



|||ABI

Diversity, Equity and  
Inclusion Blueprint



# Our Mission Statement

- We want the insurance and long-term savings industry to be the most diverse, equitable and inclusive sector of the UK economy.
- We want the 320,000 people who work in insurance and long-term savings across all parts of the UK to reflect and represent the communities we serve.
- We want to be transparent about the targets we are working towards and the progress we are making.

We recognise that a lot needs to happen to do this – this Blueprint sets out how the Association of British Insurers, working with DEI practitioners in our membership and our partners inside and outside our industry, will work towards this goal.



# Introduction

## **Why we have created this Blueprint**

The ABI believes that making the insurance and long-term savings industry diverse, equitable and inclusive is an urgent priority for our sector. It is a cause we have long championed and promoted – and one to which ABI members are committed.

We are proud of the progress we have already made, which has allowed many people to access jobs and opportunities that would not have been available to them in previous decades.

However, our industry has not made as much progress as we would like. To create a truly inclusive culture where barriers affecting different groups of people are broken down, a holistic and comprehensive approach is needed.

We need a strategy that supports our sector in recruiting new people from all backgrounds, progressing their careers, and understanding the impact of the initiatives we champion.

## **Why our sector needs to act on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)**

Fundamentally, the ABI and its members believe that it is wrong for people to be disadvantaged because of their age, sex, gender reassignment, marital status, pregnancy or maternity, race, sexual orientation, religion, a disability<sup>1</sup> or because of their social background, health or family circumstances.

We also recognise that more than one of these characteristics may apply to people and that a wide range of characteristics and experiences – including many not currently defined in legislation – are important to a diverse, equitable and inclusive work culture.

Just as our sector aspires to be at the forefront of efforts to address societal challenges like financial resilience and climate change, so too do we want to play a leading role in creating diverse, equitable and inclusive workplaces.

However, there is also a compelling business case for an ambitious approach to DEI: research from McKinsey shows that businesses that outperform their peers on DEI metrics also outperform them on profitability and that this link is getting stronger as businesses become more diverse.<sup>2</sup>



This is unsurprising – businesses that consider the widest possible range of perspectives when developing their products are most likely to anticipate problems and find new ways to meet the needs of their customers.

People's experiences during the pandemic have created some opportunities to embed DEI principles, such as greater acceptance of flexible working. But this has also increased difficulties, especially where people have greater challenges balancing work and home life.

So, while our sector has made some progress with DEI in recent years, this progress has not been consistent or uniform. And some aspects of the DEI agenda remain comparatively overlooked.

For example, while there has been progress on gender representation at Board level<sup>2</sup> and ethnic diversity within executive teams,<sup>3</sup> this is not yet reflected in the overall representation of employees or in the roles likely to provide the pipeline of future managers and executives.

Research by the Bridge Group shows that more than 42% of senior roles in financial services are held by white men who went to an independent or selective schools.<sup>3</sup>

Older workers (aged 50 or above) make up a third of the workforce but can face challenges not experienced by younger colleagues. For example, 23% of women who become unwell during the menopause leave their jobs as a result.<sup>3</sup>

This means that the sector is still missing out on fully realising the benefits of a diverse workforce and inclusive, equitable culture.

Our sector is not unique in needing to make more progress. Many of the challenges we are working to address apply across the wider economy and reflect underlying societal challenges. For example, among young people (aged 16 to 24), people from ethnic minority backgrounds are far more likely to be unemployed than their white peers (19% compared with 10%).<sup>3</sup> Since the coronavirus pandemic, the proportion of disabled people who are in employment has gone down.<sup>3</sup> And at the current rate of progress, representation of women in the senior management of financial services companies will not reach parity until 2050<sup>3</sup> and representation of Black people among Britain's top leaders will not match the working age population until at least 2044.<sup>4</sup>

These are challenges that our sector must prioritise. As the UK enters the most challenging economic circumstances it has faced



since the 2008 financial crash, the need for our sector to be able to think critically and embrace new perspectives in providing its services has never been greater.

Only if we double down on our efforts across the entire DEI agenda will our sector be able to access the full range of talent to help manage risk in a rapidly changing economy.

### **A thematic approach to include everyone**

In recent years, the ABI has championed Diversity, Equity and Inclusion through developing and embedding a range of initiatives targeted at particular challenges. These include our Making Flexible Work campaign, our Transparent Parental Leave initiative and our pledge to double the number of apprenticeships across the sector to 2,500 by 2025 (from 1,200).<sup>4</sup>

To assess the impact we have had, our annual data collections allow us to understand the progress ABI members are making and where more needs to be done.

We have also facilitated our sector's support for a wide range of external initiatives and commitments. These include the Women in Finance Charter and the Race at Work Charter, alongside our partnerships with OUTstanding, Progress Together and as a founding member of GAIN (Group for Autism, Insurance, Investment and Neurodiversity). Combined, these initiatives will have a major impact in improving DEI across the sector. We remain committed to each of these initiatives and the wider causes they seek to address, with each incorporated into our Blueprint.

However, to be truly inclusive, a holistic and comprehensive approach is needed, recognising the range of barriers faced when recruiting new people into our sector and barriers that stop careers reaching their full potential. This approach should also allow us to identify where initiatives first targeted at a particular issue can also have a wider application and enhance equity and inclusion for everyone.

