

AMBIT Conference programme

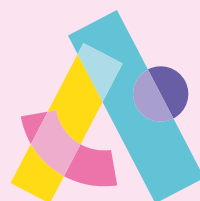
# Minds in Crisis

Thursday 19 March 2026

Chaired by the AMBIT Programme team



*Please note: The following agenda is subject to change.*



**Anna Freud**  
building the mental  
wellbeing of the  
next generation

# Conference schedule

Time	Agenda item
09:00 – 09:50	Arrival and registration
09:50 – 10:10	<b>Welcome</b> Professor Eamon McCrory
10:10 – 10:30	<b>Why Minds in Crisis?</b> <b>Whose knowledge matters? Epistemic trust and injustices</b> Liz Cracknell and Rebecca Smith (AMBIT Programme)
10:30 – 11:15	<b>‘Working alongside young people as they recover from violence to relocation’. A strengths-based approach to supporting young people facing homelessness as a result of community violence</b> Kate Bond (New Horizons Youth Centre, London)
11:15 - 11:35	Refreshment break
11:35 – 12:20	<b>Sustaining practice and preventing disintegration: building a state-wide AMBIT network</b> Megan Huppert and Dr Michael Daubney (Children’s Health Queensland, Australia)
12:20 – 13:00	<b>Working together in the storm: AMBIT-informed practice for young people in mental health crisis</b> Dr Kate Budge (Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust)
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch and networking (please note that lunch is not provided)
14:00 – 14:50	<b>Parallel crises in community justice</b> The Inclusion and Involvement Team (OPD I&I, London)
14:50 – 15:35	<b>Minding minds in uncertain times: how AMBIT supports workers under pressure</b> Shelly Simpson (Ellenhorn, USA)
15:35 – 15:50	Refreshment break
15:50 – 16:30	<b>Panel and closing discussions</b> James Fairbairn (Chair), Dr Peter Fuggle, Dr Dickon Bevington, Karlys Thompson, Catherine Uttley, Charlie Sackey, Bez Martin

# About the speakers

## **Kate Bond**

***New Horizons Youth Centre, London, UK***

Kate Bond has worked at New Horizon Youth Centre, a charity supporting young people who experience homelessness and housing instability, since 2012. In her current role as Head of Service for the Youth Justice team at New Horizon Youth Centre, she works directly to improve the housing options of young people who are impacted by exploitation and/or community violence. New Horizon seeks systemic changes to a system that, in its current form, prevents young people from being safe and recovering from harm.



Prior to this, Kate spent over a decade working for three different local authorities in Children's Social Care and in her last role before coming to New Horizon was the Youth Disorder and Safety Co-ordinator for Camden Council. Over her twenty-year career, she has worked directly with young people and their families from across London and still feels extremely strongly about tackling systemic injustice that prevents these children and young people from reaching their full potential.

## **Shelly Simpson**

***Ellenhorn, US***

Shelly Simpson, a licensed clinical social worker, is Ellenhorn's director of Adaptive Mentalization-Based Integrative Treatment (AMBIT), a specialized system of care that supports clients and clinicians by promoting mentalization, reducing anxiety, and fostering cohesive, well-connected teams. Shelly, whose previous roles at Ellenhorn have included founding clinical director of Ellenhorn Los Angeles and team lead at Ellenhorn Boston, established Ellenhorn as the only accredited AMBIT training centre in the United States and remains the country's sole certified AMBIT trainer; she is supervised by Anna Freud in London, England.



Shelly earned a bachelor's degree from Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas; a master's degree from the University of Houston in Houston, Texas; and completed a postgraduate fellowship in psychodynamic theory at The Council on Recovery in Houston. She has also worked in management at The Menninger Clinic in Houston. Shelly is passionate about helping both clients and treatment teams strengthen their relationships, navigate multiple perspectives and manage relational anxiety. Her work is grounded in mentalization and deeply rooted in a relational approach.

**Dr Kate Budge**  
**Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust, UK**

Dr Kate Budge is an Associate Director of Psychology and Consultant Clinical Psychologist at Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust, where she provides strategic and clinical leadership across a broad portfolio of CYP and young adult mental health services. She has extensive experience leading service development, clinical governance, and transformation programmes across CAMHS, youth justice mental health, crisis care, and specialist pathways, alongside maintaining a highly specialist clinical caseload. With a background spanning inpatient, community, crisis, and multi-agency contexts, Kate is particularly passionate about trauma-informed practice, psychologically informed systems, and improving care for young people with complex needs.



