

The ABPI's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

April 2021



The ABPI exists to make the UK the best place in the world to research, develop and use the medicines and vaccines of the future.

Creating diverse and inclusive workplaces that deliver innovations to improve the lives of everyone in the UK is critical if we are to deliver on our mission.

Introduction

Over the past year, the Marmot Ten Years On Health Equity Review, the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on ethnic minority groups, the Black Lives Matter movement and the Cumberlege Report have all brought into stark relief the serious and growing inequalities in health outcomes and life opportunities that are casting a long shadow on the UK.

The pharmaceutical industry has a central role to play in addressing these challenges: not only in researching and developing treatments that improve the lives of everyone in the UK, but in creating diverse and inclusive workplaces that reflect the whole of UK society.

This strategy sets out how the ABPI can work with our members to help drive this change.

We will do this by:

- Establishing an EDI Baseline for the Pharmaceutical Industry
- Delivering a policy programme targeted at addressing health inequalities in the UK
- Refreshing ABPI's EDI policies

1. Establishing an EDI Baseline for the Pharmaceutical Industry

The success of pharmaceutical companies has always relied on collaboration between highly talented people. A diverse workforce brings a diversity of thought and experience which delivers success, and our members are already doing a huge amount of work to create diverse and inclusive workplaces.

As part of the Science Industry Partnership (SIP) we acknowledged that more research was needed into EDI in our sector. A recent SIP report demonstrated that whilst almost 7 in 10 companies have an EDI strategy, concerns remain about the number of senior staff from ethnic minority communities. Research from the Social Mobility Commission¹ estimates that just 9% of life science professionals are from a working-class background.

Our goal is for the research-based pharmaceutical industry and the ABPI to achieve industry-leading standards of EDI within 5 years.

ABPI activity: Building on the work of SIP, the ABPI will work with our members to create a baseline of current EDI policies, identify areas of concern, and will report back with recommendations by the end of 2021.

References

1. Social Mobility Commission: Social Mobility, the Class Pay Gap and Intergenerational Worklessness: New Insights from The Labour Force Survey, 2017



2. Addressing health inequalities in the UK

Health outcomes in the UK remain unequal. The Marmot Ten Years On Review included analysis demonstrating that, even after accounting for social and economic disadvantage, adults over 60 from minority ethnic groups are more likely than white British people to report limiting health and poor self-rated health².

The COVID-19 pandemic has further underlined these inequalities. Government analysis³ found that after accounting for the effect of sex, age, deprivation and region, people of Bangladeshi ethnicity had around twice the risk of death when compared to people of white British ethnicity. People of Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Other Asian, Caribbean, and Other Black ethnicity had between 10% and 50% higher risk of death when compared to White British.

We also know that, to address these inequalities, clinical research should reflect and include the diversity of the population as a default, unless there is good scientific rationale to exclude particular groups.

References

2. Toleikyte L, Salway S. Local action on health inequalities Understanding and reducing ethnic inequalities in health. Public Health England and Institute of Health Equity; 2018
3. Beyond the Data: Understanding the Impact of COVID-19 on BAME Communities ([here](#))

ABPI activity: To understand how the pharmaceutical industry can work to address these inequalities, we will undertake a Health Inequalities work programme with the NHS Confederation, which will enable us to understand how to better tackle variation in uptake and outcomes.

This will include workshops with regional stakeholders in the areas of cancer, diabetes and respiratory disease and activity at the NHS Confed Conference.

ABPI activity: The ABPI will work with partners to ensure our Valuing Vaccines campaign helps to address the issue of vaccine hesitancy in ethnic minority communities.

ABPI activity: The ABPI will continue to work with the Academic Health Science Network and the Birmingham Health Partnership to address unmet needs of both maternal health and those with multiple long-term conditions.

ABPI activity: The ABPI will become an active member of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Science and Health (EDIS) Coalition.

3. Refreshing ABPI's EDI policies

We also want the ABPI to have the best possible policies and processes that attract and retain a diverse workforce. We want to learn from our members and other organisations how we can refresh our existing staff policy handbook and recruitment processes to reflect best practice.

We also know that as the trade association representing the industry, we can provide opportunities for young people at the start of their career and who may go on to become the industry leaders of the future.

ABPI action: We will develop a staff mentorship programme in partnership with the Social Mobility Foundation, using its established tools to train staff mentor volunteers to support young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to reach university and embark on a career in the life sciences sector.

ABPI action: We will develop an internship within the ABPI communications team, designed to provide opportunities to groups of people who are underrepresented in the communications industry as well as life sciences.

ABPI action: We will set up a working group with member company EDI champions to explore and develop a pilot project to support minority groups in the industry.

ABPI action: We will refresh our staff policy handbook and recruitment processes, including exploring a community approach to recruitment of specific roles, and the ABPI achieving Living Wage accreditation.

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