



Food & Drink  
Wholesale UK



Diversity in Wholesale

# Sponsorship Pack 2026

EMPOWER YOUR TEAMS  
WITH TRAINING VIA THE  
NEW FWD ACADEMY

LEAD WITH PURPOSE:  
PUT ESG AT THE HEART  
OF YOUR BUSINESS





# Why backing Diversity in Wholesale is a smarter investment than ever in 2026

## 2025 was a game-changing year - and sponsors like you made it happen!

Together, we launched the FWD Academy, held our flagship annual conference with inspirational speakers and forward-thinking businesses sharing best practice, expanded Women in Wholesale's reach, and helped 100+ future leaders grow through real-world development, visibility and mentoring.

**Don't step back now. Be the business that leads from the front.**

**It's not just sponsorship; it's a smart talent strategy.**

At FWD, we believe diversity is the key to a stronger, more future-ready wholesale sector.

Join us in driving progress across FWD's Seven Pillars of Diversity:

- Gender
- Age
- Disability
- LGBTQ+
- Neurodiversity
- Ethnicity & Culture
- Mental Health

**Diversity in Wholesale incorporates:**

- The FWD Academy
- Future Leaders Forum
- Women in Wholesale

**Let's build a more inclusive industry - together**

## And in 2026? We're going bigger, louder, and bolder.

**The increasing importance of ESG means backing Diversity in Wholesale is a smarter investment than ever in 2026.**

In today's business landscape, **Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)** credentials are essential markers of success. For food and drink leaders, they demonstrate a commitment to sustainability, ethical practice and social responsibility - values that matter to consumers, investors and partners alike.

Supporting Diversity in Wholesale (DIW) brings ESG to life. Companies that embrace diversity, equity and inclusion attract and retain top talent, drive innovation, and reflect the diverse communities they serve. As customer and employee expectations shift towards authenticity, inclusive workplaces are not just fairer, they are stronger and more future-ready.

Investing in DE&I is no longer a "nice to have" - it's a competitive advantage. Businesses that lead in this space stand out, build resilience and respond more effectively to change. By supporting DIW, you're not only backing a fairer, more inclusive industry, but also reinforcing your organisation's reputation, belief in people, and commitment to a sustainable, future-ready food and drink sector.



# 2025 Impact & Results snapshot

Your sponsorship in action: What you helped us achieve in 2025

## 750+ Engaged

across the **Diversity in Wholesale** programme of events, webinars and forums (2024/25), showing engagement is at an all-time high!



### 100+ individuals

100+ individuals accessed resources through the pilot FWD Academy



### 12 FLF members

12 Future Leaders Forum members benefitted from the Mentorship Scheme 2024/25



**90% of Women in Wholesale** event participants said it increased their confidence



### 32

Women in Wholesale Coaching Academy supported a record **32 people** in 2025



### 1700

**1700 people** in the Women in Wholesale community



## 5 STAR

rated **Diversity in Wholesale Conference** (October 2024)



### Agenda and content

shaped directly by sponsors

“ **Diversity in Wholesale gives you access to content and real-world support like never before.** ”

“Across the Booker Group, we firmly believe that fostering diversity, equity and inclusion isn’t just good ethics, it’s smart leadership. Supporting Diversity in Wholesale is investment in a future where every voice is heard, valued, and empowered. I’ve seen first-hand how DEI initiatives drive innovation and attract and retain exceptional talent. By sponsoring this programme, we not only align ourselves with these values but also help to create a space where courageous conversations lead to meaningful change. Events like these bring together passionate advocates, emerging leaders, and changemakers from all backgrounds – and that’s where progress happens.”

**Rebecca Mallows – People Director, Booker Group**



**BOOKER**

# 2025 Highlights – Powered by our sponsors

Thanks to the support of our sponsors, we delivered high-impact, industry-first initiatives in 2025, driving equity, visibility and development across every part of the wholesale sector. Here's what your backing made possible:



## Women in Wholesale: Championing Change Report

Our landmark 10-Year Report, launched in Parliament, marked a turning point for gender equity in wholesale. It celebrated progress and exposed what still needs to change.

