

British Association for the Study of the Liver (BASL)

Equality, Diversity and Inclusiveness (ED&I) Strategy 2026-2029

The British Association for the Study of the Liver (BASL) is committed to promoting excellence in hepatology through research, education and clinical practice. **Equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I)** are fundamental to achieving this mission. We recognise that a diverse and inclusive community fosters innovation, enriches scientific discussion and enables us to better serve patients affected by liver disease.

Since launching its first ED&I Strategy in 2021, BASL has made substantial progress in embedding ED&I principles across the organisation. The establishment of the ED&I Working Group, the development of an ED&I mission statement, the implementation of member surveys and the introduction of demographic monitoring have enabled us to listen to our members, understand where improvements are needed, and ensure that our activities reflect the diversity of the liver community.

This new strategy builds on these achievements. It reaffirms BASL's commitment to creating a welcoming environment where all members feel they belong, are respected and have equitable opportunities to participate, contribute and lead.

Mission statement

At BASL, we are committed to embedding equality, diversity and inclusion across all activities. We cultivate a professional community where every individual feels valued, respected, and empowered, embracing diversity of backgrounds, identities and professional roles, and use evidence and transparency to drive improvement.

We also advocate for equity in liver health, research and healthcare delivery, recognising that inclusive practice is essential to scientific excellence and improved outcomes for patients.

ED&I is not a destination but an ongoing commitment. Through this strategy, BASL aims to strengthen its culture of belonging, remove barriers to participation, promote transparency and accountability, and champion equity across hepatology.

Recent achievements in ED&I at BASL

The launch of the ED&I Working Group in 2021 established a dedicated forum to develop initiatives, monitor progress and provide strategic advice to the BASL Committee.

A major focus during the 2021-2025 period has been to improve understanding of the diversity of the BASL community. Demographic data collected at the Annual Meeting has been

systematically analysed since 2023. These analyses have provided important insights into attendee demographics, professional backgrounds, speaker and chair representation, and areas where further efforts may be required to ensure equitable participation.

The Society has also sought to engage directly with members to understand their experiences and expectations. In 2025, BASL conducted a flash survey to explore perceptions of ED&I within the membership. The survey received 195 responses and demonstrated broad support for the BASL's ED&I agenda. Nearly 80% of respondents felt that BASL currently fulfils its ED&I mission, while more than 95% considered the mission statement to be ambitious and inclusive.

The survey also highlighted important opportunities for improvement. Members expressed a desire for greater representation of ethnic minorities, nurses, allied health professionals and non-medical professionals within committees and visible leadership positions.

Respondents emphasised the importance of supporting carers and single parents, increasing transparency around committee appointments, and improving accessibility through hybrid educational content and flexible engagement opportunities.

Alongside these activities, BASL has continued to promote initiatives that support underrepresented groups within hepatology, including Women in Liver Research and initiatives aimed at increasing visibility of diverse career pathways.

Importantly, the ED&I Working Group published a position statement on ED&I in the Lancet – Gastro-Hepatology journal in 2023, identifying five priority action areas to work on.

These achievements provide a strong foundation for the next phase of BASL's ED&I journey.

Strategic priorities 2026-2029

1. Foster a culture of belonging and inclusive excellence

Create a professional environment where every member, regardless of background or identity, feels safe, valued, and empowered to contribute fully. This includes embedding psychological safety, encouraging active allyship, and advancing an inclusive culture through awareness-raising and training initiatives.

BASL will continue to promote an inclusive culture that values diversity, encourages respectful dialogue and celebrates the achievements of members from all backgrounds and career stages.

Key actions

- *Promote a culture of mutual respect and psychological safety across all BASL activities.*
- *Celebrate and showcase the achievements and experiences of members from diverse backgrounds.*
- *Increase visibility of ED&I initiatives and promote examples of inclusive practice.*
- *Encourage participation and engagement from members across different career stages and professional groups.*
- *Regularly evaluate members' experience through surveys and feedback.*

2. Embed ED&I in governance and decision-making

Ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are transparently and consistently integrated into BASL's governance, review processes, and leadership structures. We will work to remove barriers

to leadership and ensure equitable access to committees, working groups and leadership positions.

