

# Inclusion & Diversity Strategy to **2030**

Our commitment to  
an inclusive chemical  
science community

## Foreword



**We have made significant progress since launching the first Royal Society of Chemistry Inclusion & Diversity Strategy in 2020.**

Working closely with our community, we have strengthened our data and evidence base, built meaningful partnerships, and ensured that addressing inequalities in the chemical sciences is firmly on the agenda. However, the current environment is shifting politically, economically and technologically. Inclusion and Diversity efforts remain increasingly scrutinised, even as the case for inclusive and diverse science has never been stronger. It is therefore essential that we continue to build on our strong foundations with clarity and confidence.

Our refreshed strategy for 2026–2030 sets out how we will move towards achieving greater impact and creating long-term, systemic and sustainable change in science culture.



While diversity and equity remain fundamental, inclusion is the organising focus of this strategy. We aim to foster a strong sense of belonging and recognise that representation alone is not enough if people do not feel valued, supported and able to thrive. Our ambition is to embed inclusion into how chemistry is taught, practised, published, accredited and rewarded.

The four pillars of our previous strategy continue to guide our work, with inclusion placed at the centre of these connected priorities. We remain committed to supporting underrepresented groups across the chemical sciences, and continue to take a fully intersectional approach that recognises how overlapping identities can intensify disadvantage and create distinct barriers. This understanding shapes how we design, deliver and evaluate our initiatives.

The work of building a more inclusive chemical sciences community is far from complete, but the foundations are strong. This strategy represents a decisive shift: from intention to impact, from activity to cultural change, and from short-term initiatives to systemic inclusion.

By committing to data and evidence, partnership, advocacy and inclusive science culture, we will continue to shape our discipline so that everyone who chooses chemistry can belong, contribute and thrive.



**Dr Helen Pain MBE CSci CChem FRSC**  
Chief Executive, Royal Society of Chemistry



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President Elect, Royal Society of Chemistry

# Our commitment to an inclusive science culture

Great science thrives in an inclusive and diverse professional community.

Recognising this, in 2020 the Royal Society of Chemistry launched an ambitious [Inclusion & Diversity Strategy to 2025](#), with the aim of reducing and ultimately eliminating inequalities across the chemical sciences. That strategy was grounded in four core pillars: using data and evidence as the foundation for action; increasing inclusive access for underrepresented groups in chemistry; promoting inclusive progression and career paths; and collaboration with partners to amplify impact and embed longer-term improvements across the chemical science ecosystem.

In 2025, as we approached the end of the strategy period, we convened a series of high-level workshops, drawing on the expertise and experience of our community, colleagues, funders and partners, to assess the continued relevance of these pillars. The conclusion was clear. The strategy remains fundamentally sound, but it must adapt to a rapidly changing external environment shaped by political, economic, technological and environmental pressures.

As science and society navigate these changes, our new Inclusion & Diversity Strategy to 2030 positions **inclusion**, science culture and belonging as central to the long-term health, resilience and success of the chemical sciences. Building on more than a decade of evidence-led research and action, this reviewed strategy sets out a clear ambition: to move beyond isolated initiatives towards **systemic and sustainable inclusion**. This will be underpinned by data and evidence, strengthened through partnerships and advocacy, and focused on driving change both in the UK and globally.

This approach aligns with the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#), particularly those focused on reducing inequalities, fostering innovation and strengthening global partnerships. By taking a 2030 horizon view, we recognise that **inclusion** requires long-term commitment to build a more equitable and sustainable scientific ecosystem.

Our commitment is unwavering. We will continue to champion Inclusion and Diversity as a core enabler of scientific excellence, innovation and societal impact. At a time when these efforts face increased challenge and scrutiny, we will sustain our position because we truly believe that inclusion is not only the right thing to do: it is essential for better science, stronger organisations and wider benefit to society.

## Strategic focus: inclusion as the organising principle

While diversity and equity remain fundamental, **inclusion** is the primary organising principle of this new strategy. Our work will explicitly focus on fostering a **sense of belonging**, recognising that representation alone is not enough if individuals do not feel valued, supported and able to thrive.

