

# **STRATEGIC PLAN**

## **2016 – 2020**

Promoting and supporting excellence in research

[www.immunology.org](http://www.immunology.org)



# BSI STRATEGY 2016 – 2020

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### OUR MISSION

Our mission is to promote excellence in immunological research, scholarship and clinical practice in order to improve human and animal health.

We accomplish this by:

- Working with our members to support current and future generations of immunologists.
- Sharing our passion for immunology through meetings, publications and the media.
- Building up an understanding of our work by engaging with the public and those working in the research and health environments.
- Working with partners in pursuit of our mission, building on common interests.

### OUR VALUES

Our values are:

- We are a friendly, accessible community which supports diversity, working across different sectors and national borders.
- We give a powerful voice to immunological science and health, advocating on issues for the benefit of society.
- Our strategy and governance reflect our charitable purpose, upholding standards of openness and independence.

### STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Our strategic priorities for 2016–2020 are:

1. To harness the collective strength of our membership, growing our numbers and increasing our support.
2. To shape the future by influencing high-level policy and research priorities, communicating effectively and strengthening the public's understanding of immunology.
3. To offer support to current and future generations of immunologists across their careers.
4. To invest in our future and build on our rich heritage, forging new partnerships in pursuit of our mission.

## 1. MEMBERSHIP

### BY 2017

- The BSI will have brought in a new membership database, enabling us to reach our members more effectively. We will use this database to improve communications and strengthen our regional networks.
- We will review our membership offer and pricing to improve member recruitment and retention.
- We will develop a ‘women in immunology’ project to inspire women to join and stay in the field, helping them to become future leaders.

### BY 2019

- We will have developed a dynamic membership scheme supported by better data analysis, building up a clear picture of our members and identifying any gaps in our support.
- An ‘ambassador’ scheme encouraging immunologists to champion our work will be in place. This will extend to clinical as well as non-clinical professionals.

### BY 2021

- We will have 6,000 members in the UK and abroad (from our present base of 3,000).
- Our programme of meetings and Congress will continue to provide a hub for immunologists to meet and share knowledge.

## OVERVIEW

Our membership is our lifeblood and it is our members who give us the ability to share knowledge, improve research, engage with the public, and encourage the next generation to move forward in the field.

Taking information from our 2015 survey, we know that members see the BSI as a dynamic organisation which thrives on its networks of meetings and through its Congress. But we can do more to increase our membership by offering more opportunities to share information, attend meetings, and be part of a vibrant community that champions research in pursuit of our mission.

All of our members should have a strong personal attachment to the BSI, and see it as an organisation which is helpful and reliable, there to support them when it matters and to offer new opportunities. We need to do more to ensure this applies to clinical as well as non-clinical members, and those in industry and in academic research. We can help our members to support and learn from each other, but we can also help them engage more with the different bodies that will have an impact on their work and careers.



Over the next five years, we will:

- Increase our reach and relevance to our members, with a review and improvement of our activities, website, communication materials and approach.
- We will analyse member data regularly and use it to formulate a strong membership package, with incentives, offering different types of membership at different career stages.
- Carry out an annual survey and act on the findings.
- Explore how our Congress can be developed to support members here and abroad.
- Investigate how to encourage additional groups to join and see us as relevant: this includes those working in industry and clinical immunologists, particularly trainees.
- Champion causes that matter to members across the field.

## 2. SHAPING THE FUTURE THROUGH POLICY, INFLUENCE AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

### BY 2017

- A new website which has better content and is far easier to use will showcase immunology, enabling us to communicate properly with different audiences, including policy makers, funders, other partners and the public.
- We will have reviewed our public engagement work, assessing our reach, subject coverage, engagement methods, use of technology such as apps and the benefits it brings to immunology.
- The celebrations of the BSI's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary will have acted as a springboard raising the profile of the organisation, enabling us to share our vision.

### BY 2019

- Evidence-based policy-making will involve an active group of members across specialisms as a central part of our activities, supported by a strong governance process. There will have been demonstrable impacts on external decisions made by policy makers that affect our discipline.
- We will have carried out a public dialogue project to understand how others view immunology and the research that our members do, and to help inform our engagement strategies with them.
- The Society will have set up an award scheme to recognise those who excel in communicating immunology.

### BY 2021

- Partners in government, research and the NHS will recognise us as the leading expert group on immunology in the UK.
- Organisations will be approaching us to partner on a range of advocacy and campaign initiatives, as well as public engagement projects, to secure success. We are regarded by those bodies who influence immunology most as credible, effective and independent.

