

Applied Microbiology International

Foreword

Hello – I'm Lucy Harper, AMI's Chief Executive. In my role it's imperative that I continually work to stay informed of developments across the D&I landscape. I do this in the UK by maintaining relevant conversations with other CEOs in the sector through membership of the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO), Memcom, and through AMI's status as a strategic partner of the Royal Society of Biology (RSB).

Internationally, AMI has developed strong links with numerous like-minded organisations such as American Society for Microbiology (ASM), Federation of European Microbiological Societies (FEMS), International Union of Microbiological Societies (IUMS) and International Society for Microbial Ecology (ISME) and in particular Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minoritized Scientists (ABRCMS) and we were all incredibly proud of the role we played in the launch of the inaugural Minoritised Life Scientists Future Forum (MLSFF) in March 2025.

I am committed to ensuring D&I is at the core of AMI – a place that truly values inclusivity. We understand that hearing diverse voices and creating opportunities for all, is the only way to push science forward effectively. This approach ensures robust decision-making and safeguards our inclusivity so that we create a safe space where all applied microbiologists can feel a sense of belonging.

Having said all this, we know that the situation is ever-changing and that there is still work to do. Our Diversity & Inclusion Committee have developed a D&I strategy for AMI, including a myriad of processes and practices that create opportunities for all. But I won't discuss those here – you can read all about them in this overview which is testament to the hard work and buy-in of the D&I team, D&I committee, the wider AMI team, trustees, committees, Advisory Groups, Global Ambassadors and everyone here at AMI.



Dr Lucy Harper

Chief Executive,
Applied Microbiology International

Introduction: D&I Team

At AMI, we remain committed to building a community where diversity is actively encouraged and every member feels safe, included, and valued. We're excited to finally announce our first D&I strategy, which has been created to make this vision a lasting reality, is set for publication in January 2026 and to highlight some key achievements from the past 12 months.

Since the establishment of AMI's D&I Committee in 2024, we're pleased to share that throughout 2025 several of the future considerations highlighted by AMI teams in our previous infographic have now been achieved. Key highlights include ring-fenced funding within the New Lecturer Research Grant to support applicants from LMICs, the rollout of AMI's accessibility widget across all our websites, and the introduction of concessionary memberships for members in LMICs and individuals from other underrepresented groups.

As in previous years, we would like to reiterate our recognition that our members are at the heart of all our external D&I work. Your perspectives are invaluable in helping us build a more accessible, welcoming, and representative community, and we continue to invite and encourage you to share your feedback to help inform our work. We're always keen to listen—please get in touch with us at diversity@appliedmicrobiology.org.

We can't wait to show you what we accomplish in the coming year, and we hope you'll help us get there!



Dr Lucky Cullen

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Aims

- 01 Develop a more diverse and inclusive community for all AMI staff and members
- 02 Achieve diversity across our governance and leadership structures making sure decisions are made in an inclusive way
- 03 Engage with our members in ways that are both inclusive and accessible

Leadership & Governance

IMPROVEMENTS MADE:

- AMI's Chief Executive, attended various seminars to increase awareness and understanding of minoritised groups including the first iteration of the Minoritised Life Sciences Future Forum.
- AMI implemented flexible working policies e.g. working abroad policy.
- AMI conducted a gender pay gap analysis within its senior leadership team.
- AMI started D&I data collection for those who apply to trustee and committee roles by introducing a new questionnaire for the 2025 elections.
- AMI introduced a formal feedback mechanism for applicants to AMI trustee and committee roles by introducing a new questionnaire.
- AMI amended its constitution and introduced two new lay trustee roles presenting opportunities to draw on a more diverse range of skills and target particular skills or experience gaps.
- Updated the [AMI Code of Conduct](#) to include measures to ensure AMI meetings, events and online spaces are safer and inclusive for member. A similar [code of conduct for events](#) has also been introduced.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS:

- AMI will consider all aspects of team meeting arrangements (online & in person) to ensure best possible access for the whole team.
- AMI will consider repeating the training for the team on menopause awareness.
- Consider how to encourage better uptake of D&I data collection for trustee role applicants.
- Consider how to get more replies to the feedback questionnaire about the recruitment process – from applicants to trustee / committee roles.
- AMI will start gathering data about the composition of the existing trustee board, this will include gender, ethnicity, nationality, and age.