### Key findings:

**What can business do to break down these barriers?**

What additional steps do you think your company should take to attract and support the development of more women employees?



**53%**  
of respondents called for businesses to **increase visibility of women leaders and role models** within the company

WOMEN IN WHOLESALE  
BROUGHT TO YOU BY  
fwd

**Challenges**

What's the biggest challenge for women working in wholesale?



**43%**  
think the biggest challenge for women working in the wholesale sector is **unconscious bias in decision-making and promotions**

WOMEN IN WHOLESALE  
BROUGHT TO YOU BY  
fwd

### With your support, we delivered:

- Speed Mentoring Event
- Breakfast Briefings and Menopause Café
- Women in Wholesale Coaching Academy



Our focus for 2026 is putting female senior leaders in the spotlight as a result of our Championing Change report.

Scan the QR code to read the full report.





“Heineken is proud to support the DIW programme because DE&I is incredibly important to us as a business. We value the positive impact that the DIW programme is having to make the wholesale channel a more inclusive and better place to work for all. The programme has had a great impact on our culture, and we have been able to take learnings from it back internally, and also share learnings back into the wholesale channel. We have led different sessions at the events such as the need to understand neurodiversity, and thoroughly enjoyed the conference, the events and year-round focus the DIW programme provides to elevate this hugely important topic.”

**Adam Turner – Customer Director Wholesale, Heineken**



# 2025 Highlights – Powered by our sponsors

## Diversity in Wholesale Conference

The 2025 Conference featured world-class speakers and interactive workshops on topics such as workplace megatrends, evolving cultures in wholesale, and the role of Gen Z in shaping the future workforce. With expert insight from thought leaders including Dr Naeema Pasha and Rohit Talwar, the conference provided practical tools, fresh perspectives, and space for meaningful discussion.



## Future Leaders Forum (FLF)

FLF connects rising stars (35 and under) across our sector to mentoring, leadership access, and their own space to shape the future of wholesale.

**With your support, we provided:**

- Coaching and mentoring for emerging leaders
- Three exclusive in-person events focused on personal and professional development
- Seats at FWD Live! annual conference and Diversity in Wholesale Conference
- A connected peer community across FWD supplier and wholesale membership



## Mentorship Scheme 2024/25

**The FWD Mentorship Scheme pairs future leaders from wholesale and supplier businesses with experienced senior mentors across the sector.**

The 2024–2025 programme kicked off with 12 new partnerships and a nine-month journey of growth, support, and shared learning. The scheme includes virtual clinics and tailored guidance throughout. It's designed to help emerging talent thrive while offering mentors fresh insight through reverse mentoring. This is a key initiative in futureproofing the sector through meaningful, cross-generational connections.





## The FWD Academy

### New for 2026: The People First Training Platform Built for Wholesale

**This isn't just a launch. It's a leadership moment.**

The FWD Academy is the first-ever diversity and inclusion platform built specifically for the wholesale sector - and it's live from January 2026 after a successful pilot. This will include 10 sessions, exclusive to Diversity in Wholesale sponsors.

#### It's your opportunity to give your teams access to:

- High-impact DE&I training
- Expert-led webinars and toolkits
- A secure, personalised learning hub
- Peer-to-peer insight and inspiration from across the industry

#### You can't afford to sit this out.

Why? Because today's talent expects more than values on a poster. They want real commitment, real tools and real opportunity.

The FWD Academy gives you all three, and positions your business as an inclusive, future-ready employer.

#### Launched by Baroness Warsi at FWD Live

Endorsed by Former Cabinet Minister Baroness Sayeeda Warsi and developed with FWD's DE&I partners Elevo, the FWD Academy sends a clear message: inclusion is no longer optional - it's a business advantage.