We recognise the importance of 'intersectionality' – that each individual may experience a number of different factors that could lead to them experiencing discrimination or exclusion. Initiatives targeted at a single group or characteristic need to be incorporated into a wider framework to be effective.

Therefore, in this Blueprint, we have identified three overarching themes through which the ABI will accelerate its leadership on DEI.



### Attract

- Ensure our sector’s approach to recruitment and talent acquisition is welcoming and accessible for potential employees from all backgrounds, experiences and seniority.
- Create a diverse range of entry points to begin a career or make a mid-career change into our sector.
- Demonstrate that insurance and long-term savings offers a wide range of attractive career opportunities for many different skill sets.

### Grow

- Foster a sector-wide culture that develops people so they reach their full potential.
- Create environments that retain people even when their circumstances change, or they experience significant life events.
- Embed and expand a diverse pipeline of talented people across the sector to be appointed into leadership and executive roles.

### Advance

- Build a set of consistent metrics that allow us to understand the effectiveness of actions the sector is taking on DEI.
- Collaborate to ensure that employees can feel comfortable sharing data about themselves to inform decision-making.
- Foster a culture of transparency where evidence informs prioritisation and the progress being made is regularly reviewed.

These three themes will inevitably interlink and overlap in places.

To attract new entrants to our sector (especially people from backgrounds less well-represented currently or with skill sets outside the ‘traditional’ set our sector has recruited from in the past), they need to be persuaded they have opportunities for their careers to grow.

To feel included, they will need to see evidence of the changes promised happening in practice.

This Blueprint is focused on our sector’s employees and talent pipeline, rather than the products and services we provide to our customers or our sector’s wider supply chain.

However, we also recognise that we have a key role as a sector in creating the wider societal conditions on which diverse,



equitable and inclusive workplaces depend. Therefore, this Blueprint emphasises the importance of the ABI's own policy work, taken forward through our Board Committees and working groups, continuing to reflect DEI best practice.

### **How we will use this Blueprint to drive progress**

This Blueprint has been developed by a wide range of firms represented on the ABI Board, our DEI Executive Sponsors working group and our Talent & Diversity Network. This Blueprint forms part of a wider programme – the aim of this document is to show those already leading action on DEI how different initiatives can contribute to a wider transformative agenda and to demonstrate to those who would like to do more how they can prioritise their activities.

As a trade association, we bring our members together and, by working collectively and consistently, initiatives can have much more impact.

We will continue to showcase leadership through our advocacy and campaigning, our annual DEI summit and our Annual Conference. Our aim is to keep persuading more leaders within our sector to commit to meaningful progress.

The Blueprint sets out transparently how the ABI will structure our work on DEI over the next three years. It is intended to provide firms across our sector with a set of prioritised actions they can use to inform their work and benchmark themselves against industry peers. It also provides our partners and stakeholders with a consistent indication of how we would like to work with you.

Under the three themes, we have set out ambitions for ourselves as a trade association, good practice for our members and the areas on which we want to work with our partners and stakeholders.



### **Ambitions for the ABI**

- The Blueprint sets out the activities the ABI will lead and the targets we are setting ourselves across three themes.
- These include activities where the ABI will manage the delivery of a programme or workstream – working with our members and our stakeholders to make them happen.
- They also include activities where the ABI will act as our members' representative on a programme led externally.
- ABI members support us in delivering these activities by collaborating with us on our committees and working groups, providing us with an evidence base and with case studies of the impact these programmes have.



## Good practice for ABI members

- The Blueprint identifies benchmarks of good practice for ABI members.
- We focus on actions we believe will have most impact on the sector's overall collective diversity, equity and inclusion – while recognising that how they are achieved will vary depending on a firm's size, location, business model and the maturity of their existing DEI strategies.
- Some ABI members will have already met these recommendations, while others will be working towards them.
- For each of these recommendations, individual ABI members can take them forward within their own businesses, fitting their approach to their own circumstances.
- The role of the ABI will be to bring our members together to share their expertise, learn from the experience of industry peers and to understand what can be done to address common challenges firms are facing.



## Collaboration with our stakeholders

- We recognise that primary responsibility for making our sector diverse, equitable and inclusive rests with the ABI and its members.
- We are committed to working collaboratively with the wider insurance and long-term savings sector – including brokers, advisers and firms represented by our counterpart trade associations.
- Policymakers in Government and our regulators can maximise the impact of the initiatives in this Blueprint and remove barriers to further progress.
- We want our sector to reflect wider society – so we are also committed to working with cross-economy initiatives, other sectors (especially our financial services counterparts) and organisations representing people who are impacted by a lack of diversity, equity and inclusion.
- As well as helping ABI members with their DEI strategies, we want this Blueprint to help our wider stakeholders understand how we are approaching this issue.

## Cross-cutting initiatives

The Blueprint is organised by theme. Inevitably, there are some workstreams and ambitions that can apply across multiple themes – where this is the case, we have attempted to select the most relevant theme.

