

British Society for Immunology

# Strategy

2021–2025

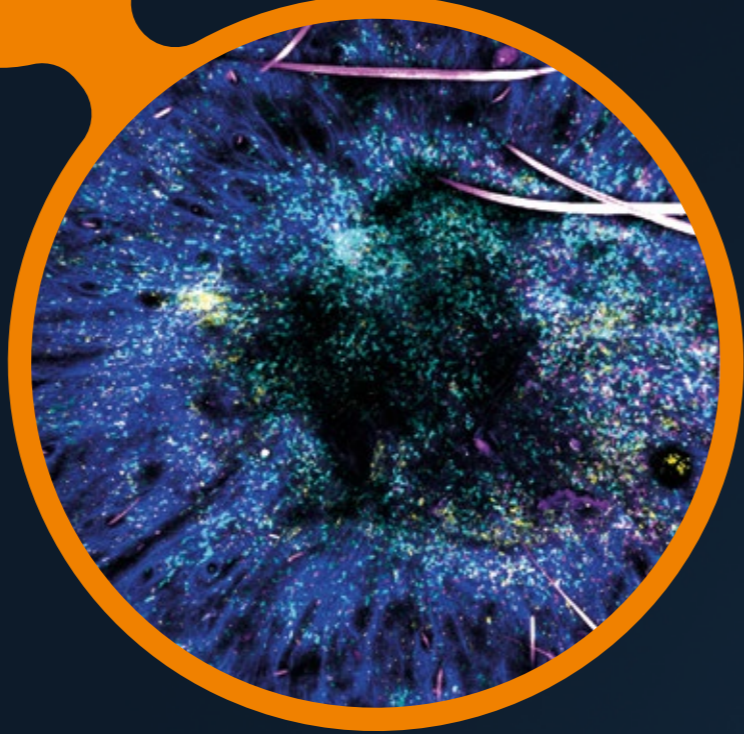


## About the Society

The British Society for Immunology is the leading UK charity organisation representing scientists and clinicians who study the immune system in humans or animals. As a membership organisation, we act as a focal hub for the immunology community, supporting and empowering immunologists working in academic, industry and clinical settings to drive forward scientific discovery and application together. We also aim to harness the knowledge generated by our membership and reach out to the wider world – policymakers, public, the media – to ensure that society is aware of the health benefits that immunology research can deliver.

## What is immunology?

Immunology is the study of the immune system in health and disease in humans and animals. It is a very important and growing branch of the medical and biological sciences. The immune system protects the body from infection through various lines of defence and can also be primed through vaccination to fight off infections. If the immune system is not functioning as it should, it can result in diseases, such as autoimmunity, allergy, cancers or immunodeficiencies. Immune responses also contribute to the development of other common disorders, such as heart disease, Alzheimer's, and mental health disorders. There are now lots of medical therapies in use or under development that manipulate the workings of the immune system to provide effective treatments for a wide variety of diseases.



British Society for  
**immunology**

## Our vision

Better health for all through immunology

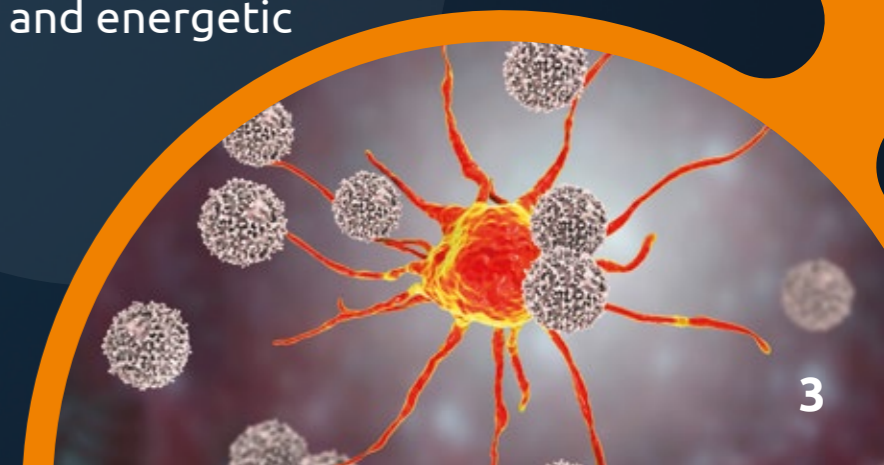
## Our mission

We are committed to supporting our immunology community in driving scientific discovery and making a positive impact on health