**The Inclusion and Involvement Team (I&I)**  
**I&I – OPD London, UK**

The I&I team are a grassroots service built from suggestions and input from people on probation under the London Offender Personality Disorder (OPD) Pathway, a joint HMPPS and NHS programme. The team consists of lived experience practitioners, psychologists and support workers, alongside partnership organisations with similar values and service priorities. The I&I service has multiple aims: to support people's transition from custody into meaningful integration into the community, to support psychological wellbeing and risk management, and to embed service participant contributions into the fabric of how services run. AMBIT is a core model of the team, alongside community psychology, co-production and trauma-informed practice.



**Dr Michael Daubney**  
**Children's Health Queensland, Australia**

Dr Michael Daubney is a Child, Adolescent and Adult Psychiatrist with clinical interests in psychotherapy, trauma, infant mental health and adolescent inpatient and outpatient treatment. Currently, he is the Medical Director of the Community Adolescent Extended Treatment Programs within Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service, Queensland, Australia, and State-wide Medical Director of the Assertive Mobile Youth Outreach Teams (AMYOS). AMYOS is an outreach service targeting high risk adolescents and their families, who services can find hard to reach. He is the chair of the Case History Subcommittee (RANZCP), past Qld Director of Advanced Training Psychotherapy (RANZCP), chair of the Committee for Evidence Based Practice (RANZCP) and immediate past chair of the binational Committee, Faculty of Psychotherapy (RANZCP). He is an accredited Anna Freud Centre Mentalization Based Therapy supervisor and trainer (MBT Adult, MBT Adolescent, MBT Family and AMBIT) and an experienced supervisor. He is a past Queensland President of the Australian Association of Infant Mental Health (AAIMH) and a past member of the AAIMH National Committee. He has experience in public and private Psychiatry.



**Megan Huppert**  
***Children's Health Queensland, Australia***

Megan is an advanced social worker with more than 20 years' experience in child and youth mental health service delivery, including a professional background in infant mental health and clinical quality and safety. She is the State-wide Coordinator for Community Adolescent Extended Treatment Programs within Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service, Australia. Megan co-leads and supports Assertive Mobile Youth Outreach Services across Queensland, delivering community-based outreach responses to high-risk and vulnerable young people with complex mental health needs. An accredited AMBIT trainer and supervisor, Megan is strongly committed to workforce development, reflective practice, and the delivery of evidence informed, youth and family centred care across diverse service settings.



**Professor Eamon McCrory**  
***CEO of Anna Freud and Professor of Developmental Neuroscience and Psychopathology at UCL***

Eamon McCrory is an international leader in the field of adversity and childhood trauma. He is CEO of Anna Freud and Professor of Developmental Neuroscience and Psychopathology at UCL where he co-directs the Developmental Risk and Resilience Unit. He is also adjunct Professor at Yale University. Eamon co-founded the UK Trauma Council which creates and disseminates resources to support those working with children and young people who have experienced trauma.

Eamon's research uses brain imaging and psychological approaches to investigate the impact of trauma and adversity on children's mental health. He is particularly interested in how research can help inform the prevention of future mental health problems and how latent vulnerability following adversity may be mediated by altered pathways of brain and social development.



**Laura Talbot**  
***AMBIT Joint Programme Director at Anna Freud***

Dr Laura Talbot is Joint AMBIT Programme Lead at Anna Freud, having joined the Programme as an Assistant Trainer in 2015. As a qualified Clinical Psychologist, she has specialised in working with adolescents and young adults in several different AMBIT-influenced teams across community outreach services within the health, social care, voluntary and education sectors. Within her AMBIT role, Laura currently works within the Pan-London Violence and Exploitation Support Service, offering training, supervision and consultation to youth caseworkers and managers, who support young people impacted by violence and exploitation.



## **Liz Cracknell**

### ***AMBIT Joint Programme Director at Anna Freud***

Liz Cracknell is the joint Programme Director for AMBIT at Anna Freud. As a Mental Health Nurse and Systemic Practitioner, Liz has specialised in work with young people with multiple, risky problems in both outreach and secure settings, utilising the AMBIT approach. Liz has contributed to a number of key publications and the development of AMBIT and has trained and consulted with hundreds of practitioners in the UK and internationally.



## **Dickon Bevington**

### ***Co-founder of AMBIT and Consultant in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry***

Dickon is a Consultant in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and has worked for more than 30 years in the NHS, where he leads a team for young people with substance use and multiple other needs, and is Mental Health Lead for the planned new Cambridge Children's Hospital on the Addenbrookes site. He co-founded AMBIT, and he now works as a consultant to the AMBIT Programme at Anna Freud.