Marketing and Communications

IMPROVEMENTS MADE:

- AMI's digital accessibility widget has been rolled out across AMI's other websites ([MLSFF](#), [Soil Stars](#) and [Microbes & Social Equity](#)). This offers adaptive features for users with visual impairments, colour blindness, dyslexia, epilepsy, and more, ensuring a more inclusive experience for all visitors.
- Full audits of the main AMI website and MLSFF website have been carried out testing suitability and appropriateness of language and imagery. This will now become an annual audit.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS:

- D&I questions will be included in the 2026 AMI Member Survey, including D&I data monitoring questions and questions on member experience of inclusivity within the AMI community.
- AMI will benchmark the presentation and communication of its new D&I strategy against other professional bodies and associations to identify best practice.
- AMI will begin implementing a new strategy for celebrating D&I Awareness Days of relevance to AMI's global community in 2026.

Publishing: Journals & *The Microbiologist*

AMI JOURNALS

IMPROVEMENTS MADE:

- AMI issued global calls for all editorial vacancies in 2025 resulting in AMI's editors representing 37 countries and all continents.
- AMI launched its second Junior Editor training programme, the 21 vacancies attracted >200 applications from 46 countries, with all positions filled by final year PhD to 6 years post PhD.
- The five Senior Vacancies attracted >60 applications from 20 countries.
- Each board meets the EU definition of gender balance by including at least 40% male & female:
 - *Journal of Applied Microbiology* 55% male 45% female
 - *Letters in Applied Microbiology* 52% male 48% female
 - *Sustainable Microbiology* 60% male 40% female

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS:

- AMI plans to carry out a diversity questionnaire across all boards to enable monitoring on the diversity of protected characteristics.
- *Letters in Applied Microbiology* has inclusivity as a strategic priority and will aim to grow authorship from underrepresented regions: Latin America, Africa, South & Southeast Asia.

themicrobiologist

IMPROVEMENTS MADE:

- AMI added a Regions tab to *The Microbiologist* website to help users filter content to their location or area of interest.
- Implemented a reader survey to help guide our editorial work for the upcoming year.
- *The Microbiologist* team started D&I collection when signing up.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS:

- Adding an accessibility widget to the site to improve reader experience (in progress).
- AMI will consider the feasibility of translating and printing the annual hardcopy version in languages other than English.
- AMI will consider using geographic information to tailor featured content better suited to each geographical region.
- AMI will use the reader survey results to improve coverage across all geographic areas.

Events

IMPROVEMENTS MADE:

- AMI updated its Events Code of Conduct to enhance inclusivity, accessibility, and respectful participation, ensuring a welcoming environment for all attendees.
- D&I considerations have been more consistently embedded into event planning and delivery, including speaker balance, session formats, and codes of conduct for both online and in-person events.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS:

- AMI will be developing an official D&I checklist to be incorporated into our D&I Events Operations framework to support consistent application across all AMI events.
- AMI will continue exploring inclusive event formats and support mechanisms (e.g. accessibility, neurodiversity-aware practices, and safe networking spaces), particularly for early-career researchers and under-represented groups.

Human Resources

IMPROVEMENTS MADE:

- Updated employee policies to align with evolving D&I standards, including enhancements to family-friendly policies (buying and selling annual leave), the birthday leave policy, and the carers leave policy.
- Delivered D&I training, ensuring all staff are equipped to contribute to an inclusive and supportive workplace culture.
- Continued facilitation of regular check-in sessions with staff to provide a safe space for discussion and feedback.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS:

- AMI will introduce a wellness passport to document health conditions, support needs, and preferred workplace adjustments for staff.
- AMI will implement equality-monitoring forms as part of the recruitment process to enable more comprehensive monitoring of diversity across the candidate pool.

Finance & Grants

IMPROVEMENTS MADE:

- AMI has ring-fenced funding within the New Lecturer Research Grant (NLRG) to specifically support applicants from LMICs in 2025.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS:

- AMI will develop a procurement policy with a strong focus on Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles.
- AMI will review its grants marketing strategy to secure a 30% allocation of the summer studentships for students from countries outside the UK and US.

Membership

IMPROVEMENTS MADE:

- AMI developed free and concessionary memberships for individuals in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) and other underrepresented groups, removing financial barriers and promoting equitable access to AMI's resources.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS:

- AMI will develop an international mentorship programme across the AMI membership to diversify the talent pipeline and promote leadership development

Other

IMPROVEMENTS MADE:

- AMI finalised a D&I Glossary to standardise definitions used within the organisation and make them relevant to our global community.
- Seven AMI team members completed Mental Health First Aider Training to support colleagues and help foster a mentally healthy workplace.
- We engaged with several external organisations, including Royal Society of Biology D&I Working Group and the APPG on D&I in STEM to strengthen our D&I perspective and explore collaboration to benefit our community.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS:

- AMI has committed to hosting two D&I focused webinars per year starting from 2026.
- Exploring enhancing anonymous D&I data collection by members in order to understand our community better to support those who are present and encourage the engagement of those who are missing from the STEM space.