## Our values

We are:

Ambitious and committed  
Evidence-based and responsible  
Collaborative and inclusive  
Agile and energetic



# Introduction

Immunology plays a central role in many of the most pressing global health challenges we face. Whether it's fighting a global pandemic, supporting ageing populations to experience healthier lives for longer, protecting livestock against infectious diseases to secure the food chain or developing new therapeutics to treat cancer, immunology has a vital part to play in tackling these challenges.

Over the past decade, immunology research has undergone a remarkable revolution, with giant steps forward in our understanding of the basic science behind how the immune system functions leading to the development of a plethora of new therapeutics with the potential to make a hugely significant positive impact on human and animal health. The coming years will be critical for immunology to deliver on this potential. The British Society for Immunology has always stood shoulder to shoulder with our members to promote and support the discipline of immunology – never has this been more important than today. Our new strategy, developed in close consultation with members, sets out our vision for immunology and how the BSI will work to achieve this goal over the next five years.

We will focus on three core areas to achieve our mission. Firstly, we will build on past successes to nurture a cohesive and interconnected immunology ecosystem that supports collaboration between sectors and disciplines. We will also focus our efforts to provide sector-leading careers support to attract and retain talent in immunology at all levels and sectors. Finally, we will engage with external stakeholders to ensure the gains in knowledge achieved through immunology research have a demonstrable impact in policy and public circles to deliver positive outcomes for health as well as influencing the external

environment to enable immunology research to thrive. This is an ambitious strategy but one that is eminently achievable if we all work together. Our work will be underpinned by three facilitators – ensuring the future financial stability of the BSI, embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in all our activities and creating a larger and more diverse and engaged membership. This last point is particularly important. Membership sits at the very heart of all our activities and we are immensely grateful to the many BSI members and partners who generously volunteer their time to assist in our work to help shape the future of immunology. We hope you will all continue to join us on this journey.

We believe that immunology can change the world for the better, delivering better health for people and animals. Our ambitious five-year strategy sets out how the BSI plans to play our part in realising this vision of better health through immunology.

**Professor Arne Akbar,**  
BSI President



**Dr Doug Brown,**  
BSI Chief Executive

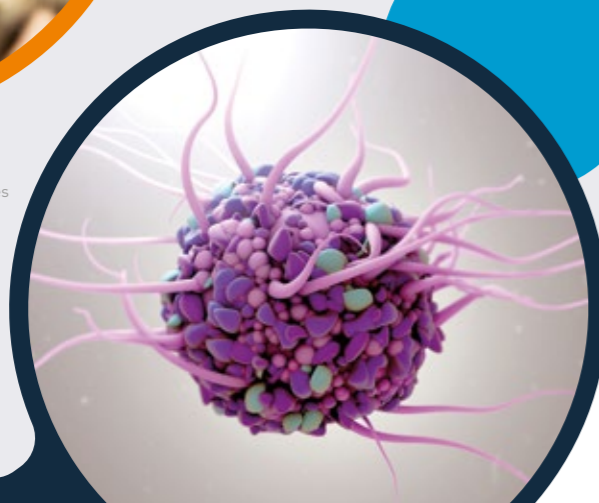


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# Our five year strategy

## 2021-2025

Our strategic plan for 2021 to 2025 sets the direction and priorities of the British Society for Immunology for the next five years. It is ambitious and forward thinking and places members at the heart of our mission to support our immunology community in driving scientific discovery and making a positive impact on health. As the UK's leading charity and scientific society representing the immune research sector, we are confident that we will deliver on this strategy to lead a positive change towards our vision of better health for all through immunology.