## **Peter Fuggle**

### ***Co-founder of AMBIT and Consultant to the Programme and Community***

Peter is a clinical psychologist who has worked in child mental health throughout his career. He currently works as a Consultant to the AMBIT team at Anna Freud. He worked in the NHS as Clinical Director of Islington CAMHS and was concerned about the children and young people with major needs who did not come to the main services that were provided. This led him to join a group at Anna Freud who were concerned about the same issue, which resulted in the development of the AMBIT approach. He has been involved in publishing two books on AMBIT.



## **James Fairbairn**

### ***AMBIT Joint Deputy Programme Director at Anna Freud***

James is joint Deputy Director for the AMBIT Programme and is a Consultant Clinical Psychologist. James first became connected with AMBIT in 2011 as the lead psychologist in a regional adolescent inpatient service, helping develop the AMBIT model on the unit, then moving into training others in the approach. James leads on the evaluation of the AMBIT programme and jointly leads the AMBIT international study group.



## **Rebecca Smith**

### ***AMBIT Joint Deputy Programme Director at Anna Freud***

Rebecca is joint Deputy Director for the AMBIT Programme. She progressed to this role having become a Lead Trainer in 2019. Her journey into AMBIT started in 2014 whilst working for Wandsworth Local Authority. In the 18 years she spent in Wandsworth, Rebecca's roles included work as a team manager in the Evolve Team (who support young people and young adults impacted by gangs, youth violence and exploitation), and as a Youth Offending Team Practitioner.



## **Verity Beehan-Heath**

### ***Lead AMBIT Trainer at Anna Freud***

Verity is a Registered Mental Health Nurse. She worked for many years in the NHS, in an AMBIT influenced Specialist Drug and Alcohol Service for young people with substance use, mental health and multiple other needs. Verity has also worked as a Clinician, Team Manager and Service Manager within NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) including Core CAMHS, Specialist Eating Disorders and a Multi-Agency Emotional Wellbeing Referral Hub. Verity started working in the AMBIT Programme Team as an Assistant Trainer in 2018 and moved into a lead trainer role in 2023.



## **Karlys Thompson**

### ***Reaching Higher Youth Charity***

Karlys is a dynamic youth worker with a background in therapeutic intervention. She is trained as an Integrative Counsellor and Psychotherapist and is a member of the BACP. Karlys has worked therapeutically with adults through agency work and in both primary and secondary mainstream schools.

Prior to working at Reaching Higher, she was a Mental Health Lead at two alternative provisions in Bromley working long and short term with the students and offering clinical spaces to the staff. She was previously Lead Counsellor at a South London college, overseeing the work of trainee counsellors and started at Reaching Higher as Senior Therapeutic Practitioner supporting frontline youth workers with clinical supervision and training; believing that those who pour out also need to be poured back into intentionally. Karlys is the Head of Contextual Safeguarding at Reaching Higher and serves as the charity's Designated Safeguarding Lead.



## Catherine Uttley

Catherine is a social worker and systemic practitioner who trained and has spent the majority of her practice in child protection. She currently works between a local CAMHS service and Children's Services to promote joint working and support young people with high risk and complex mental health difficulties to access support from both. Catherine completed an action research project as part of a master's programme based on using the AMBIT model to create meaningful therapeutic relationships with young people at risk of exploitation. Since then, she has been applying the AMBIT model to continue to try to engage and build trust with young people as well as to facilitate integrated multi-agency working between the Local Authority and CAMHS.



## Charlie Sackey

Charlie is a social care practitioner with over 32 years of experience in working with children in care, particularly those looked after by local authorities.

Currently, Charlie serves as a Placement Support Lead for a London local authority, supporting networks around children with high levels of complexity. In this role, he ensures an integrated approach to care plans and addresses specific challenges within the care network for each child. He also provides consultation to children's homes, semi-independent providers, and fostering agencies, developing strategies to support both children and staff effectively. AMBIT is a cornerstone of Charlie's approach, guiding his work in providing effective, trauma-informed care. Additionally, Charlie is an Assistant AMBIT Trainer within the AMBIT Team, where he trains and mentors others within his local authority, to integrate this approach into their practice.



## Bez Martin

### *Head of Participation at Anna Freud*

Bez Martin is the Head of Participation. Her role is to manage the participation team, supporting them with their work with young and parent/carer champions and our paid Participation Programme Assistants. Bez is also responsible for creating a strategy for participation that will say how participation is delivered by all staff across Anna Freud. Bez is a qualified youth worker and has worked in various voluntary and statutory settings since 2000. Bez recently worked as the Rights and Participation Manager for Leicester City Council supporting the voices of children in care to be heard. Bez is the founder and lead for the Lundy Model Network, a national community of practice for practitioners who are committed to rights-based practice and the application of the Lundy Model. Bez is passionate about all things participation and the rights of children, young people and parents/carers when accessing services.





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