There are a number of initiatives that the ABI will actively participate in that we expect to help our sector make progress across all of the themes in our Blueprint. Some of these initiatives include:



- Ensuring the final proposals from the **FCA's ongoing review of diversity and inclusion in the financial sector** are implemented effectively.
- Participating in the City of London's **Socio-Economic Diversity Taskforce** and promote implementation of its recommendations across the sector.
- Ongoing **collaboration with representative bodies** in the wider insurance and long-term savings sectors, including those representing insurance brokers, the London market, pension funds, asset managers and financial advisers, and our counterparts in financial services and the wider economy.
- Ongoing collaboration and engagement with organisations representing people who are impacted by a lack of diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Through the **ABI's Consumer Committee** ensuring our sector's products and services contribute to minimising economic disruption to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

#### Footnotes

- 1 The full list of **protected characteristics**, as defined by Equality Act 2010
- 2 33% of Board members are women – among firms who participated in the ABI's Diversity Data Collection in 2021 – an increase from 19% in 2018
- 3 **'Women in Finance Charter: The Blueprint'**, Bain & Company, 7 March 2022

# Attract

## Overall objectives

- Ensure our sector's approach to recruitment and talent acquisition is welcoming and accessible for potential employees from all backgrounds, experiences and seniority.
- Create a diverse range of entry points to begin a career or make a mid-career change into our sector.
- Demonstrate how insurance and long-term savings can offer a wide range of attractive career opportunities for many different skill sets.

Ensure our sector's approach to recruitment and talent acquisition is welcoming and accessible for potential employees from all backgrounds, experiences and seniority.

### Short term: 2023



#### Ambitions for the ABI

Develop a creative and exciting industry-wide multi-media campaign showcasing the diverse opportunities within the sector and the experiences of those within it.

Use ABI platforms to showcase career journeys of current industry leaders from different backgrounds.

Aim to further increase the number of ABI members signing our **Transparent Parental Leave initiative**, so that at least 50 firms have become signatories.

Campaign to further increase the number of ABI members that are part of the Government's Disability Confident employer scheme,<sup>12</sup> so that at least 50 firms have become signatories.



#### Good practice for ABI members

Ensure information on DEI strategies and policies is provided in an accessible format (on the company website and through job descriptions) for all potential applicants.

Make flexible working conditions a standard feature of advertised roles (available to new recruits as soon as they begin their role).

Ensure hiring and interviewing practices are aligned to the principles of the UK Government's Disability Confident employer scheme.

Set targets to ensure a diverse group of candidates are interviewed for every role.



#### Collaboration with our stakeholders

Gather and publish a complete list of the existing networking and mentoring opportunities, community networks and allyship programmes different organisations make available to new entrants to our sector.

Collaborate with the wider insurance and long-term savings sector and the wider financial services sector to identify shared opportunities to make apprenticeships attractive and inclusive.

Leverage these networks to facilitate networking and recruitment events.

### Medium term: 2024 and 2025



#### Ambitions for the ABI

Roll out multi-media campaign and target this towards key stakeholders advising on career opportunities.

Work with our members to identify good practice for inclusive recruitment practices (including interview questions, scoring criteria, composition panels and feedback processes).



#### Good practice for ABI members

Aim to become a Level 3 Disability Confident Leader and, as part of this, act as a champion within local and business communities.

Aim to recognise the Government's Access to Work passport for disabled people (assuming planned pilot programmes are successful).

Review assessment processes to ensure they are based on skills, not just experience.<sup>13</sup>

Introduce pro-active measures to ensure all recruiting teams and interview panels are diverse.

Collect feedback from applicants on the accessibility of your recruitment process and agree an action plan, with executive responsibility for delivery, to address any areas that require improvement.

Ensure all recruitment is through centralised, consistent processes (phasing out the use of 'personal networks').



#### Collaboration with our stakeholders

Ensure that the Apprenticeships Levy<sup>14</sup> is used effectively, so that it funds either apprenticeship starts or related workplace training, including by encouraging key partners (such as brokers, advisers and other parts of the sector's value chain) to make use of any unused funds or by donating this to suitable charitable or third-sector partners.

## Longer term: 2026 and beyond

### Ambitions for the ABI

Confirm an updated target for apprenticeship roles in the sector – linked to specific DEI metrics.

Consider where we can update the ABI's DEI definitions and priorities to reflect progress made since launching this Blueprint.

### Good practice for ABI members

Establish a programme of work experience and traineeships opportunities to bridge the gap between leaving school and starting a formal apprenticeship.<sup>15</sup>

Create a dedicated hiring process for career returners.

### Collaboration with our stakeholders

Maintain an environment where the education and training sector works with ABI members to identify skills gaps and employment opportunities and then promote these to people from every background, community and experience.

Review the Apprenticeship Levy to ensure it remains fit for purpose in an environment where the overall number of apprentices has significantly increased.

Create a diverse range of entry points to begin a career or make a mid-career change into our sector.

### Short term: 2023



#### Ambitions for the ABI

Campaign across our Board Committees and member networks to increase the number of apprenticeships being offered across the sector to 1,800.

Identify the barriers ABI members face preventing them from offering more positions to apprentices and school-leavers.



#### Good practice for ABI members

Contribute to the industry-wide target for doubling the number of apprenticeships by offering more apprenticeships.

Establish a network of relationships with local education and skills providers to ensure they are aware of the opportunities insurance and long-term savings firms operating in their area offer, and the skills required.

Support the **#10000blackinterns** initiative and pledge to offer paid internships to young Black people.

When recruiting, consider longer hiring timelines to allow more candidates to apply (such as those with family or caring commitments).



