

The British Toxicology Society

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, 2023-25

1.0 Background

The British Toxicology Society (BTS) provides the main platform for communication, dissemination, integration and education of the diverse field of toxicology within the UK. The BTS is committed to the development of a strong and diverse membership through the facilitation of professional interactions and mentoring opportunities, promotion of involvement in scientific meetings of the Society and development of focused out-reach programmes to schools, universities and other learning establishments.

In 2020, the BTS produced its overarching strategic vision for 2020-2024 (<https://www.thebts.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Strategy-of-the-BTS-2020-2024-Aug-2020.pdf>) which included six key objectives one of which was Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). The Executive Committee is committed to supporting the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda.

To engage with the strategic vision of the Society it is essential to create an inclusive culture, which reflects its membership and the toxicology community; treating all members, participants in BTS facilitated activities, and stakeholders with dignity and respect.

The BTS has taken a number of steps to ensure it meets its EDI commitments, including becoming an associate member of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Science and Health (EDIS), a coalition of organisations working to improve EDI within the science and health research sector. The BTS also works closely with the Royal Society of Biology (RSB) and individual sister societies to initiate, develop and deliver EDI for its members through the RSB's Diversity and Inclusion Working Group.

The BTS continues to work to ensure that all those associated with the Society are not disadvantaged on the grounds of any of the nine protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), religious belief & non-belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The 2020-2024 Strategy, ratified by the BTS Executive Committee, identified key areas of focus : Leadership and Governance, Subcommittees, Communications and Events.

The Society has already taken a number of steps to embed EDI into its organisation and ways of working and ensured that EDI has been embedded into its six key objectives namely:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Education and Training
- Research
- Networking
- Communication
- Sustainability

This EDI Strategy 2023-2025 will ensure that the Society and its membership can have confidence that the Executive Committee support the principles of EDI to the benefit of the Society and its members.

2.0 Policies underpinning the EDI Strategy 2023-25

The BTS has an EDI policy which underpins this EDI Strategy 2023-2025 (<https://www.thebts.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Equality-Diversity-and-Inclusion-Policy-April-2024.pdf>).

In addition, the BTS will take specific actions to implement the requirements set out in the **Public Sector Equality Duty** (<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty>).

This duty requires the BTS to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010 (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, with a specific requirement to tackle prejudice, and promote understanding. The BTS recognises that this relates to all of its functions, with specific reference to the provision of education and training and the provision of membership services. The BTS also embeds these principles within its core remit, such that it is the duty of each member of the Society and those associated with the Society not to engage in discriminatory behaviour and to abide by and implement this Code of Conduct policy (<https://www.thebts.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/BTS-Code-of-Conduct-V2-Feb-2022.pdf>).

Additionally, in the context of the activities of the BTS, the Society expands its equality and inclusion principles to also encompass subject knowledge and experience, as well as representation from all sectors (academic, clinical, industrial and regulatory). The BTS is committed to advancing equality of opportunity for persons at all stages of their career and levels of expertise.

3.0 Guiding principles of the BTS EDI Strategy 2023-2025 and its implementation.

The Society has already taken a number of steps to embed EDI in its organisation and ways of working and the 2023-2025 EDI Strategy will use the guiding principles to implement some further specific actions:

3.1 Guiding Principles

3.1.1 Guiding Principle 1: Leadership

The BTS is committed to creating an inclusive culture that supports equality, diversity and inclusion which fully reflects its membership and the toxicology community. The BTS will actively embed strategies and actions to maintain equality, diversity and inclusion within its leadership and governance, committee structures, and participation in BTS-facilitated meetings.

3.1.2 Guiding principle 2:Membership

All members of the society have a personal responsibility to ensure that the BTS implements the policies and principles underpinning the EDI strategy.

3.1.3 Guiding principle 3: Dignity and Respect

The BTS will treat all members, participants and stakeholders in BTS-facilitated activities with dignity and respect.

3.1.4 Guiding principle 4: Support

The BTS will endeavour to play a central supporting role in the development of a strong and diverse toxicology community, through facilitation of professional interactions and mentoring opportunities, promotion of involvement in scientific meetings of the Society, and development of focused out-reach programmes to schools, universities and other learning establishments.

3.1.5 Guiding Principle 5: Communication

The BTS EDI Co-ordinator will ensure that all members are signposted to the EDI Strategy 2023-2025 and its underpinning policy through electronic communication channels.

The BTS EDI Co-ordinator will provide a report on EDI initiatives undertaken by the Society and any changes made to the Strategy and Policy at the Annual General Meeting and via the BTS Social Media channels.

3.2 EDI Strategy and its implementation in focus areas

The EDI Strategy 2023-2025 will use the guiding principles to implement some further specific actions:

3.2.1 Inclusive Governance:

- The EDI co-ordinator will work closely with EDI representatives appointed from ordinary members serving on the Executive Committee.
- The EDI co-ordinator and EDI representatives will form the Society's EDI working group to oversee the EDI Strategy 2023-2025 and its underpinning policy.
- EDI will be a standing agenda item on Executive Committee meeting agendas to keep EDI at the forefront when decisions are being taken for the Society.
- All subcommittees of the Society should consider at least once a year how they can take actions which will produce more inclusive membership engagement.
- The Executive Committee and its subcommittees will continue to provide opportunities for an inclusive and diversified representation of the membership and will establish a professional culture that ensures that all members are able to question and challenge the status quo.
- All BTS subcommittees should have an EDI champion nominated by the Chair of the subcommittee who would liaise with the EDI working group to provide support and advise to the champions.

3.2.2 Communication:

- The EDI Co-ordinator will give visibility of EDI Initiatives to the scientific community through a variety of communication channels ensuring these are accessible to all members.
- The EDI working group will work closely with the Communications Subcommittee on ensuring that the content uploaded to the website is fully accessible and meets Government guidelines so that those accessing the website can use it without needing to adapt it, while supporting those who do need to adapt things.

3.2.3 Inclusive life-long membership engagement:

- The Executive Committee through the EDI Co-ordinator will emphasise through activities such as the Annual Congress that the BTS supports a diverse range of people united by a passion for using science to make the world a safer place.
- The Society will support member's changing needs as they move through their career.

3.2.4 Diverse and Inclusive Recognition:

- The Executive Committee will ensure that bursaries and awards are accessible to all in the BTS community, break down barriers and explore opportunities to refocus and recognise a broader range of achievements within the BTS community.

- The Society will ensure there is an EDI working group member in attendance when awards are being considered with a view to ensure that the committee has not shown any unconscious bias to those being awarded.

3.2.5 Equitable and Inclusive Events:

- The Executive Committee will strive for accessibility excellence at its Congresses and events, providing an inclusive environment;
- Where and if appropriate, The Executive Committee will make the most of available digital technologies to allow participation for those who cannot attend in person;
- The EDI Co-ordinator will work closely with the Scientific Subcommittee to ensure that events have considered Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

4.0 Auditing of this Strategy

The BTS EDI Co-ordinator will review the EDI Strategy every two years.

Date of Policy initiated: 31st March 2023

Date of next review: 1st April 2025

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