

# 2025 Conference

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Working with Aggression and  
Intensity in Play Therapy



**Keynote  
Speaker**  
Lisa Dion

East Sussex  
National Hotel,  
Little Horsted, UK



# Itinerary

## 21st June

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- 08:00 - 08:45 Arrival & Registration
- 08:45 - 09:15 Welcome
- 09:15 - 10:45 Keynote part 1
- 10:45 - 11:00 Refreshments
- 11:00 - 12:30 Keynote part 2
- 12:30 - 14:30 Lunch & Networking
- 14:30 - 16:30 Workshops
- 17:00 - 19:00 Evening Reception

# Conference Programme

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**Eight CPD points  
may be claimed for  
every full day of  
attendance of the  
conference**

## **FRIDAY 20th JUNE**

### **PRE-CONFERENCE FOLLOW UP DAY**

- PQ Certificate in Clinical Supervision follow up day
- PQ Certificate in Filial Play Coaching follow up day
- PQ Certificate in Counselling Children and Young People follow up day

NB: Follow up days are for those who have previously completed the corresponding PQ course.

## **SATURDAY 21st JUNE PTUK CONFERENCE**

### **MORNING: PLENARY SESSION**

- Welcome and Introduction
- Key Note Address: Working with Aggression and Intensity in Play Therapy

### **AFTERNOON: WORKSHOPS**

- WS1: Working with Aggression and Intensity in Play Therapy
- WS2: Slam it! Splat it! Bash it! Squash it!
- WS3: Feet on the ground, arms in the air and breathe
- WS4: Acceptance of Rage in Neurodiverse Young People
- WS5: Aggression as a Trauma Response

## **FROM 22nd JUNE POST QUALIFYING COURSES**

- PQ Certificate in Clinical Supervision
- PQ Certificate in Counselling Children and Young People
- PQ Certificate in Filial Play Coaching

These PQ Courses enable successful applicants to fulfil their CPD requirements for the whole year. They will significantly enhance your skills and aid your career development and CV.

CPD for PQ Courses can be carried over two years.

# Message from our CEO

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**I had the most wonderful time at our 2024 Conference: Helping to make meaning out of loss. It was good to meet so many of you in person; it was very special to be together in one space and I have some amazing, evocative memories – especially the bubbles.**

**Each year our Play Therapy community grows, we are so proud of all our members and all the amazing work you are doing.**

**We are all very excited about our Annual Conference 2025 and preparations are well underway to create another innovative, unique and inspiring day for you all.**

I am delighted to announce that our theme for 2025 will be Anger and we are so honoured to announce the Keynote Speaker for this year will be Lisa Dion. Lisa is a highly sought after speaker and was most requested by our members in the evaluations so we are truly thrilled she will be joining us. Anger was a frequently requested theme by members so we hope that the keynote along with pioneering afternoon workshops including one delivered by Lisa herself, will be of the most benefit to you all.

Brilliantly over 200 people attended our in-person 2024 June Conference and another 200 plus attended our 2024 November Online Conference. We know so many of you will want to book to experience and hear from Lisa Dion, so we are excited to announce we have decided to offer a hybrid Conference for 2025. For the first time we will live stream the Keynote Speech and we hope that this will make the Conference as accessible as possible to all our members in UK, Ireland and across the world.

As always post Conference we will be supporting our members who want to grow their practice and embark on Post Qualifying courses, these will begin on Sunday 22nd June, further information can be found within this brochure.

The Conference day brings me so much joy and I am looking forward to welcoming you back to the East Sussex National for the most special day in the Play Therapy calendar.

Monika





# Key Note Speaker

## Lisa Dion

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Lisa is an international teacher, clinical supervisor, author, coach and entrepreneur. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor, Registered Play Therapy Supervisor and is at the cutting edge of her field creating new and innovative models of therapy with children and adults.

She is the founder and President of the Synergetic Play Therapy Institute and the creator of Synergetic Play Therapy®. She is also a Certified Gestalt Therapist, Parent Educator, Level II EMDR Practitioner and Master Certified Facilitator of the Demartini Method™.