This focus will shape **science culture** and influence how chemistry is taught, practised, governed, published and rewarded.

The strategy can be summarised as follows:



## Priority areas of focus within an intersectional framework

This strategy adopts a fully intersectional approach, recognising that inequalities are not experienced in isolation and that overlapping identities can intensify disadvantages. Our evidence indicates that certain inequalities require sustained attention during the 2026-2030 period:

- **Gender inequality**, which remains the most persistent and system-wide disparity in the chemical sciences.
- **Disability and accessibility**, including inclusive laboratory design, training and professional practice.
- **Socioeconomic inclusion**, including barriers to educational access and retention, and long-term impact on career trajectories.
- **Race and ethnicity**, building on the foundations laid by the **Missing Elements** report and subsequent programmes.
- **LGBT+ inclusion**, with continued focus on workplace experience, retention and progression, and the changing sociopolitical environment.

Our work in these areas will be integrated and evidence-led.



# Strategic priorities (2026–2030)



## 1. Embed inclusion across the chemical sciences

**From a standalone strategy to a shared organisational and sector-wide responsibility**

- Embed inclusion and diversity principles across all RSC strategies and functions, including education, accreditation, publishing, membership, sustainability, global inclusion and governance.
- Share and advocate for the business case for inclusion, positioning it as essential to scientific excellence, talent attraction and retention, innovation and long-term resilience across the chemical sciences sector.
- Ensure visible leadership accountability for inclusion, showing that inclusive outcomes are a core leadership responsibility.
- Maintain the central role of the RSC Inclusion and Diversity Committee in shaping our leadership, advising and championing progress, and amplifying our voice.

**Outcome:** Inclusion and Diversity are shared responsibilities, embedded in decisions, resources and success, shaping culture and permeating the chemical sciences.

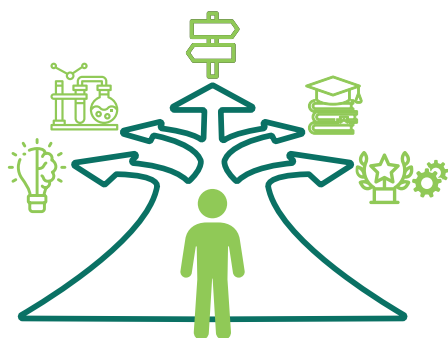


## 2. Build on our strong evidence base, grounded in data and lived experience, to drive innovation and trust

**From measuring inequalities to measuring progress, impact and belonging**

- Maintain the RSC's role as a trusted source of high quality, ethical Inclusion and Diversity data.
- Combine quantitative datasets with qualitative research, lived experience and storytelling to capture the full complexity of inequality.
- Broaden definitions of success to include culture change, belonging and sustained improvement.
- Translate evidence into practical guidance, tools and policy influence across the sector.

**Outcome:** Decisions use trusted, shared evidence, with progress tracked to demonstrate impact and the value of investment in Inclusion and Diversity.



## 3. Enable inclusive career pathways across the chemical sciences

**From access points to equitable, lifelong career progression**

- Treat access, retention, progression and leadership as a single, connected continuum rather than separate stages.
- Focus on critical transition points where attrition is highest, particularly beyond PhD level, and address systemic barriers for underrepresented groups in chemistry.
- Recognise the impact of regional inequalities, including access, constraints on mobility, and retention and progress in chemistry.
- Use and promote relatable role models, mentoring, sponsorship, advocates and career profiling to strengthen retention and aspiration.

**Outcome:** More equitable progression, improved retention and reduced loss of talent across all career stages.



## 4. Drive systemic and sustainable change through partnerships and structural levers

### From isolated initiatives to sustainable transformation and impact

- Build long-term partnerships with universities, funders, industry, regulators and international bodies.
- Draw on RSC core areas - such as membership, accreditation, publishing, peer review, recognition, prizes and professional standards - to embed inclusive practices.
- Align inclusion and diversity work with environmental sustainability, open research and digital inclusion agendas.
- Support relevant pilot programmes with potential for scale.

**Outcome:** Inclusion is embedded into the structures that shape careers, science culture and opportunity across chemistry.