Warsi's record of driving change in politics, sport and education made her the perfect voice to launch the FWD Academy at our annual conference in 2025.

"Diversity is having the faces in your organisations and around the top table, inclusion is letting them have a voice, and equity is creating the culture that allows those voices to be authentic. It's acknowledging that talent is found in many shades, genders, ethnicities and abilities, and recognising that success for a business can come in forms which we may not always readily recognise."

**Former Cabinet Minister Baroness Sayeeda Warsi**



**Pilot programme: July–December 2025**

**Full rollout: January 2026**

Hosted on a secure, bespoke platform with individual logins

"This is about lasting change, putting people at the heart of wholesale."

**Lyndsey Cambridge-Wilson – Head of External Affairs, FWD**



"We've been able to challenge the status quo and build something the industry's never seen before."

**Dervla Gallen – Head of Programmes, Elevo**



# 2026 – Let's not slow down. Let's go further.

**Support Diversity in Wholesale in 2026 and be part of the change:** louder, bolder, and more visible than ever, with ESG at its heart.

Still think Diversity in Wholesale is just an annual event? Think again. This is the new standard for inclusion in wholesale.

## What else is new in 2026?

### Full launch of the FWD Academy

Your people get year-round access to expert-led DE&I training, toolkits, and webinars, all designed for the wholesale sector. Exclusive access for sponsors.

**Bigger events. Bigger reach.**

### Diversity in Wholesale flagship event: a bold new chapter for 2026

Our flagship conference is back in 2026 with a brand-new venue and a fresh format, designed to deliver even more impact, energy, and connection.

While full details are under wraps for now, we can promise the same high-quality experience the event is known for:

- Inspiring keynotes from influential leaders
- Actionable takeaways you can implement immediately
- Interactive sessions like you've never seen before

This next chapter will challenge assumptions, spark new thinking, and bring people together like never before.

We're proud to make this a cornerstone of the Diversity in Wholesale programme - and we can't wait to reveal what's next. And it's all made possible by the support of our sponsors.

### New for 2026 – Expanding the Women in Wholesale Programme

#### Women in Wholesale Leadership Network

Alongside our flagship Women in Wholesale event, we're thrilled to introduce an exciting new addition to the programme for 2026: A new space for women in senior and rising roles to connect, share and grow – through online meet-ups and exclusive in-person events.

#### Women in Wholesale Mentoring Event

As we look to the year ahead, we're thrilled to share that we're in the early stages of developing a unique, female-focused event for 2026. While full details are still under wraps, this initiative will be designed to inspire, connect, and celebrate women across all career levels, from emerging talent to established managers.

We believe this will present a meaningful opportunity for collaboration and visibility, and we look forward to sharing more in the coming months.

#### Women in Wholesale Wellbeing Group

#### The Menopause Café

**More details coming soon — watch this space!**



## Future Leaders Forum events – a new look for 2026

We're excited to unveil a refreshed programme for the Future Leaders Forum in 2026, with a stronger focus on development, connection, and visibility for the next generation of wholesale talent.

The new format will incorporate our popular Mentorship Scheme, launching in January 2026, alongside a series of three in-person events designed to equip future leaders with the skills, support, and networks they need to thrive.

Participants will also receive complimentary access to flagship conferences and selected FWD events, ensuring a year-round experience that blends learning with inspiration.

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We're proud to continue championing early-career professionals across the sector - and look forward to welcoming new partners to shape the future together.

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"Diversity in Wholesale has been central to the development of many of the team at Red Bull. It's helped boost confidence and ambition in the younger generation coming through the wholesale channel."