#### Collaboration with our stakeholders

Join industry peers in networks aimed at understanding how to create opportunities for neurodiverse people.<sup>16</sup>

Ensure our sector's skills needs are included in UK-wide priorities for education and training.<sup>17</sup>

Work with regulators to modernise the criteria used to assess applicants for SMF (Senior Management Function) to encourage more appointment of applicants with relevant experience from outside our industry.

## Medium term: 2024 and 2025

### Ambitions for the ABI

Extend the ABI's existing Transparent Parental Pay Initiative to include information on other major life events, such as care responsibilities; fertility treatment; bereavement; miscarriage; menopause<sup>18</sup>; injury or ill-health; and being a victim of crime.

Campaign across the sector to meet our target of doubling the number of apprenticeships by 2025 to 2,500

Identify the barriers ABI members face preventing them from offering more positions to career-changers and older people.

Consider the evidence base on offering more opportunities aimed at rehabilitating ex-offenders.

Create a handbook for career-changers of all ages on how to access the opportunities available in our sector.

### Good practice for ABI members

Increase the number of apprenticeships offered by your firm (as a fair proportion of the overall ABI target of doubling the number of apprenticeships by 2025 to 2,500)

Work with industry peers to ensure the apprenticeships you offer equip people to pursue career opportunities in the wider sector.

Participate in initiatives aimed at supporting currently unemployed people or those with particular challenges (including disabled people, people with care needs and people giving care) into work.<sup>19</sup>

Set DEI criteria for offering work experience and traineeships to ensure these can be accessed by people from all backgrounds.

### Collaboration with our stakeholders

Develop targeted opportunities for career changers with valuable skills and experiences (such as the armed forces and emergency services).

Ensure that accreditation for apprenticeships evolves to account for existing skills gaps and the future demands of a changing economy, with a particular focus on data, cyber security and the net zero transition.

## Longer term: 2026 and beyond

### Ambitions for the ABI

Ongoing programme of targeted research and policy development on societal groups and backgrounds that remain under-represented in our sector.

### Good practice for ABI members

Increasing opportunities for 'mid-career' apprenticeships to ensure talented people previously unable to access training or qualifications at the point they were school leavers can still progress later in life.

### Collaboration with our stakeholders

Ensure there is a consistent approach to awarding and recognising training accreditations and certifications across sectors facing common risks and challenges (such as data science, cyber security and climate risk).

Demonstrate that insurance and long-term savings offers a wide range of attractive career opportunities for many different skill sets.

### Short term: 2023



#### Ambitions for the ABI

Work with ABI members to collect evidence on the full range of skill sets and role profiles our sector requires.

Ensure proposed industry-wide multimedia campaign (see above) showcases the full range of role profiles and future skill requirements our sector will require.



#### Good practice for ABI members

Create opportunities for employees from all backgrounds to act as ambassadors for the industry to potential recruits.<sup>20</sup>

Simplify role descriptions to ensure they focus on the key transferable skills needed for a role (rather than experiences only people from certain backgrounds will have).

Review the inclusivity of communications (such as job adverts), removing phrases and imagery that are only relevant to some groups (such as 'masculine' words or assumptions that someone is able-bodied).



#### Collaboration with our stakeholders

Review and update how insurance and long-term savings are presented in careers guidance offered to school, college and university leavers.

### Medium term: 2024 and 2025



#### Ambitions for the ABI

Ensure industry-wide multi-media campaign continues to evolve and showcases role profiles and skills needs of a rapidly changing economy.

Publish independent research on the real-life workplace experiences of people from different backgrounds who work in our sector.



### Good practice for ABI members

Consider how flexible working mechanisms could be developed to create project-based roles that allow key skill sets (such as digital and cyber) more opportunities in the sector.



### Collaboration with our stakeholders

Work on an ongoing basis with our counterparts in the wider sector and its value chain to maintain progress and ensure every part of the sector is attractive

Review how the sector is presented (such as in careers guidance) so that it reflects the sector's openness to under-represented groups or characteristics.

Work pro-actively with networks providing support for people with specific characteristics or experiences and update materials based on their feedback.

## Longer term: 2026 and beyond



### Ambitions for the ABI

Monitor the ongoing career progression of employees from across the sector completing apprenticeships and use this as an evidence-base to encourage more people to apply for these opportunities.



### Good practice for ABI members

Consider how targeted opportunities could be developed to utilise the skills profiles or sectors experiencing significant disruption or change (for example, where customer service skills from one sector could be applied to claims handling or customer journeys in our sector).



### Collaboration with our stakeholders

Further review how the sector is presented (such as in careers guidance) so that it appropriately reflects the changing nature of roles in the sector.

# Grow

## Overall objectives

- Foster a sector-wide culture that allows everyone employed in insurance and long-term savings to reach their full potential.
- Create environments that retain people even when their circumstances change or they experience significant life events.
- Embed and expand a diverse pipeline of talented people across the sector to be appointed to leadership and executive roles.

Foster a sector-wide culture that develops people so that they reach their full potential.

### Short term: 2023

#### Ambitions for the ABI

Aim to increase the number of ABI member firms signing the Government's **Women in Finance Charter**, so that at least 50 firms have become signatories, and promote alignment with the Women in Finance Blueprint.