## OVERVIEW

The BSI represents the voice of immunology in the UK, and is the largest organisation of its kind in Europe. Using the insight and knowledge, we will shape our future and promote our work by engaging with other agencies, including government and representative bodies.

The Society is not a passive bystander when it comes to science or healthcare. Our work gives patients hope and we are now seeing new therapies come on stream which have implications for many forms of disease and illness. By working across basic and translational research and into the clinic, we represent a broad church in human and animal health, and in the public and private sector. This leaves us uniquely placed to represent immunology in all its rich diversity. We need to ensure that our academic and clinical partners understand our views, and that we engage effectively with the public.



The BSI works successfully with others, such as the Royal Society of Biology, the Academy of Medical Research Charities and the Science Media Centre, to provide a unified voice on certain issues of collective importance such as animal research, or the importance of European collaboration. We should not try to duplicate work done by others or reach into areas that do not relate to our mission or to immunology. As a progressive and outward-looking body, we would also wish to express our own views on particular issues surrounding research on areas such as funding, vaccine development, and autoimmunity.

As the BSI, it is our role to advocate for evidence-based policy making in all areas that affect immunology.

We will develop plans that mean:

- Our views and opinions as an organisation are not simply understood but valued and seen as evidence-based, rigorous and authoritative by others.
- Whether in print or digital, our communications are focused and responsive, so that we listen to others as well as promote our messages. The BSI newsletters, magazine, print and social media will be tailored to reach audiences in the most effective way, allowing different voices in the discipline to be heard.
- The website will showcase excellence in immunology across different areas, providing a good experience for users, including video and integrating with BSI events, journals and our membership.
- Patients with immunological conditions will see us as independent body that supports research and with whom they can be heard *via* our committee structures.
- Applied immunological research will find a greater voice within the BSI.
- We enable immunologists to be at the forefront of public debate through external communications and public engagement work.
- External bodies feel able to fund us to help develop policies or produce reports on issues that matter to both partners.

### 3. EDUCATION AND CAREERS

#### BY 2017

- We will have mapped out the career pathways to understand the diversity of immunology careers and to identify gaps and deficiencies existing within the jobs pipeline. As part of this, we will have reported on the challenges facing women in the profession.
- We will recognise the importance of good education through the launch of national teaching excellence awards.

#### BY 2019

- We will be working with partners to deliver outcomes-focused training programmes and careers support that fills in skills gaps and will enable them to move between sectors if they wish. This may involve seeking investment through partnerships.

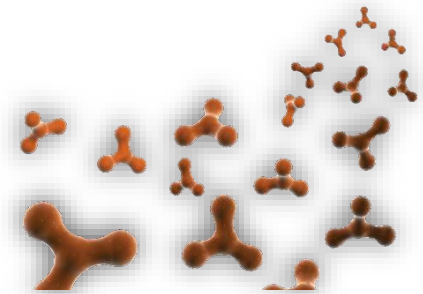
#### BY 2021

- We will have established a broad range of education and careers activities which support immunologists to achieve excellent results, helping them into leadership roles and to be effective communicators.

#### OVERVIEW

The BSI is well placed to provide help to scientists, academics and clinicians with support and partnerships which will enable the field to thrive.

The environment in which many immunologists work is a challenging one, with acute pressure on funding and uncertainty in the university and industry sectors. The same is true for many professions supported by learned societies. A core responsibility of the BSI is to think how we can establish programmes to help support them to maintain a career in immunology, or to move from one sector to another.



We will develop an ambitious five-year plan which sets out how we can help our members at different career stages, working in partnership with other bodies such as universities, industry and the NHS. We wish to be known as a hub of expertise on the issue of forging strong immunology careers, whatever sector in which people work.

This plan will encompass:

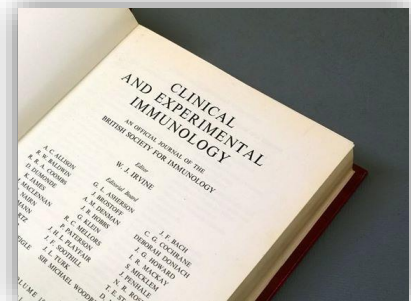
- Developing a network of teachers to share resources and promote best practice, including teaching excellence awards.
- A mentoring scheme, fully piloted, so that immunologists at different career stages have the proper peer support they need to thrive.
- Influencing the training programme for clinical immunologists so training can improve and with it, patient care.
- Career workshops and a learning programme, including the development of web resources, in partnership with others and attracting external funding, extending out regionally.