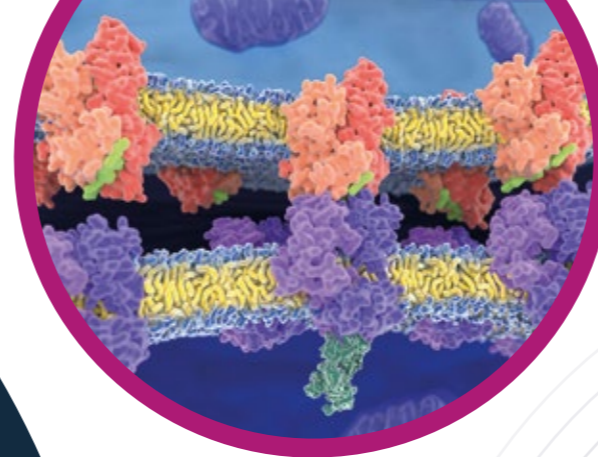


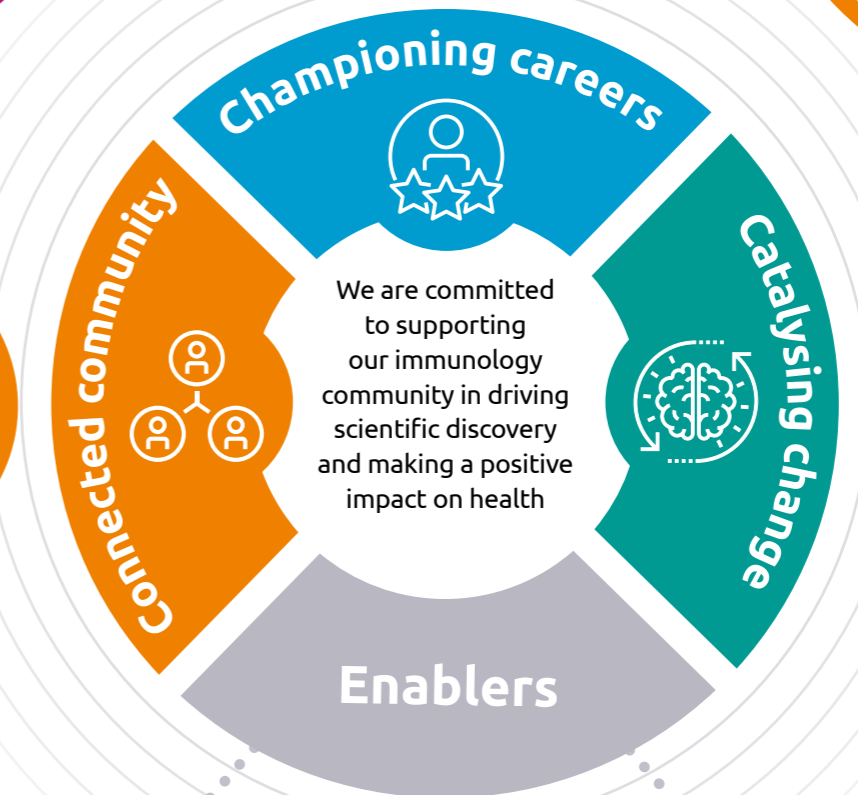
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To provide sector-leading support to attract and retain talent in immunology

To provide the immunology community with support to establish more connections and enhance collaboration

To influence and improve the external environment to enable immunology to thrive and deliver positive outcomes for health



# Connected community



By 2025, we will provide the immunology community with support to establish more connections and enhance collaboration, both within the field, and with other related scientific disciplines and between sectors.

## We will do this by:

- Expanding our activities and support to further enable our members to network and engage with each other across the immunology community
- Increasing the number and diversity of interdisciplinary connections with industry as well as between immunology and other relevant research and clinical fields
- Initiating and supporting national and topic-specific research consortia efforts relevant to immunology

## Our motivation

Our BSI community is at the heart of all we do. Being a member of the BSI means being a member of one of the largest immunology networks in the world. Immunology is a growing field, and the BSI aims to continually develop our activities and the support we provide to members to enable the discipline to flourish. Immunology intersects with numerous research fields, across different sectors, with the involvement of all career grades. Our goal is to bring this ecosystem together into a cohesive whole that fulfils our mission to take immunology forwards faster and more collaboratively.