Aim to increase the number of ABI member firms signing the Business In The Communities' **Race at Work Charter**, so at least 50 firms have become signatories.

Continue to facilitate the sharing of best practice among different ABI members, partners and associate members (for example, through our Diversity & Inclusion Network, our Diversity Summit and a plenary session at our Flagship Annual Conference).

#### Good practice for ABI members

Ensure that all aspects of DEI (including Equity<sup>21</sup>) are acknowledged and given equal status at the heart of all relevant policies and procedures.

Adopt, publicise and enforce consistent 'zero tolerance' policies covering all forms of abuse, bullying and harassment linked to work.

Ensure all colleagues understand how concerns and complaints will be acted upon, within a 'speak up, listen up' culture.

Appoint an Executive Sponsor for Race and provide support and encouragement for race inclusion allies across your firm.<sup>22</sup>

Consider appointing Executive Sponsors for other protected characteristics or to champion specific aspects of your DEI strategy.

Encourage and support participation in networks offering and mentoring for LGBTQ+ people.<sup>23</sup>

Make decision-making on DEI policies more representative by involving internal working groups, forums and networks that feature employees from all levels of seniority and experience.

Through a focus on 'allyship', make DEI a responsibility for all employees.



### Collaboration with our stakeholders

Promote greater consistency in the terminology and definitions used for policymaking on DEI (especially among the different regulators responsible for our sector).

Collectively work to end the use of gendered and non-inclusive language (for example, removing this from policy documentation, regulatory rulebooks and handbooks).<sup>24</sup>

Raise awareness of, and help grow, networks aimed at raising cultural awareness in our sector.<sup>25</sup>

### Medium term: 2024 and 2025



### Ambitions for the ABI

Review progress with encouraging members to join the range of ABI-led and external charters/pledges contained in the 2023 objectives (above) and agree revised targets for each.

Work with our members to identify gaps in the availability of mentoring and coaching for different groups of people working within insurance and long-term savings.



### Good practice for ABI members

Ensure DEI policies and procedures are updated regularly to reflect both progress made and any new challenges identified.

Ensure all your staff understand what is expected of them.

Ensure there is an ongoing link between your Executive remuneration and sustained delivery on DEI (using metrics relevant to each individual firm's circumstances and commitments).



### Collaboration with our stakeholders

Through engagement with external skills initiatives<sup>26</sup> and industry partners, work to promote consistent terminology and definitions within role profiles to allow skilled people to advance within the sector.

## Longer term: 2026 and beyond

### Ambitions for the ABI

Conduct a full review of the existing pledges and charters we encourage ABI members to join and update these where required, while also considering initiatives developed for other DEI characteristics.

### Good practice for ABI members

Ensure sustained progress by regularly re-evaluating targets, metrics and remuneration so that they incentivise further change.

### Collaboration with our stakeholders

Review the effectiveness of the Women in Finance Charter and ensure it reflects progress made and continues to reflect best practice.

Review how the lessons learned from the Women in Finance Charter and the Race at Work Charter can be applied to other protected characteristics.

Create environments that retain people even when their circumstances change or they experience significant life events.

### Short term: 2023



#### Ambitions for the ABI

Aim to increase the number of firms signing the ABI's **Making Flexible Work charter**, so that at least 50 firms have become signatories.



#### Good practice for ABI members

Commit to opening up existing roles to flexible working (including job sharing and part-time working).<sup>27</sup>

Ensure that employees are made fully aware of when and how they can request reasonable adjustments and ensure that, when these are requested, they are notified of the outcome within two weeks.

Promote the uptake of mental health awareness courses and train mental health first aiders.



#### Collaboration with our stakeholders

Build networks with other sectors (including the public sector) that are adopting flexible working practices to share experiences and best practice.

Work with organisations providing tailored support to vulnerable or commonly excluded groups to ensure our sector's approach is informed by people's needs and lived experiences.

Ensure the lessons being learned from the ABI's wider policy development and engagement informs our approach to our sector's own employees.<sup>28</sup>

### Medium term: 2024 and 2025



#### Ambitions for the ABI

Identify how ABI-led initiatives can raise awareness of the needs of people with challenging life circumstances.

Consider how the Making Flexible Work Charter can evolve to provide support when people experience challenging life circumstances.



### Good practice for ABI members

Commit to further supporting working parents by equalising the pay offered for maternity and shared parental leave.

Offer further support for people experiencing significant life events<sup>29</sup> such as access to counselling or emotional support, phased part-time return at full pay, and offering paid time-off or flexible working arrangements.

Explore how to tailor support programmes to specific circumstances in which employees may find themselves.<sup>30</sup>

Advocate for the practical support service employees need to remain in employment including, where appropriate, providing evidence to inform public policymaking.



### Collaboration with our stakeholders

Review the barriers most likely to affect someone's ability to continue working while experiencing significant life events and promote greater cross-sectoral collaboration to address these challenges.

Consider how external expertise (such as mental health support and grief counselling) could be more effectively utilised to support people.

### Longer term: 2026 and beyond



### Ambitions for the ABI

Review and update the Making Flexible Work Charter to ensure it remains in line with changing work practices.



### Good practice for ABI members

Pro-actively plan for a structured pipeline of opportunities for secondments and mid-career apprenticeships (such as when filling parental leave and other career-breaks/sabbaticals offered to colleagues) so as to offer opportunities to people who may not automatically apply for a permanent promotion.