## 5. Lead advocacy and global inclusion

### From responding to change to shaping the future agenda

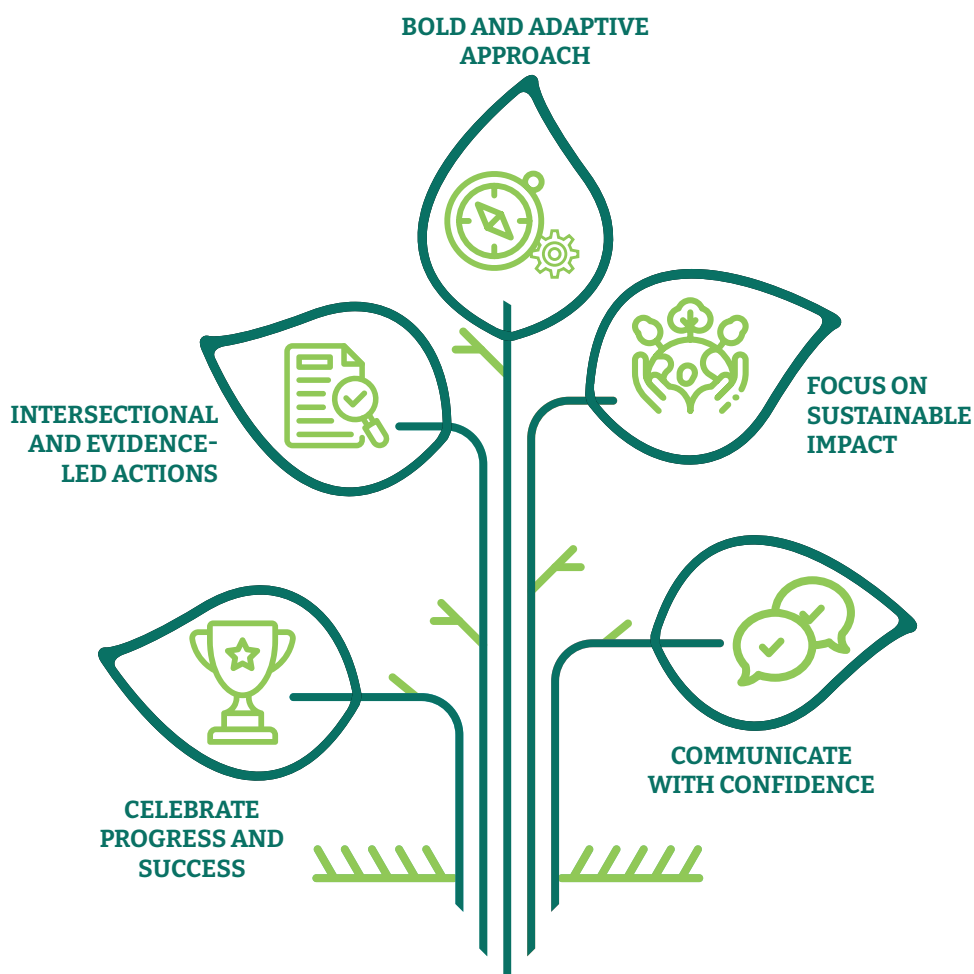
- Advocate for inclusive science and research policies in the UK and internationally to shape the future of our discipline.
- Publish influential position reports and thought leadership on inclusion and science culture.
- Amplify underrepresented voices globally.
- Promote global inclusion through international partnerships and networks.

**Outcome:** The RSC is recognised as a confident, credible and global trusted leader in inclusion across the chemical sciences.

# Enablers for success

To deliver this strategy, we will:

1. **Take an intersectional and evidence-led approach to all our initiatives and actions** by collecting data and evidence, defining success and measuring what matters.
2. **Adopt a bold and adaptive approach to inclusion** by responding to challenges and opportunities arising from political, economic and technological change.
3. **Focus efforts on achieving sustainable impact** by allocating resources, funding and people in line with agreed strategic priorities.
4. **Celebrate progress and success** by recognising achievements and building on where further positive change is still needed.
5. **Communicate with confidence** by making a strong case for Inclusion and Diversity using both value- and business-focused arguments, tailored to diverse audiences across the chemical sciences.





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