## Our aims

- Build the reputation of our Regional and Affinity Groups as community-based expert hubs, the 'go to' places for researchers from all sectors of immunology and beyond to interact and engage
- Provide more diverse networking opportunities and events for members to grow support within our community, while also launching training programmes for researchers and clinicians who use immunology as part of their work
- Increase our reach and support for clinical immunology and the wider clinical sector through events, networks and other targeted initiatives
- Expand the reach of our high-quality journal content through partnerships and engagement with membership
- Champion investment in immunology and 'team science' through supporting and delivering existing and new immunology consortia

# Championing careers



By 2025, we will provide sector-leading support to attract and retain talent in immunology.

### We will do this by:

- Up-skilling and training more of our members than ever before
- Creating a more inclusive and supportive research culture and community, assisting our members and providing opportunities for a career in immunology
- Recognising and promoting outstanding achievements and performance from BSI members

### Our motivation

Immunology is a thriving and growing research discipline, with the immune system now recognised as a key component in many different disease areas. Additionally, the career paths open to those with a background in immunology have expanded exponentially, meaning immunologists are now present in a huge variety of workplaces. This growth means that we need to secure the future career pipeline to attract and retain more talented people from all backgrounds into the workforce. The BSI will be at the forefront of this effort, provide suitable training opportunities for members to grow their skill sets throughout their careers, encouraging an inclusive and supportive research culture and recognising excellence.

### Our aims

- Conduct a major new immunology careers review to gain in depth insights into the challenges and facilitators of a career in immunology
- Deliver and grow our new significantly enhanced career support offer, providing more grant support than ever before to members at all career stages and from different sectors
- Demonstrate a more inclusive and supportive in research culture through BSI activities and influence
- Recognise excellence by launching a major BSI awards programme to celebrate outstanding achievements and service to immunology

# Catalysing change

By 2025, we will influence and improve the external environment to enable immunology to thrive and deliver positive outcomes for health.

**We will do this by:**

- Having demonstrable impact on public health, policy, practice and research funding issues important to immunology and our members
- Influencing public opinion and engagement in key immunology matters
- Maintaining the BSI as an internationally respected thought leader

**Our motivation**

Immunology is a core life science, which touches on many areas of our lives. With a charitable remit to educate and influence, the BSI has made great strides to raise the profile and understanding of immunology amongst a wide range of audiences including the public, policymakers and the media. Our leadership through the COVID-19 pandemic in engaging with policymakers, developing innovative vaccine engagement programmes and supporting the UK Coronavirus Immunology Consortium research initiative has positioned us well to bring this influence to bear on other areas within immunology. Immunology as a discipline has never had higher recognition amongst external audiences – now is the time for the BSI to build on this for the long-term benefit to immunology, our members and human and animal health.



**Our aims**

- Build on our existing reputation to maintain our position as the 'go to' organisation for immunology matters
- Launch a BSI Campaigns Network to facilitate and increase membership engagement and mobilisation on policy matters
- Expand our innovative public engagement work to other sectors of immunology to increase public understanding and improve health
- Build on our partnerships in autoimmunity, cancer and veterinary immunology to attract new focus and funding to priority areas within immunology
- Deliver a journals strategy for existing and new publishing products to keep us at the forefront of global immunology innovation and research dissemination

# Our enablers



To deliver our ambitious strategic aims, we need to maintain the BSI as a sector-leading organisation.

### We will do this by:

- Creating a larger and more diverse engaged membership
- Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in all our activities
- Ensuring the Society's financial sustainability

### Our motivation

We are ambitious in what we want to deliver for immunology and for our members. But we need the finance and infrastructure in place to allow us to do this. Traditionally, the BSI has heavily relied on journal income to fund our charitable activities. With current challenges within the scholarly publishing landscape, we need to secure new

income streams which will provide funding for our activities and maintain the financial security of the Society, while also allowing us to make a positive contribution to the immunology sector.

Our membership is the foundation of our Society. As the discipline of immunology grows and evolves, we aim to evolve too to ensure we engage with, support and are relevant to immunologists from across the spectrum of our discipline. Similarly, organisations and sectors that embrace diversity are more productive, bringing together people from different backgrounds with a range of talents and skills, enabling innovative thinking and improving performance. Diversity breeds success and we want to do all we can to support diversity and inclusion within our activities and the wider immunology sector.