### Collaboration with our stakeholders

Work collaboratively to identify solutions where collaboration between different sectors and Government/local authorities could improve employees' ability to work productively.

Embed and expand a diverse pipeline of talented people across the sector to be appointed into leadership and executive roles.

### Short term: 2023

#### Ambitions for the ABI

Ensure the ABI 'Future Leaders' training programme (which equips people identified as having leadership potential with the skills they will need to navigate public policy challenges affecting their business) is delivered to a diverse cohort.<sup>31</sup>

Monitor the compliance with our DEI policy for ABI Committees and Working Groups to ensure our own policymaking and governance procedures reflect a diversity of roles from across the sector.

#### Good practice for ABI members

Ensure that your Board's Diversity Strategy is up to date and aligns with best practice.<sup>32</sup>

Develop internal targets and a strategy for the progression of under-represented groups into senior roles.<sup>33</sup>

Create processes to monitor effectively the career progression of people working flexibly or part-time.

Encourage Board members and senior leaders to participate in reverse-mentoring.

Encourage actively supporting organisations providing support, mentoring and sponsorship for future insurance leaders of colour.<sup>34</sup>

#### Collaboration with our stakeholders

Continue to campaign for regulators to approve qualified candidates from different backgrounds for senior roles even if they do not have prior experience in the insurance sector.

Support wider collaborative efforts to increase Board Diversity across the UK economy.<sup>35</sup>

## Medium term: 2024 and 2025

### Ambitions for the ABI

Revisit our 2018 research, ‘**Tackling the Gender Seniority Gap**’, reviewing progress implementing the recommendations and identifying any new actions needed.

Review and consider updating our DEI policies for ABI committees to ensure that the structures that allow member participation in our policy development work continue to reflect best practice on DEI inclusion.

### Good practice for ABI members

Review the career progression of people working flexibly or part-time regularly and consider targeted opportunities for anyone viewed as having high potential.

### Collaboration with our stakeholders

Disseminate case studies of best practice from across different sectors on creating a diverse talent pipeline for appointments to senior roles.

## Longer term: 2026 and beyond

### Ambitions for the ABI

Learn from the experiences of participants in our Future Leaders programme in their future careers and use this network as a ‘focus group’ to build an evidence base to inform our approach to promoting DEI in senior leadership roles.

### Good practice for ABI members

Ensure your talent pipeline is equipped with the skills and experience needed in a changing economy by encouraging secondments to and from key sectors in which your business underwrites or invests.

### Collaboration with our stakeholders

Increase the potential talent pool of people with experience required to hold regulated SMF functions by actively collaborating with other regulated sectors (including within the wider financial services sector) and the public sector to offer secondment, placements or job-sharing opportunities.



# Advance

## Overall objectives

- Build a set of consistent metrics that allow us to understand the effectiveness of actions the sector is taking on DEI.
- Foster a culture of transparency where evidence informs prioritisation and the progress being made is regularly reviewed.
- Collaborate to ensure that employees are able to feel comfortable sharing data about themselves to inform decision-making.

Build a set of consistent metrics that allow us to understand the effectiveness of actions the sector is taking on DEI.

### Short term: 2023

#### Ambitions for the ABI

Extend the scope of firms asked to participate in our annual data collection so that it reflects a broader section of the industry, including (where appropriate) our long-term savings members and associate members.

Consider the options for the ABI to understand employee perceptions of organisational culture across the sector.<sup>36</sup>

#### Good practice for ABI members

Provide your data to the ABI's DEI data collection so that we can measure progress on an aggregated basis across the sector.

Monitor inclusion in your organisation consistently, utilising one of the four levels contained within the Financial Services Skills Commission's **inclusion measurement guide**.

#### Collaboration with our stakeholders

Create and share case studies from across different sectors of best practice on data collection for all relevant DEI metrics.

Explore how the analysis of DEI data can evolve so that it captures the 'return on investment' from targeted initiatives (rather than simply tracking overall trends).

### Medium term: 2024 and 2025

#### Ambitions for the ABI

Aim to further extend the number of ABI members participating in our DEI Data Collection.

Work with our industry partners to understand how to improve the evidence base across the wider sector's value chain.

#### Good practice for ABI members

Aim to publish Gender Pay Gap and Ethnicity Pay Gap information annually (even if out of formal scope for any legislative or regulatory disclosure requirements) and provide an action plan and narrative so that these results can be interpreted by your employees.<sup>37</sup>

Further enrich your understanding of inclusion in your organisation consistently by aiming to progress towards Level Three and Level Four of the Financial Services Skills Commission's **inclusion measurement guide**.



### Collaboration with our stakeholders

Provide an evidence base to inform the FCA's planned three-year review of its DEI disclosure rules (which apply to listed companies and were first introduced in 2022).

Work to improve the granularity of regional data on DEI and social mobility characteristics, so that firms can tailor their strategies and targets to the needs of the areas where their employees live and work.

### Longer term: 2026 and beyond



### Ambitions for the ABI

Continue to conduct regular data collections to ensure sustained progress and identify any new trends – ensuring these are designed to produce 'decision-useful' data.

Analyse DEI performance across different sub-sectors within the ABI membership and across different geographies, and use this to inform where more targeted approaches will be needed.