In her private practice, she works with clients of all ages from around the world on a full spectrum of issues. In addition to her clinical work, she has also launched multiple for-profit and non-profit businesses and is a business consultant to various organizations worldwide.

She is often asked, “How do you do it all - run businesses, supervise therapists, teach on a weekly basis, maintain a private practice, consult internationally, create products and be a mother?” The answer is simple: “I am clear about my purpose, am inspired and have organized my life in such a way that allows me to do what I love to do on a daily basis. I face challenges like everyone else, but I have a calling and have learned the skills to help me manifest my vision.”

### **Working with Aggression and Intensity in Play Therapy**

Although aggression and death play are a common part of the play therapy process, many therapists don't have a clear understanding of what to do and how to facilitate the intensity when it enters the playroom during play. The result can lead to inadvertently promoting aggression and increasing lower brain disorganization. It can also lead to the therapist feeling beat up, exhausted and hyper-aroused themselves, which can over time significantly impact their longevity in the field, as well as their ability to stay attuned and present to a child in the playroom.

This keynote presentation is designed to help play therapists understand aggression and death play from a neuro-biological perspective and a Synergetic Play Therapy lens. With the help of neuroscience and interpersonal neurobiology, therapists will learn how to effectively work with this type of play in a way that supports nervous system regulation, repatterning of the child's autonomic activation patterns and decreases compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma.

#### **Learning Objectives**

- Identify at least 2 strategies for working with aggression in the playroom without experiencing your own nervous system shut down leading to vicarious trauma
- Explain the link between a child's dysregulated states of their nervous system and their aggressive and traumatic play
- Demonstrate at least 2 strategies for setting boundaries without shaming or shutting down a child's play
- Examine the Synergetic Play Therapy concept of “The Set Up” in the playroom as a way to understand what the child is trying to communicate
- Demonstrate at least 2 strategies for setting boundaries without shaming or shutting down a child's play

# Workshops

## WS1: Working with Aggression and Intensity in Play Therapy

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### Lisa Dion



Lisa Dion, LPC, RPT-S, is an international teacher, creator of Synergetic Play Therapy, founder and President of the Synergetic Play Therapy Institute, co-founder of the Synergetic Education Institute, creator of the Business of Therapy and host of the Lessons from the Playroom podcast. She is the author of *Aggression in Play Therapy: A Neurobiological Approach for Integrating Intensity* and is the 2015 recipient of the Association for Play Therapy's Professional Education and Training Award of Excellence.

This 2 hour workshop is designed to help therapists learn what it really means to become a child's external regulator for trauma integration. Participants will be guided through experiential role plays and activities designed to help them explore their own experience with aggression while learning how to regulate and co-regulate with a child when aggression and intensity arises in the playroom. Come take what you learned in the keynote presentation and put it into practice further helping you embody the teaching.

#### Learning Objectives:

- Identify strategies for maintaining regulation in the midst of intense play, aggression and death in the playroom
- Describe how a therapist's "window of tolerance" can impact the child's healing process
- Describe the importance of becoming the child's external regulator for trauma integration
- Explain what it takes to become the "external regulator" in the playroom to support nervous system integration
- Practice facilitating aggressive play in the play therapy process without increasing or promoting aggression.



# Workshops

## **WS2: Slam it! Splat it! Bash it! Squash it!**

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## Dr Lynne Souter-Anderson

Dr Lynne Souter-Anderson was one of the earliest Course Directors with APAC. She is now an Ambassador and accredited Senior Supervisor with PTUK, Fellow of the National Counselling Society, and registered Consultant Sandplay Therapist with the AST, whilst also working as a research supervisor on the Doctoral programmes in psychotherapy and psychology offered at Metanoia Institute, London.

As founder of the Clay Therapy Community, in 2012 Lynne established a pioneering Clay Therapy training in the UK, followed by the creation of an online Practitioner Award in Clay Conversations in 2021. Her private practice is in Cambridgeshire, UK where she offers psychotherapy to clients of all ages, clinical supervision and consultancy work. Her expertise in the field of clay therapy, the creative arts and sandplay therapy is acknowledged through invitations to present training and conference workshops across the globe.