## Our aims

- Introduce a refreshed membership scheme to increase the size and diversity of our membership, while also increasing membership engagement opportunities
- Implement our new Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to be a positive force for change within immunology
- Deliver our income diversification plan to reduce reliance on journal income, ensuring we are financially secure to support future generations of immunologists
- Empower our staff team to enable them to continue to deliver sector-leading work for the benefit of our members and delivery of our mission



# Our past achievements, our future ambition

Over the course of our previous five-year strategic plan, the BSI has consistently delivered significant benefits for our members and the wider discipline of immunology.

Shining a spotlight on animal health through our partnership with the International Veterinary Vaccinology Network to deliver our successful report on support needed by the veterinary vaccinology sector to thrive in the future

Working through our Connect Immune Research partnership and the Lorna and Yuti Chernajovsky Biomedical Research Foundation to attract £1.3 million of new funding for autoimmune research

Successful delivery of BSI Congress with attendance growing year on year, culminating in 1,400 attendees from 35 countries in 2019

Represented the immunology sector during the pandemic to provide expert input and information to policymakers, media and the public on the COVID-19 and vaccination, which led to a demonstrable impact on policy

Dedication and innovation by our editorial teams and staff have resulted in our highest ever impact factor for *Clinical & Experimental Immunology*

Supported our 30 Regional and Affinity Groups to deliver over 50 research conferences over the last 5 years, strengthening research networks and fostering research dissemination

Developing an innovative and diverse suite of grants tailored to our members' needs to provide support throughout their careers and in different aspects of their work

Launching *Immunotherapy Advances*, our first fully Open Access journal, evolved our publishing portfolio to keep us at the cutting-edge of immunology innovation

Provided vital support, through our communication, governance and patient public involvement functions, to enable the successful delivery of the UK Coronavirus Immunology Consortium, the largest UK publicly funded immunology grant awarded in response to the pandemic

Sector leading public engagement programmes, working with local authorities and stakeholders, to provide training on effective conversations about vaccines

Tailoring individual support to members through our highly rated mentoring scheme, supporting 50 members in the last year to take the next step on the career ladder

Our track record in successfully delivering high impact projects for immunology means we are excellently positioned to deliver on our strategic promises for the next five years.

# Our promise to you

Our new values make it clear how the BSI will work to meet our mission – to support our immunology community in driving scientific discovery and making a positive impact on health.

Our values tell you who we are as an organisation, what we stand for and ensure that our focus is clear for the challenges and opportunities ahead. Our values will be evident in what we do, how we do it, and how we work together.

Through living these values, we will maximise the impact we make for immunology.

“We believe that immunology can change the world for the better, delivering better health for humans and animals. Our ambitious five-year strategy sets out how the BSI plans to play our part in delivering this vision of better health through immunology.”

Professor Arne Akbar, BSI President

## Our values

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Ambitious and committed

Collaborative and inclusive

Agile and energetic

# Thank you

## Our Board and Committees

The BSI's Board of Trustees and supporting committees are made up of BSI members who work with BSI staff to deliver our strategy. All the Society's committees will proactively support the implementation of our five-year strategy.

## Our members

Our members are at the heart of everything we do. Thank you to all members for their ongoing support, engagement and enthusiasm for our Society and its activities.

## Our partners and supporters

Collaborating with other organisations and partners is crucial to our success. We would like to thank all of our strategic partners, corporate members and other supporting organisations for their continued support.

We look forward to working with all of you over the next five years to deliver on our mission to support our immunology community in driving scientific discovery and making a positive impact on health.

# Inspired by what you've heard? Join us!

The British Society for Immunology is an inclusive and ambitious community. We understand the potential that immunology has to deliver huge health benefits for society and we want to play our part in realising that vision.

If you've been inspired by what you've heard in this document, please consider joining our community, whether through individual membership, corporate membership or as a partner organisation. Get in touch – we'd love to hear from you.

British Society for Immunology

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