

Applied Microbiology International

Foreword

Hello – I’m Lucy Harper, AMI’s Chief Executive and 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 through AMI’s membership of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Science and Health (EDIS), connections with the Daphne Jackson Trust, and 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 the American Society for Microbiology (ASM), the Federation of European Microbiological Societies (FEMS), the International Union of Microbiological Societies (IUMS) and the International Society for Microbial Ecology (ISME) and in particular the 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 are developing 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 team, trustees and everyone here at AMI.



Dr Lucy Harper

Chief Executive,
Applied Microbiology International

Introduction

At AMI, we’re committed to building a community where diversity is actively encouraged and every member feels safe, included, and valued. Our first D&I strategy, set for publication later this year, is being developed to help make this vision a lasting reality.

Building on work started in 2023, our staff continue to embed D&I-focused improvements across all areas of AMI, recognising D&I as a continuous, evolving responsibility. This infographic highlights key achievements from 2024, as well as priorities for 2025.

A major milestone for 2024 was the launch of AMI’s first D&I Committee. The committee not only supports our strategy’s development but also provides a safe space for staff to raise D&I-related ideas, questions, and concerns—driving meaningful change from within.

Alongside our staff experiences of D&I, we also recognise that our members experience the effects of our external-facing D&I work most directly. That’s why we’re openly inviting your feedback on how we can continue to shape AMI into a more accessible, welcoming, and representative community. You can contact us at diversity@appliedmicrobiology.org, and your input will be brought to the committee for discussion. Or keep an eye out for this year’s member survey which will provide the opportunity to give anonymous feedback. We’d love to hear from you.

We look forward to showing you the progress we’re making throughout 2025 in next year’s infographic—and we hope you’ll help us in getting there.



Dr Lucky Cullen

Head of Policy, Community &
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Applied Microbiology International



Daisy Neale

Policy & Diversity Manager
Applied Microbiology International

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, HR & Governance

IMPROVEMENTS MADE:

- AMI implemented a blind recruitment process for roles advertised at the society to promote diversity, inclusivity and fairness.
- AMI reviewed its current policies and implemented several dynamic policies to improve staff wellbeing, inclusivity and experience including on menopause and working abroad.
- AMI updated role descriptions, person specifications and adverts for trustee and committee appointment, using best practices from the ‘Getting on Board, How to Diversify your Board’ publication.
- AMI continued using measures to minimise unconscious bias during trustee and committee appointment, using anonymised applications and scoring rubrics.
- As AMI’s D&I champion, AMI’s Chief Exec Lucy Harper attended various seminars to increase awareness and understanding of minoritised groups e.g., the neurodiverse community (Neurodiversity at Work online seminar).

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS:

- AMI is piloting a D&I data collection form for trustee elections to enhance our diversity monitoring.
- AMI will explore introducing formal feedback mechanisms from applicants to improve future appointment processes.
- The introduction of two new lay trustees offers an opportunity to bring in broader skills and increase board diversity.

Marketing and Communications

IMPROVEMENTS MADE:

- AMI has added an accessibility widget to our website to improve digital accessibility. This offers adaptive features for users with visual impairments, colour blindness, dyslexia, epilepsy, and more, ensuring a more inclusive experience for all visitors.
- Our 2023 branding guidelines have placed greater emphasis on ensuring AMI’s visual and written content reflect the diversity of our members and the wider scientific community.
- In late 2024, AMI’s marketing and communications team helped plan the 2025 Minoritised Life Scientists Forum.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS:

- AMI will roll out the accessibility widget across our other websites during 2025.
- AMI is reviewing its strategic approach to recognising global diversity & inclusion awareness days to try and embed a more community-led approach.

Publishing

AMI JOURNALS

IMPROVEMENTS MADE:

- AMI has achieved a gender balance on each of our editorial boards (defined by the EU as at least 40% of each gender (male and female only)).
- AMI publishing team have set a clear policy around the diversity of our editorial boards for gender and geographical location.
- AMI is now reporting annually on diversity of our authors in line with the Joint Commitment for Action on Inclusion and Diversity in Publishing.
- Completed the first year of our Junior Editor training programmes with participants from 13 countries and every continent. A full review of the training programme is ready for the second cohort.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS:

- AMI plans to send a diversity questionnaire to all Editors to enable monitoring and target setting on further protected characteristics.
- AMI plans on issuing global calls for all editorial vacancies, with an emphasis on underrepresented regions.
- AMI will launch our second, improved Junior Editor training programmes.

