

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release



Lopa Patel MBE (centre) was honoured with a Diversity Champion Award by Lord Hain, Alex Danks of Futurum Financial Advice; Claire Carroll and Jon Gill of Eversheds Sutherland LLP and the Trustees of Diversity UK.

Equality advocate honoured by the charity she co-founded

London, 8 July 2026 – Equality advocate, AI evangelist and business leader **Lopa Patel MBE** has been honoured with the **Diversity Champion Award** by **Diversity UK**, the national equality charity she co-founded in 2012.

The award recognises Patel's outstanding contribution to advancing equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) and celebrates fourteen years of leadership that has helped establish Diversity UK as a respected voice on race equality, inclusive leadership and social justice.

Since co-founding the charity in 2012, Patel has played a pivotal role in shaping its growth and influence. She served as Chief Executive from 2012 to 2019, leading national campaigns and strategic initiatives, and has since continued to guide the organisation as Chair, strengthening partnerships across business, government, academia and the voluntary sector while championing practical action to address inequality.

Diversity Champion Award

Established in 2019, the Diversity Champion Award recognises individuals who have made an exceptional contribution to advancing race equality and inclusion in the UK through sustained leadership and impact.

PRESS RELEASE

Previous recipients include, among many others, Lord Marvin Rees OBE, former Mayor of Bristol, for his leadership in making Bristol a city built on ambition, inclusion and social justice; Baroness Sandip Verma for her work on diversity, gender equality and international affairs, particularly in South Asia and Africa; geoscientist Professor Chris Jackson and academic Professor Marcia Wilson for challenging institutional racism in higher education; and poet and author Jaspreet Kaur, better known as Behind the Netra, for raising awareness of lived experiences, diversity and shared identity through her acclaimed book *Brown Girl Like Me*.

The award was presented during Diversity UK's **Global Changemakers Reception 2026**, where the charity also launched its **Impact Report 2012–2026**, celebrating fourteen years of driving positive change while highlighting the challenges that will shape the next decade of equality, including artificial intelligence, widening health inequalities and the need for more inclusive leadership.

Unveiled on **Tuesday 7 July 2026** in London, the report charts the journey of a volunteer-led organisation that has helped influence public policy, champion under-represented talent, convene national conversations and build lasting partnerships across business, government, academia and the voluntary sector.

Over the past fourteen years, Diversity UK has:

- Supported **194** equality, diversity and inclusion events.
- Organised **44** flagship conferences and receptions.
- Hosted **14** International Women's Day celebrations.
- Published influential research that has informed national debate.
- Contributed to government reviews and public consultations.
- Recognised and celebrated hundreds of leaders, entrepreneurs and changemakers.

"Lopa is a force of nature"

Presenting the award, Ramesh Vala CBE, Deputy Chair of Diversity UK, said:

"Lopa is a force of nature. Over the past fourteen years she has driven an agenda that has enabled Diversity UK to continue punching well above its weight. Her vision, determination and unwavering commitment have inspired countless people and ensured that the organisation remains a powerful advocate for equality. She is an undoubted Champion of Diversity."

The award was presented by host **Alex Danks**, Founder & Principal of **Futurum Financial Advice**, together with the Trustees of Diversity UK, during the Global Changemakers Reception at St James's Place, London. The evening featured a keynote address from Lord Peter Hain, whose reflections on anti-racism, democratic leadership and social justice provided a fitting backdrop to the launch of the charity's *Impact Report 2012–2026* and its call for renewed action.

Accepting the award, Lopa Patel MBE said:

"This came as a complete surprise and means more to me than I can express, particularly because it comes from my esteemed colleagues and friends who have worked tirelessly to make Diversity UK the success it is today."

Looking back over the past fourteen years, I realised just how much commitment, dedication and hard work we have all invested in making a real difference. Together, we have remained steadfast in our mission, even during those times when the challenges felt overwhelming."

PRESS RELEASE

The success of this evening's event is a testament to the attention to detail, stamina, determination and goodwill that each of you brings to our wonderful charity. I feel incredibly proud to serve alongside such an inspiring group of trustees. Thank you for this deeply meaningful honour. I will treasure it."

About Lopa Patel MBE

Lopa Patel MBE is a strategically minded leader with extensive executive and non-executive experience spanning governance, innovation, technology and risk oversight. She is Chair of Diversity UK, Chair of the Finance & Performance Committee and a Non-Executive Board Member of The National Archives, and Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee and an Independent Non-Executive Board Member of the NHS South West Peninsula Cluster Board.

Her previous appointments include Chair of the National Science and Media Museum Advisory Board, Trustee of the Science Museum Group, Non-Executive Director of the Intellectual Property Office, Lead Reviewer of the Ministry of Defence Service Museums, Council Member of The Open University, member of the DCMS BBC Charter Review Advisory Board, Non-Executive Director of Becta, and trustee of several arts and education charities.

A Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing (FCIM) and the Institute of Data & Marketing (FIDM), Patel holds a BTEC in Computer Science, a BSc in Biochemistry from the University of Manchester (UMIST) and the Financial Times Diploma in Corporate Governance.

An AI evangelist and ambassador for entrepreneurship, innovation and technology, she was awarded an MBE for services to the creative industries, received an Honorary Doctorate (DUniv) from The Open University and was named among the Top Five Female Founders in the Computer Weekly UKTech50 2025 index.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Press Images from the event are available here: <https://bit.ly/4f6DYY8>

About Diversity UK

Diversity UK is a registered charity (No. 1155189) dedicated to advancing equality, diversity and inclusion through research, public policy, thought leadership and collaborative initiatives. The charity convenes leaders across business, government, academia and civil society to tackle inequalities and create more inclusive opportunities across the UK.

For further information, interviews or media enquiries, please contact:
e: info@diversityuk.org Website: www.diversityuk.org