

EBDOG & Education Estates® unite MATs and Local Authorities on the school estate

Education Estates® 2026 will host the public debut of a new strategic partnership between EBD OG, the national body representing Local Authority building and development officers across England and Wales, and the UK's leading event for education infrastructure. The partnership aims to bring Multi-Academy Trusts and Local Authorities closer together on the management and improvement of the school estate, and will be unveiled when Education Estates® returns to Manchester Central on 20 - 21 October 2026.

For EBD OG, which advises government on education, property and capital planning, the collaboration builds on a simple recognition: that Multi-Academy Trusts and Local Authorities have too often worked in parallel rather than together on the school estate, and that closer collaboration can only strengthen outcomes for schools. By combining EBD OG's national Local Authority membership with Education Estates®'s reach across the sector, the partnership aims to reshape how school buildings are planned, managed and improved.

"EBDOG members have always believed that the best outcomes for school buildings come from collaboration, not competition," says Rob Thomas, Chair of EBD OG. "This partnership gives us the platform to finally have that conversation together and at scale."

James Lee, CEO of STEP CONNECT2 organiser Education Estates®, agrees the moment is significant for the sector. "Education Estates® exists to connect the people who shape our learning environments," he says. "Partnering with EBD OG means we can go further than we ever have, bringing MATs and LAs into the same room, with real intent. That's a genuinely exciting moment for the sector."

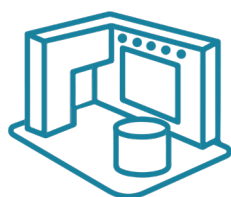
The partnership is built around three pillars: shared knowledge and best practice across both sectors, joint programmes and dedicated event space where MAT estates leads and Local Authority officers can connect, and a unified voice on school estate policy when engaging with the Department for Education.



Education Estate® has long been recognised as the market leader for education infrastructure, bringing together local authorities, academy trusts and universities alongside contractors, architects, consultants, suppliers and government representatives. With more than 5,000 attendees expected in 2026, Manchester Central will again become a focal point for the sector across two days of strategic conversation, partnership-building and practical problem-solving.

Delivered in partnership with the Department for Education, the event arrives at a significant moment following publication of the Education Estates Strategy: a decade of national renewal, giving EBD OG and Education Estates® a timely opportunity to show how policy ambitions are translating into delivery priorities across the estate.

The conference programme spans six themed stages of CPD-accredited, sector-led discussion, covering tomorrow’s learning environments, estate improvement and renewal, build and rebuild projects, sustainability, SEND and inclusion and estate management. Alongside it sits the largest Education Estates® exhibition to date, with more than 220 exhibitors covering construction, consultancy, digital solutions, furniture, modular buildings and sustainability technology.



220+
Exhibitors



6
Stages



170+
Speakers



5000+
Attendees



650
Awards Guests

2026 PREDICTED STATISTICS

Education Estates® 2026 will be the first opportunity to see the EBD OG partnership in action, and to meet the Local Authority and EBD OG professionals driving it forward. Attendance remains free for those directly employed within schools, colleges, universities, government and local authorities. Join the national conversation around the education estate: full details and registration are available at educationestates.com.