Hazel Banks – National Account Manager, On Premise Wholesale, Red Bull



## 2026 is your moment to...

- ➔ Show your people you're serious about inclusion
- ➔ Stay ahead in the race for talent and retention
- ➔ Be seen as a values-led, people-first employer
- ➔ Influence the future of wholesale, not just react to it



# Will you lead the change?

**Diversity in Wholesale gives members a platform to be seen, heard, and celebrated. This is a brilliantly diverse sector, and our events reflect that.**

In today's fast-evolving business landscape, Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) credentials are no longer just buzzwords – they're essential indicators of future success. For senior executives across the food and drink industry, ESG signals a company's commitment to sustainability, ethical practices, and social responsibility, all of which resonate strongly with consumers, investors, and partners alike.

Supporting Diversity in Wholesale offers a tangible way to demonstrate these values on the ground. As the sector aligns more closely with leading grocers who prioritise people-first approaches, companies that champion diversity, inclusion and equity are better positioned to attract and retain top talent. A diverse and inclusive workforce fosters innovation, enhances team engagement, and reflects the rich communities we serve – an imperative as consumer expectations shift toward authenticity and inclusivity.

## Why support Diversity in Wholesale?

- It shows your commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion
- It helps attract and retain great people
- It positions your business as a leader in culture and values
- It contributes to real, sector-wide change

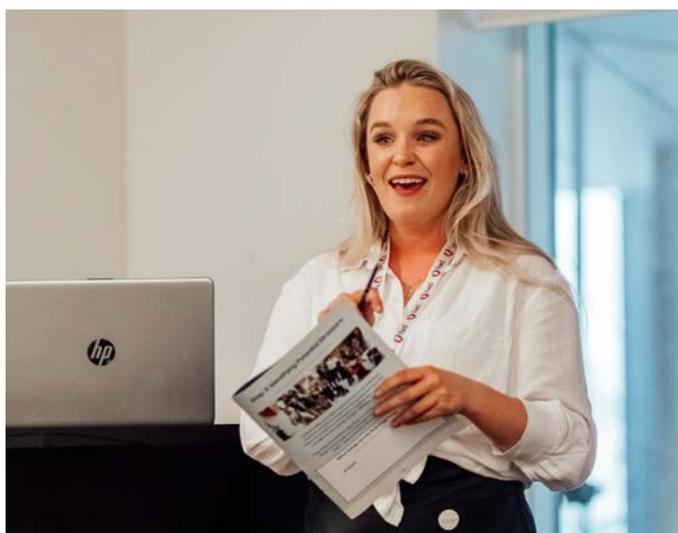
From our new FWD Academy to Women in Wholesale and the Future Leaders Forum, together we're building an inclusive industry where everyone can thrive.



“Diversity in Wholesale has not only empowered individuals but has also influenced the supplier and customer base to embrace diversity and inclusion.”

**Samantha Howard – Senior National Account Manager, Nestlé UK**





## Who should get involved?

- In short, everyone! Diversity in Wholesale is for all your teams, not just HR and senior leaders
- Brands with DEI values
- Suppliers who want to champion inclusive growth
- Wholesalers looking to inspire, retain and attract talent

## Who Do We Work With?

- HR teams
- Senior leaders
- Forward-thinking sponsors like you



## Coming Next

As a 2026 sponsor of Diversity in Wholesale, you will have full access to the FWD Academy and have the opportunity to help shape our events and benefit from insight that helps your business grow stronger through inclusion.

# Diversity in Wholesale 2026 sponsorship package



- ➔ 2 complimentary tickets to the Diversity in Wholesale flagship event
- ➔ 2 complimentary tickets to the Women in Wholesale mentoring event
- ➔ New partner status with branding across regular emails, event and brochures



## NEW FOR 2026

- ➔ 50% off additional tickets to DIW flagship events
- ➔ Input into the Diversity in Wholesale content and agenda
- ➔ Full access to the FWD Academy

## Confirm your sponsorship today

Contact one of the team:

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**PRICE FREEZE**

**Annual sponsorship costs just**

**£3,750**

+ VAT

Thank you to our Diversity in Wholesale Sponsors 2025

