Choice in The Diverse Book Awards 2025 and Highly Commended in the Selfies Book Awards 2025.



Farrah Serroukh is the Director of Research and Strategic Development at the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) where she initiated the ground-breaking Reflecting Realities research series. The practical classroom application of this research is detailed in *Representation in Children's Literature* (Corwin/CLPE 2024). Farrah was awarded the UKLA's Brenda Eastwood Award in recognition of her innovative and sector-leading work on ethnic representation in children's literature in 2019 and received NATE's Diversity and Inclusion Award in 2021. In 2025 she was awarded a scholarship from the College of Social Sciences at Glasgow University to pursue a PhD that will enable her to deepen her work in this area.



Former primary school teacher, **Lucy Starbuck Braidley** is Head of School Libraries at the National Literacy Trust, leading on the [Libraries for Primaries Programme](#). Alongside this, Lucy is the producer and host of the podcast *Comic Boom - The Comics in Education Podcast*, and co-author of *Comics in the Classroom: Boosting multiliteracies, creativity and collaboration through comics* (Routledge 2026). She is co-chair of trustees at Libraries Rising, the national network for leaders in children's public and Schools Library Services which works with partners and supporters to create libraries for today's world, where children and young people feel understood, empowered and inspired.

Patchwork Stories: a creative workshop with Sita Brahmachari

Join award winning author Sita Brahmachari in an interactive storytelling and creative art and writing workshop. Make a patchwork piece of your own story quilt taking inspiration from *The Tale That Time Sews* – a lyrical, intergenerational story to inspire readers to trace golden threads of family, friendship and love through time, illustrated by Jane Ray.



Sita Brahmachari (FRSL) is an internationally award-winning storyteller known for her many celebrated children's and young adult novels and her empowering work with diverse communities. She is the recipient of the IBBY Honour for writing. Her novels, centering global majority minoritised characters, include *Artichoke Hearts*, *Where The River Runs Gold*, *When Secrets Set Sail*, *When Shadows Fall*, *Corey's Rock* and *Phoenix Brothers*. Sita has served as a child human rights ambassador for Amnesty International and is Writer in Residence at a London Refugee Centre working alongside Jane Ray. In 2025 The Diverse Book Award honoured Sita's work with The Malorie Blackman Impact Award.

Exhibitors

[World Kid Lit](#) – exhibiting in Sheffield only

[Badge Cafe](#) – exhibiting in Sheffield only

National Literacy Trust: [Read Manchester](#) and [Bradford Hub](#) – exhibiting in Sheffield only

[Lit in Colour](#)

[Hillsborough Bookshop](#), Sheffield

[The Children's Bookshop](#), Muswell Hill, London