Lynne has over thirty-five years of experience in this field and is author of *Touching Clay, Touching What? The Use of Clay in Therapy* (2010), *Making Meaning: Clay Therapy with Children and Adolescents* (2015 & 2024) and *Seeking Shelter, Seeking Safety. Clay Therapy with Families and Groups* (2019). She also loves being a Grandma and playing with clay with her grandchildren!

Clay is especially effective in helping children to explore angry and aggressive feelings and deeper emotions. As children and young people begin to locate anger and aggression, they want and need, to find ways of expressing it. Slamming, splatting, bashing, squashing pounding lumps of clay with as much force as possible to release pent-up feelings can be immensely freeing - for clients of all age groups, often put much energy into such actions.

The questions that arise here are often:

Can play therapists tolerate such aggression in the play therapy sessions?

How might play therapists be triggered when violent intentions are palpable within the play therapy room?

And, how might manifestations of projective identification experienced in the play be understood?

This workshop is suitable for practitioners of all levels. We will work experientially through clay activities, with plenty of time for discussion. In the second part of the workshop Lynne will share case material from her extensive clinical work, when clay has been used with troubled children.

# Workshops

## WS3: Feet on the ground, arms in the air and breathe

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## Kate Macairt

Kate led two Secondary School Expressive Arts Departments (1990-2004) before she re-trained as a Creative Play Therapist in 2004. Her company Creative Spark provides informative, creative, and experiential training for those working with children and young people. Her professional focus addresses the impact of nature deficit on mental well-being and the effects of toxic stress and trauma on brain development. Creativity and facilitating methods to ignite the creative spark in young and old is at the heart of all her work. Kate's love of Mother Nature and spending time outside is integral to her role as Teacher and Play Therapist. She is author of Landplay; Nature connection Play Therapy a CPD course which has been accredited by PTUK and CPDUK. She has facilitated training in Therapeutic Play skills for Forest School training organisation Circle of Life Rediscovery and Forest Schools in Devon and Cornwall. In 2017 she and colleagues from BAPT Ali Chown and Sarah Holden founded the Collaboration of Outdoor Play Therapists.

### **FEET ON THE GROUND, ARMS IN THE AIR AND BREATHE**

Playing outdoors provides sensory experiences which are far more varied than those we can provide indoors. Sensory play is a crucial building block of infant development. Humans build our perception of the world, our relationship to the world and to others through our senses.

The physical health benefits of being outside are numerous; more oxygen, more physical movement, more vitamin D and more room to be ourselves. Children struggling with hyperarousal and whose mind and bodies are programmed for flight or fight could find the enclosed space within four walls triggering. Adults working with a dysregulated child may well take them outside for a 'breather' almost as an intuitive reaction. Once outside energy can be safely discharged, and often the child is able to share authentic feelings. Bigger natural spaces can absorb the intense and at times aggressive behaviour of the dysregulated client allowing the child space to release energy safely.

Outdoor Play Therapy does not replace the safe space of the inside playroom it is additional and offers that breath of fresh air and room for the child's sensory networks to be enriched. It can provide a sense of belonging to the land and a more secure attachment to place.

In this experiential workshop you will explore your own relationship with an outdoor space using games, creative activities and theoretical perspectives to encourage deeper connection





# Workshops

## WS4: Acceptance of Rage in Neurodiverse Young People

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### Joe Jardim-Hinds

Joe is an Accredited Play Therapist, Clinical Supervisor and Filial Play Coach. Additionally to therapy, he is a supervisor for teaching staff at an SEMH school and singer in a professional A Cappella group. He spends most of his time trying to convince people this is a match made in heaven. Clinically, he has a particular passion working with neurodiversity. He believes expression through play is the key to unconditional acceptance of diverse brain functions in our children.

What do we do when rage appears in the playroom? How can we support parents when it consistently shows up at home?

This session invites you to explore the history, perceptions, and archetypal significance of the word "rage" while reflecting on your own experiences with this powerful emotional state. By embracing and accepting our own emotional responses during moments of intense dysregulation, we can create a safe and supportive space for those with more complex needs.