Events

IMPROVEMENTS MADE:

- AMI hosted its first two D&I focused webinars;
 - ‘Science & Success: the link between STEM and success in sustainable entrepreneurship’, hosted on International Women’s Day to spotlight five women in STEM who became successful entrepreneurs, using science to develop sustainable solutions to global challenges.
 - ‘Connecting and inspiring LGBTQIA+ researchers in microbiology’ – a community event for LGBTQIA+ microbiologists to share experiences and explore ways to advance inclusion and representation in science.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS:

- AMI will be developing an official D&I checklist to be incorporated into our D&I Events Operations Manual.
- AMI will update its Events Code of Conduct to enhance inclusivity, accessibility, and respectful participation, ensuring a welcoming environment for all attendees.

Membership

IMPROVEMENTS MADE:

- AMI’s Membership & Community Administrator completed Open University’s Intercultural Competence course to strengthen inclusive communication – supporting better engagement with our international members.
- AMI is undergoing GDPR-compliant updates to diversity data collection – making it optional, anonymous, and framed to improve services without storing personal identifiers.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS:

- AMI is developing 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.

Finance & Grants

IMPROVEMENTS MADE:

- AMI implemented a policy to anonymise all grant applications before review, ensuring impartial assessment and minimising unconscious bias.
- AMI established targeted allocation goals, committing a percentage of grants to members from LMICs in 2024.
- AMI conducted a comprehensive banking review to ensure financial partnerships align with Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles, including ethical investment practices and commitments to social equity. Whilst we were unable to identify an ideal solution that fully aligned with all ESG priorities, we carefully assessed available options and selected the provider that best met our overall requirements at this time.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS:

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

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IMPROVEMENTS MADE:

- AMI conducted a reader survey to gather anonymous demographic and readership behaviour information and is tracking the geographical region of each story and its author as well as readership location, to gather better D&I monitoring data.
- AMI is making use of a wider range of image libraries, to ensure diverse representation in images used.
- AMI is working with our Global Ambassador and Advisory Group cohorts to internationalise content.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS:

- AMI hopes to add an accessibility widget to the Microbiologist site to improve reader experience.
- AMI is considering the feasibility of translating and printing the Microbiologist hardcopy annual in other than languages.
- AMI is considering using geographic data to tailor featured content so that it’s better suited to each geographical region.
- AMI plans to use reader survey results to improve coverage across all geographic areas.

Other

IMPROVEMENTS MADE:

- AMI established its first D&I Committee, formed of staff from each workstream and an AMI trustee. The group meet monthly to discuss D&I related issues, improvements and to progress the development of AMI’s first D&I Strategy.
- AMI conducted several D&I assessments on its processes, including:
 - How we can empower the use of pronouns (resulting in more opportunities for pronoun declaration to be implemented into recruitment processes)
 - How to reduce bias in our recruitment (resulting in blind recruitment being implemented)
 - How AMI should approach membership and activities within countries of international concern
- AMI established our Dorothy Jones Diversity & Inclusion Achievement award which acknowledges individuals or organisations that have made significant strides in these areas.
- AMI introduced a confidential ‘post-box’ tool for staff to share HR, wellbeing, or inclusion concerns – encouraging open, safe communication.
- Some of AMI’s staff are looking to gain / refresh their Mental Health First Aider training to support colleagues and help foster a mentally healthy workplace.
- AMI has published its Diversity and Inclusion Monitoring Report, based on the results of the December 2023 D&I survey. This report will serve as a benchmark for measuring progress, informing future initiatives, and guiding ongoing efforts to enhance equity and inclusion across AMI.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS:

- AMI is considering establishing an Anti-Racism and LGBTQIA+ network for its members.
- AMI will review and update its general Code of Conduct to incorporate a new Safe Space policy and to include new sections covering topics such as how AMI responds to microaggressions and misgendering.