- A project to help those who may want to move into industry, but need new skills to do so, working in collaboration with others such as the Academy of Medical Sciences.
- Working for international members through the IUIS and EFIS and charitable initiatives to improve scientists' education in countries where the immunology community is less developed.

## 4. INVESTMENT IN OUR FUTURE

### BY 2017

- Financial systems will be in place which enable best trustees and staff to better manage finances.
- The BSI will have reviewed its investments policy, framing how the BSI wishes to use its portfolio ethically and to safeguard funds for future generations. We will have reviewed our reserves policy to ensure it maintains a balance of investing in the development of the organisation whilst maintaining its financial security.
- A partnership working plan will be put in place which can be developed to identify long-term opportunities and a clear proposition to potential partners from different sectors, with a view to increasing income and thereby extending our ability to do more.



### BY 2019

- Our journals income is now supplemented by income from collaboration with partners in a range of areas: careers activities, reports on immunology and events.
- We will have a new corporate membership package that will aim to raise £50,000 pa to support our activities. A fundraising plan will be developed to look at how the BSI could raise income for specific activities; this includes individual giving, trusts and foundations, alumni and events.
- We will maximise resources by looking at our cost base in order to increase proportion of expenditure on charitable activities.

### BY 2021

- The Society will have diversified its income sources to be less reliant on publishing earnings, with half our total income now coming from non-journals funding. We will have annual income totalling more than £2m a year for the BSI, including Congress income.
- Collaboration with partners, increased subscriptions and fundraising is strengthening our finances and supporting a range of activities.
- The journals are thriving with a strong publisher relationship and an impact factor of above 5.

## OVERVIEW

Over the past 60 years, the BSI has grown from a small group of committed individuals intent on doing more to disseminate research, to a membership organisation which is the largest of its kind in Europe.

The original ethos lies very much at the heart of the Society: to disseminate research, to promote and advance immunology and to make it possible to foster innovation. The BSI does so through the publication of its two scientific journals, *Immunology* and *Clinical & Experimental Immunology*. Working with the publisher Wiley, our journals provide the bulk of the Society's income, and have also enabled us to build up our investment portfolio. Our membership subscriptions provide most of the remainder of our income.

The Society is fortunate to have a substantial income from our journals but, as publishing and data access changes, we need to diversify our income sources and not be over-reliant on one activity. Opportunities to look at publishing other material important to members, such as clinical guidelines or exploring an additional open access model, should not be overlooked.

There is another compelling reason for us to look at new ways of generating funds to further our aims. Our science underpins many aspects of human and animal health, and the progression of disease. It is now the case that immune responses are key to the development of many common disorders not traditionally viewed as immunologic, including metabolic, cardiovascular and neurodegenerative conditions.

This opens up new possibilities for us over the next five years to work with other science and medical research bodies, as well as funders, to help advance the research through shared projects and initiatives. The BSI has the opportunity to become a 'bridge' to enable funding bodies and others to harness our expertise to invest in important areas of research. With our knowledge base residing in our journals and our membership, we have a resource which can be used to build up further activities. For example, we can help those working in primary immunodeficiency to produce clinical guidelines which would raise the standards of care for patients, but could also generate income.

We can work with industry partners to ensure that we help meet some of the skills gaps they find when recruiting immunologists into specific areas. By partnering with bodies such as the Academy of Medical Research Charities, we can have a stronger network of partners who value immunological input, and look for opportunities to generate income through new areas of research.

Over the next five years, we will:

- Deliver a financially sustainable future by managing our finances well and looking at diversifying our income streams.
- Run a productive organisation that enables the staff to work with trustees and members to deliver a high-quality, responsive service.
- Make the most of our rich heritage – and 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2016 – to explain the value of immunology.
- Use our expertise and assets for the future advancement of the science.
- Work with others to become a 'bridge' to building new partnerships to help immunology, making the most of our investments and our skills.



- Investigate the areas of work where we can deliver most impact by working in partnership, strengthening our role in innovation, as much as building on our heritage.

## CONCLUSION

The BSI has many strengths, in particular, its ability to bring together immunologists to share ideas, to support excellence in its many different forms and to work with partners, with the ultimate aim of improving animal and human health.

This strategy will be discussed and shared with our members and more widely. The work contained here builds on our work of the past six decades and our role as the leaders in fostering innovation and excellence in immunology. The document will be reviewed and revised regularly to ensure that it is what our members want, and also that it meets the needs set by a fast-changing health and research environment.