Neurodiverse individuals often face challenges in societies that don't always understand or meet their needs. This can make emotional regulation more difficult, emphasising the importance of acceptance and self-identity. Together, we will explore the possibility of shifting our mindset—toward understanding our regulatory states and natural responses to unmet needs, rather than resisting them.

In this training, you'll have the opportunity to:

- Reflect on what feelings rage brings up for you as a practitioner.
- Explore the archetypal value of rage and how it interweaves with other emotions, evolving in different contexts.
- Process and creatively explore rage using tools from the play therapy toolkit, including symbols and art-based approaches.
- Share and develop creative strategies for representing and working with rage in the playroom.

Rage, as a state of dysregulation, is a normal and significant part of our human survival system. Together, we'll explore how to navigate its intensity with curiosity, compassion, creativity, and safety.

What do we do when rage shows up in the playroom? Or how do we support parents when rage consistently shows up at home?

This session will explore the history, perceptions and archetypal value of the word 'rage' as well as navigating our own experience of rage within ourselves. Holding and accepting our own emotional experience during moments of intense emotional dysregulation could support us in providing space for rage in those with more complex needs.

# Workshops

## WS5: Aggression as a Trauma Response

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# Karen O'Neill & Tara McDonald



This workshop is delivered by Karen O'Neill, an adult psychotherapist, child therapist, parent-infant therapist, clinical supervisor and EMDR Europe Accredited Practitioner, and Tara McDonald, a child therapist, adult psychotherapist, and clinical supervisor.

As Co-directors of PIP Solutions Training and Consultancy, they provide high-quality training and support for child therapists, equipping them with specialist skills and knowledge to meet the needs of vulnerable young clients and their families. Their expertise links attachment theory, developmental trauma, and play-based interventions to help therapists better understand and work with protective behaviours in children and young people.

Karen and Tara are co-authors of *A Polyvagal Informed Approach to Therapeutic Work with Children and Young People*, a guide that unravels the mysteries of the nervous system and offers practical strategies for supporting children through a polyvagal lens.

When working with children and adolescents who show heightened protective responses, a mindful therapeutic approach is essential. In this interactive two-hour experiential workshop, *Aggression as a Trauma Response*, Karen and Tara will lead participants in understanding aggression through a trauma-informed perspective.

The session will delve into how aggressive behaviours, while seemingly maladaptive, often serve as a resilient coping mechanism for young clients striving to self-protect and survive.

In this session, we will explore how fostering a felt sense of safety and supporting clients in remaining within their window of tolerance are crucial for effective therapy. Techniques such as habituation, titration, ritual, and structured play therapy will be introduced as valuable tools to aid in this work.

### **Aim of the workshop:**

To help participants recognize how trauma can manifest as an aggressive response.

### **Outcome of the workshop:**

Participants will gain a new understanding that aggressive communication may be a response rooted in trauma.



# Post Qualifying Certificate in Counselling Children and Young People Jessica van Maanen

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Jessica is Clinical Manager, PTUK Accredited Play Therapist, Supervisor and Filial Play Coach with over 18 years' experience of working with vulnerable children and families. She provides Play Therapy and Counselling services to foster children and their families, as well as children on the autistic spectrum both in mainstream and SEN schools.

Jessica also offers supervision to trainee and fully qualified play therapists and is an APAC course director delivering the Certificate in Therapeutic Play Skills, Diploma in Play Therapy and Certificate in Counselling Children and Young People courses.

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We all know that young children rarely use talking as a way to resolve their issues, but as they grow older this changes. This programme enables Therapists who wish to extend their skills in order to use talking therapy with children and young people alongside creative arts media.

This is a seven day conversion course open to Certified or Accredited Play Therapists.