### Good practice for ABI members

Review and update targets on gender and ethnicity (as set under their respective charters) and, where an appropriate evidence base exists, set individual targets for other characteristics.

Expand existing surveying of employees to a broader range of characteristics and ensure the results of these are published in an accessible format (for instance, within annual reports).

Aim to extend reporting beyond Board and Executive diversity to include the diversity of the pipeline of potential executives.



### Collaboration with our stakeholders

Encourage a consistent approach to data collection and disclosure across the key private and public sector partners our industry works with – so different sectors are better able to learn from each other's experiences.

Collaborate to ensure that employees can feel comfortable sharing data about themselves to inform decision-making.

### Short term: 2023

#### Ambitions for the ABI

Work with our members to develop guidance on good practice on how to conduct data collection on employees' experience of inclusion strategies and social mobility, with the aim of encouraging as many employees as possible to participate.<sup>38</sup>

#### Good practice for ABI members

Encourage all employees to participate in data collections, ensuring they are given adequate time to complete any surveys.

Ensure employees understand what the data will be used for and allow them to not answer any questions with which they are uncomfortable.

#### Collaboration with our stakeholders

Ensure there is clarity from regulators (FCA and ICO) on how and when firms can collect and store personal data for the purpose of monitoring their DEI performance.

### Medium term: 2024 and 2025

#### Ambitions for the ABI

Roll out good practice guidance on social mobility and protected characteristic data collection with a view to establishing sector-wide practices that allow trends across multiple firms to be monitored by the ABI.

#### Good practice for ABI members

Review participation by employees in DEI and social mobility surveys, and consider how to understand the reasons why any employees did not participate.

Build on any existing employee surveys by seeking to ascertain employee attitudes about organisational culture and track any trends linked to backgrounds or experiences.

Target guidance and support on those with additional potential sensitivities that may impact their attitudes to providing information (such as ongoing mental health challenges).



### Collaboration with our stakeholders

Share the outcomes of surveys with organisations with expertise in DEI and allow these bodies to challenge how data is interpreted.

### Longer term: 2026 and beyond



### Ambitions for the ABI

Continue to seek feedback from firms on where there are data gaps and identify sector-wide approaches to address this.



### Good practice for ABI members

Continue to seek meaningful feedback from your employees – and update the feedback you seek as your DEI strategy evolves.

Target employee engagement on those entering the sector through the new routes identified in the ‘Attract’ theme of this Blueprint to ensure progress made is sustained.



### Collaboration with our stakeholders

Collaborate with external experts, such as academics and third-sector organisations, to ensure definitions of protected characteristics and social mobility evolve and remain up to date.

Foster a culture of transparency where evidence informs prioritisation and the progress being made is regularly reviewed.

### Short term: 2023

#### Ambitions for the ABI

Continue to utilise our member networks, including the DEI Executive Sponsors working group and the Talent & Diversity Network to review progress and update priorities.

Work closely with industry counterparts (such as Lloyd's and counterpart trade associations) to compare the evidence base for ABI members with the wider sector.

Review the content of our annual data collection so that it focuses on the most relevant data to monitor the sector's collective performance, uses data already reported on a voluntary basis and aligns with mandatory reporting requirements as these evolve.

#### Good practice for ABI members

Benchmark yourself against industry peers by reviewing your own performance on the key metrics used in the ABI dataset and by publishing your own strategies and narratives.

Participate in the review of the ABI dataset to ensure it creates a decision-useful evidence base.

Utilise external datasets and tools to benchmark your firm in more complex or less well understood aspects of DEI.<sup>39</sup>

#### Collaboration with our stakeholders

Collaborate with initiatives designed to better understand DEI criteria, including academic research and third-sector initiatives.

Provide evidence on the experiences of disabled people working in our sector to inform the delivery of cross-sector or national programmes.<sup>40</sup>

Work collaboratively with counterparts across the economy to understand the evidence base of how DEI initiatives improve customer outcomes.

## Medium term: 2024 and 2025

### Ambitions for the ABI

Review any gaps or limitations in ABI members disclosing pay gaps, with a view to understanding how more firms can publish this.

Publish a review of progress against each of the priorities identified in this Blueprint.

Report annually on progress made towards the **target announced at our Annual Conference** in February 2022 to double the number of apprenticeship positions in the sector to 2,500.

Report transparently on the sector's compliance with the specific criteria of the Women in Finance Charter and the Race at Work Charter.

Monitor and publish data on the diversity of Board composition across the sector.

### Good practice for ABI members

Work to continually improve the usefulness of data you publish by setting out clearly any relevant contextual information to understand the data (such as sample sizes and methodologies).

Participate in initiatives designed to better understand the experiences of disabled employees and ensure that this acknowledges 'hidden' disabilities.<sup>41</sup>

### Collaboration with our stakeholders

Facilitate ongoing discussion with stakeholders inside and outside the sector on progress made with the Blueprint.

## Longer term: 2026 and beyond

### Ambitions for the ABI

Review progress on our 2025 target for recruiting apprenticeships and set a new target for school leaver and mid-career apprenticeships.

### Good practice for ABI members

Continue to benchmark yourself against industry peers – including understanding where progress has been made elsewhere in the sector on areas not prioritised within your own DEI strategy.