Key actions

- *Monitor diversity across committees, working groups, speakers, session chairs and award recipients.*
- *Encourage applications from members from underrepresented groups.*
- *Publish regular updates on progress and representation.*

3. Reduce barriers to participation

BASL recognises that barriers to participation may arise from a range of factors, including disability, neurodiversity, caring responsibilities, geographic location, socioeconomic circumstances, religion and professional background.

Explore and address challenges to ED&I within BASL's operations, activities, and membership. Trial and implement innovative, evidence-based approaches to make participation more accessible, especially for underrepresented groups.

Key actions

- *Explore hybrid and/or recorded educational content where appropriate.*
- *Promote inclusive meeting practices and accessible venues.*
- *Consider the needs of carers and members with family responsibilities when planning activities.*
- *Encourage inclusive social events and networking opportunities.*
- *Review accessibility regularly and respond to member feedback.*

4. Be a leading voice in hepatology on ED&I

As the leading UK society for hepatology, BASL has an important role in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion across the wider liver community. We aim to lead by example, promoting inclusive research, education and clinical practice while supporting diverse career pathways throughout hepatology.

Key actions

- Collaborate with partner organisations to share best practice in ED&I.
- Support inclusive educational and research opportunities.
- Encourage participation from members working in all healthcare settings, including district general hospitals and non-transplant centres.
- Develop and support initiatives that promote diversity within hepatology.

5. Engage inclusively and responsively

Communicate with members and stakeholders in ways that are inclusive, accessible, and relevant. Proactively seek out diverse perspectives, and ensure that engagement opportunities and services reflect the needs and identities of the communities BASL serves.

Key actions

- Conduct regular ED&I surveys.
- Maintain anonymous feedback and reporting mechanisms.

- Share progress transparently through annual reports and communications.
- Develop ED&I resources and educational materials.
- Promote member stories and examples of good practice.

Key areas of focus and implementation

Key area	Rationale and implementation plan
Data collection	<i>Includes making ED&I data mandatory when members first log in and continuous; more accessible data collection (including BASL X-tra and BASL committees)</i> <i>Simplify language and more concise questionnaire for data collection</i>
Member-led ED&I content	<i>Generate and share useful material to promote awareness about ED&I:</i> • <i>Short stories or facts about ED&I from BASL Members and patients</i> • <i>Bios from BASL Committee Members</i> • <i>Statements / testimonies on how ED&I has changed in BASL</i>
Sharing ED&I material and campaigns	<i>Raising awareness through targeted materials, campaigns and champions (e.g. ED&I terminology appendix/page on the BASL website)</i>
Report data analysis long term	<i>Collect ED&I data over multiple years, track ED&I changes in membership, assess whether interventions are working.</i> <i>Inform decision-making and improve inclusivity: the diversity data can be useful in shaping/updating the activities, policies, and priorities of BASL.</i> <i>Informing governance and leadership: ensure decision-making transparency; compare leadership diversity with general membership.</i>
Promoting/supporting inclusiveness	<i>Tailoring events, resources and policies: identify lower participation or engagement; review barriers including accessibility and unconscious bias in leadership pathways; inform event planning and online content.</i>

Governance and accountability

The successful implementation of this strategy requires sustained commitment and transparent governance. Responsibility for overseeing delivery of the strategy will remain with the BASL ED&I Working Group, which reports regularly to the BASL Committee.

The ED&I Working Group will report progress against the strategic priorities and present relevant demographic data, including membership characteristics, Annual Meeting attendance, speaker and chair representation, committee composition and survey findings. This report will enable BASL to monitor trends over time, identify areas requiring further attention and demonstrate accountability to its members.

The strategy will be reviewed annually and updated as required to reflect emerging evidence, member feedback and evolving priorities. Through continuous evaluation and engagement, BASL will ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion remain central to its mission and values.