## **Course content includes:**

- How to communicate effectively using listening, reflecting, empathy, attending, observing, paraphrasing and summarising skills with children and young people in the therapeutic relationship
- Understanding transference and counter transference as it arises in the therapeutic relationship and how to respond effectively
- Identifying the ways in which children and young people manage and process their emotions, including the ability to recognise situations where they are finding it difficult to access these
- Helping children and young people to find appropriate words to describe their emotions
- Helping children and young people to verbalise key concerns, meanings and memories which emerge out of emotional arousal
- Helping children and young people to identify and verbalise the wishes, needs, behaviours and goals associated with feelings and emotions
- Integrating the use of therapeutic creative arts media (from your Play Therapy experience) directly with talking therapy skills
- Increasing your self-awareness and understanding how this can help or hinder the therapeutic relationship

**A Follow Up Day will be offered in 2026 for those who undertake this seven-day training in 2025.**

# Post Qualifying Certificate in Clinical Supervision

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## Rochelle Rajan



Rochelle is Registrar for PTUK, CE for Play Therapy India, Senior Accredited Play Therapist, Senior Clinical Supervisor and UoC Associated Tutor with over 20 years' experience working in Special Education and over 15 years as a Play Therapist. She has been running a charity providing funded play therapy for her local community for the last 8 years.

In her role as an APAC Course Director, Rochelle has been delivering the Certificate in Therapeutic Play Skills, Diploma in Play Therapy and Certificate in Clinical Supervision internationally as well as in the UK.

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This programme will enable you to leverage your Play Therapy experience to help many more children by advising and supporting other practitioners through Clinical Supervision.

Training courses are now run at 12 different locations within the UK, 3 in Ireland, 1 in France and in 12 other countries across four continents, producing a stream of Play and Creative Arts Therapists who require Clinical Supervision. This course is designed to help to fill the shortage of suitably trained supervisors able to support these therapists. Qualifying as a Certified Clinical Supervisor is also an essential step on the way to becoming a PTUK Certified Play Therapy Trainer; both of these career opportunities not only provide extra income but also additional job satisfaction.

Course entry requires at least 350 hours experience of working with children or adolescents using Play and Creative Arts Therapy, as well as experienced, accredited counsellors and professionals. Participants can come from any theoretical background or clinical setting.

Applicants will also be asked to provide a written recommendation from their own Clinical Supervisor, confirming their support for their supervisee's progression onto this course.

Course content includes:

- A model for the supervision of Play and Creative Arts Therapies
- Agreeing contracts
- Using creative arts for supervision
- Using the Play Therapy Dimension Model for supervision
- Supervisees' training requirements
- Dealing with supervisees' career development issues

**A Follow Up Day will be offered in 2026 for those who undertake this seven-day training in 2025.**



# Post Qualifying Certificate in Filial Play Coaching Sabrina Persiano

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Sabrina is Placements Lead, PTUK Certified Play Therapist, Certified Clinical Supervisor and Certified Filial Supervisor. She is a Course Director with the Academy of Play and Child Psychotherapy (APAC) and delivers Certificate in Therapeutic Play Skills and PQ Certificate in Filial Play Coaching courses both in the UK and overseas. Sabrina also holds an MA in Practice Based Play Therapy and offers a range of support services to children and families through her own private practice.

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This programme is designed for those who have completed the APAC Certificate in Therapeutic Play Skills course and have at least 100 hours supervised clinical experience of working with children using non-directive play.

## Course Content:

- The main models of Filial Play and their pros and cons
- How to assess parents and children being considered for Filial Play
- Teaching parents the importance of play, the main types of play and their purpose, in order that they can achieve a suitable balance with their children
- How to ensure parents know how to structure a Filial Play session
- How to coach parents in the four key skills of Filial Play
- How to ensure that parents know how to focus on the child during a Filial Play Session
- The use and applicability of the main Filial Play Tools (art media, music, movement, sand trays, storytelling and puppets)
- Which tools are appropriate for use at home and those that should be used in the therapist's playroom
- Advising parents on acquiring, making and using appropriate equipment, materials and toys during their home play sessions according to their circumstances
- How to ensure that the parents know how to use encouragement during a Filial Play session
- Advising parents upon how to make notes on home play sessions suitable for use during the coaching discussions
- How to integrate the use of Filial Play with play therapy if this is being used concurrently
- Maintaining suitable records of progress and carrying out quality management of Filial Play work
- How to brief colleagues and those from other involved organisations on the purpose and methods of Filial Play

**A Follow Up Day will be offered in 2026 for those who undertake this four day training in 2025.**



# Looking back on 2024



# Looking forward to 2025



**After the wonderful response from our PTI/PTUK Online Winter Conference we are excited to announce that our 2025 PTUK Annual Conference will have a hybrid option.**