Utilise the initiatives set out under ‘Attract’ and ‘Grow’ to maintain a recurring feedback loop (for example, diverse DEI working groups and reverse mentoring for executives).

### Collaboration with our stakeholders

Review lessons learned from collaborative initiatives, such as the Women In Finance Charter.

Where these collaborative initiatives are focused on a particular aspect of DEI or a particular characteristic, consider whether these lessons can also be applied more widely to other areas covered by this Blueprint.

## Footnotes

- 12 A full list of signatories from across the economy is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disability-confident-employers-that-have-signed-up>.
- 13 There is scope to consider how existing recommendations for good practice – such as those outlined in the ‘**Women in Finance Charter: The Blueprint**’ – can be applied more generally to other people and groups.
- 14 The Apprenticeships Levy is paid by all UK employers – but how the funds raised can be used differs in England, Scotland, Wales and NI. The ABI will work with our members to ensure levy funds are used effectively wherever in the UK they are raised and distributed.
- 15 There are already some schemes being developed in this area – examples within our sector include an initiative currently being developed by the London Market Group and a project run by Startup Sherpas, a social enterprise. We would expect these initiatives to have developed by 2025 so they can be accessed by the wider sector.
- 16 The initial focus for this will be the **GAIN network** (Group for Autism, Insurance, Investment and Neurodiversity), which the ABI joined as a founding member in 2022 and which aims to apply expertise in this area to the needs of our sector
- 17 Our work with the wider financial services sector will include participation in the Financial Services Skills Commission and collaboration with industry bodies like the CII. The public policy priorities we will aim to influence will include the ifATE (Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education)’s priorities.
- 18 In October 2021, research by the Financial Services Skills Commission (FSSC) showed the impact of menopausal symptoms on female career progression and talent retention. In a survey published one year on from the original research, there are indications that progress is beginning to be made across the wider sector (62% of firms surveyed have implemented menopause support systems and employee networks internally; 51% have senior leaders championing menopause awareness and 84% of firms now offer part-time working arrangements for those experiencing the menopause). You can see the full survey results [here](#).
- 19 Examples of these initiatives could include the UK Government’s **Kickstart scheme**, which offers opportunities to people aged 16-24 on Universal Credit – the examples provided here are indicative, as we recognise there are a wide range of diverse circumstances that people may experience.
- 20 An example of this could include encouraging those who have recently completed apprenticeships to join the UK Government’s **Apprentice Ambassador Network**.
- 21 Equity is often given less prominence in DEI policies – see a blogpost from the ABI’s Head of Prudential Regulation David Otudeko on this [here](#).
- 22 Guidance on how to achieve this can be found in Business In The Community’s **Race at Work Charter**.
- 23 Examples of effective networks firms should consider include Link, OUTstanding and Great.
- 24 For example, the **FCA Handbook** (most recently updated in October 2022) continues to default to referring to ‘he/his’ rather than ‘they/their’.
- 25 In particular, ICAN (the Insurance Cultural Awareness Network).
- 26 This can include the Future Skills Framework being developed by the Financial Services Skills Commission.
- 27 Feedback from some ABI member firms suggests that while new roles are increasingly advertised with the option for flexible working, this is not always automatically offered to existing roles.
- 28 For example, the ABI’s Consumer Committee, our internal taskforce looking at the implications of the ongoing Cost of Living crisis, the future of social care and the future of Health and Protection insurance all have relevant insights that industry leaders focussed on Talent and Diversity can learn from.
- 29 These significant life events could include parental leave; fertility treatment; care responsibilities; bereavement; miscarriage; menopause; injury, ill-health or mental health; and being a victim of crime – and firms could consider working with specialist support organisations in these areas or signing pledges.
- 30 For example, some ABI members are already adapting their Mental Health Awareness programmes to look at the unique experiences some groups face or to support people with challenging circumstances, such as bereavement
- 31 Details on the 2023 Future Leaders programme are [online here](#) – including our commitment to diversity in this programme.
- 32 For example, the targets and recommendations set out in the Hampton-Alexander review and the Parker review and the recommendations made in ‘Women in Finance Charter: The Blueprint’.
- 33 The Women in Finance Charter makes specific recommendations on how to do this for women – there is scope to consider how these approaches could be adapted or extended to apply to other under-represented groups.
- 34 The ABI is an active supporter of Race Action Through Leadership, which focusses on the insurance sector. Other organisations that provide active support include Urban Synergy.
- 35 This will include feeding into UK policymaking and also more actively through our sector’s stewardship activity as major institutional investors, which will be taken forward by an ABI Stewardship Forum launched in H3 2022.
- 36 The ABI will work with members to explore how this would be achieved, with a view to build on existing work on this undertaken by Lloyd’s/London Market.
- 37 The Government Equalities Office has published guidance on how to develop a gender pay gap action plan, [available here](#).
- 38 As a starting point, this work will use the model survey questions contained within the FSSC’s **Inclusion measurement guide** and then build on this to focus on good practice for collecting data on socio-economic factors and social mobility.
- 39 Examples of external tools include the Social Mobility Foundation’s **Social Mobility Employer Tool**
- 40 This will include feeding into public consultations and the development of national strategies the Government’s **National Disability Strategy** and the Access To Work schemes).
- 41 Examples of such initiatives include the UK Government’s Disability Confident **voluntary reporting framework** and the **Business Disability Forum**’s equality index.



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