**Members all over the world will be able to access Lisa Dion's 3-hour Keynote via a live stream video link in real time from the National Suite at East Sussex National Hotel.**

**It is important to us that our Conferences are accessible for all, and we really look forward to welcoming you in person or online on Saturday 21st June 2025.**

**Secure your EARLY BIRD rate by booking as soon as possible!**



# Fees & Registration

Registration for the PTUK Conference will open on Wednesday 11th December  
via [www.playtherapy.org.uk](http://www.playtherapy.org.uk)

Please note that registrations will close on 31st May 2025.

Regrettably we will not be able to offer places to delegates who submit their  
registration form after this time.

Applications for the APAC Post-Qualifying Courses are also now open via  
[www.apac.org.uk](http://www.apac.org.uk)

## Conference 2025

Early Bird Fee  
(Up to 31st  
March 2025)

Full Fee  
(After 1st April  
2025)

Trainee	£90	£110
Member	£145	£165
Non Member	N/A	£185
Hybrid	£50	£60

## 2025 PQ Courses

Early Bird Fee  
(Up to 31st  
March 2025)

Full Fee  
(After 1st April  
2025)

PQ Certificate in Clinical Supervision	£1050*	£1180*
PQ Certificate in CCYP	£1050*	£1180*
PQ Certificate in Filial Play Coaching	£750*	£880*
PQ Follow up day	£150	£170

\*The 2026  
Follow Up  
day is  
included in  
the 2025  
course fee.



# Useful Information

## VENUE

East Sussex National, Little Horsted,  
Uckfield, TN22 5ES



To book a room at East Sussex National please email:  
[reservations@eastsussexnational.co.uk](mailto:reservations@eastsussexnational.co.uk) or call 01825 880088

## ALTERNATIVE ACCOMODATION

**Premier Inn, Uckfield** – Ashdown Business Park, Uckfield TN22 2HN

**Horsted Place hotel** – Little Horsted, Uckfield TN22 5TS

**Premier Inn, Lewes** – The Old Courtroom, Court Road, Lewes BN7 2PG

**Travelodge, Hellingly** – A22 Boship Farm Roundabout, Hellingly, near Hailsham, BN27 4DP

**The Buxted Inn** – High Street, Buxted TN22 4LA

**Chequers Inn** – High Street, Maresfield TN22 2EH

Alternatively, you can find more accommodation options on [www.booking.com](http://www.booking.com) or [www.airbnb.co.uk](http://www.airbnb.co.uk)

## TRAVEL

### By Car

#### From the West side of the M25:

Exit the M25 at junction 7, joining the M23.

Exit the M23 at Junction 10, joining the A264 towards East Grinstead.

At Felbridge pick up the A22 signposted to Eastbourne, continue to follow local signs for Eastbourne/Uckfield.

Continue on the A22 Uckfield bypass, until reaching the East Sussex National roundabout.

Take the third exit into the main entrance.

#### From the East side of the M25 (Dartford Tunnel):

From the M25, merge into the A21.

Continue on the A21.

Exit the slip road left on to A26 towards Southborough/Tunbridge Wells.

Head South on the A26, taking the first exit on to the A22.

Continue on the A22 Uckfield bypass, until reaching the East Sussex National roundabout.

Take the first exit into the main entrance.

#### From the South West:

- From Lewes, join the A26 to Uckfield. At the Little Horsted roundabout, take the third exit joining the A22.
- Continue over one further roundabout.
- At the East Sussex National roundabout, take the third exit into the main entrance.
- From the South East:
  - From Eastbourne, follow the A22 (transferring briefly to the A27) before re-joining the A22 North.
  - Follow the signs to Uckfield, remaining on the A22 Uckfield Bypass.
  - At the East Sussex National roundabout, take the first exit into the main entrance.

**Free car parking at the venue with 400 parking spaces.**

**By Rail:** The closest Train station is Uckfield, which is approx. 10 mins drive by taxi.

**By Air:** London Gatwick is the nearest airport, it is approx. 45 mins from Gatwick by car or taxi.