

### Motions, meetings and movements



I was delighted to attend the three-day General Federation of Trade Unions' Biannual General Council Meeting and the opportunity to present the very first SWU Motion linked to the BASW and SWU Working Conditions campaign. The motion

was presented at a packed London conference and it secured the support of our union affiliates. The motion was backed unanimously.

This month was also an opportunity to celebrate the 120 years of the GFTU at an evening event hosted by John McDonnell MP in Parliament. The event was attended by a range of organisations and also the Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn MP. The event celebrated the growth of the GFTU as an organisation that is pioneering and imaginative with its membership which is now approaching 275,000 members. At the conference, I was once more elected onto the GFTU National Executive for another two-year period which reinforces SWU's position amongst the influential specialist unions. Large generic unions have a place, but I would strongly argue that the specialism each smaller union brings to their members is so important, so why would anyone overlook this? The growth in independent unions shows that members, including students are interested in joining unions and working collectively. The larger unions provide a

powerful service, but the union movement of specialisms cannot be underestimated.

The fixed funding from SWU for the Austerity Action Group (Boot out Austerity) strengthens our commitment to ongoing campaigning and being active. As we know politics isn't just for General Elections; so, get active as a Social Worker with SWU. There are opportunities to join our Executive Committee, to be a Union Contact, be active with austerity campaigns or just simply to contribute to forums and newsletters. The success of the union lies in the motivation and involvement of our members. In our union we really promote the continued involvement of our members to shape the organisation. Nonetheless, the hard work remains with the A&R Team who are the Unique Selling Point of this union; without them we would not be who we are due to the skilled work that they do, and their commitment.

The response to being a SWU Parliamentary Ambassador has seen a great response and I will be in touch with everyone who applied individually over the next month. Presently we are looking at how this will develop once all the Brexit focus has reduced. James Birchall, SWU President, continues to do a great job with his parliamentary meetings and already we are building up a great support network of sympathetic MPs who will be in our corner when the time is right.

This month also saw me over in New York City and New Jersey where I met with a number of social work organisations, social workers and unions. I am hopeful that some of the sharing

and learning during this trip will create further ideas on how to advance SWU further. I will be writing a feature in Professional Social Work Magazine covering the trip, so please do have a read.

Last year's *World Social Work Day* Assignment Competition was a great success and the deadline day is approaching for this year's competition. Please do enter or share with colleagues and students. It would be great to have the same high standard of applicants once more.

Finally, the line up for this years AGM and Conference is further proof of our ability to

attract speakers of a high calibre and speakers who are willing to support the union. The union fees of £20 a year (£10 Students) is tremendous value but once more we need further resources to continue with what we are doing well. Already we have invested heavily in campaigning, additional staff and ongoing resources thus the essential need for a future member increase from £20 to £25 later this year. This increase will not impact on the student fee of £10 a year.

**John McGowan**  
**General Secretary**

[j.mcgowan@swu-union.org.uk](mailto:j.mcgowan@swu-union.org.uk)

## Boot Out Austerity Marches On - New Austerity Action Group

Following the 2017 walk from Birmingham to Liverpool the anti-austerity campaign was continued by the joint BASW/SWU Anti-Austerity (AAG) Group. The management of this project has now fallen to the SWU Executive who will form a new AAG. This follows resolutions at our last AGM.

We are in the process of inviting representatives from BASW, a number of service user organisations and other key individuals to the first meeting of the new group. The draft mission for the group is

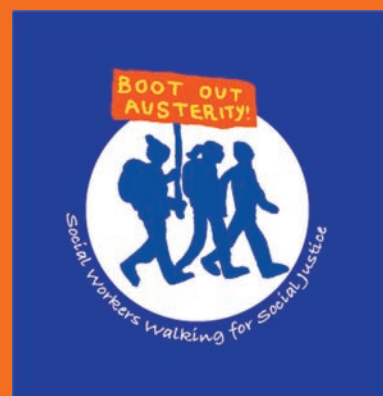
*“to actively campaign against the continued austerity policy which adversely affects the most vulnerable members of our society and impedes the capacity of social workers to exercise their professional work. The group will work with service users and other groups to ensure that we work Side by Side for Social Justice.”*

The first meeting of the new group on Tuesday July 2<sup>nd</sup> will seek to clarify these aims and to lay out a programme of work. This will include a review of progress on the Social Work Poverty Guide commissioned by the original group and the newly published shocking report of the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights in the UK .

<https://undocs.org/A/HRC/41/39/Add.1>

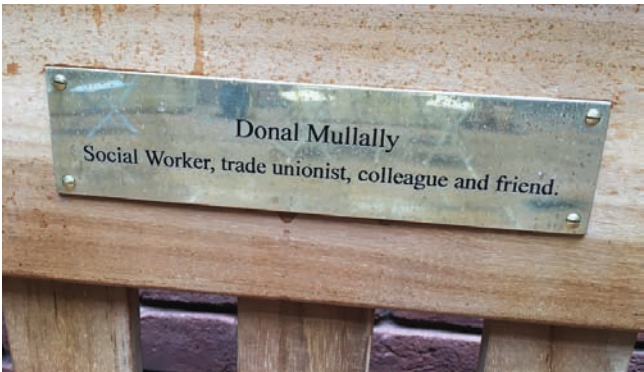
The new group will be able to build on the significant Parliamentary work being pursued by SWU and BASW in connection with the poverty campaign and the working conditions of social workers.

If you have any questions or ideas on issues or campaigning for the new group please contact [carol.reid@swu-union.org.uk](mailto:carol.reid@swu-union.org.uk) as soon as possible.



# Donal Mullally

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2019 was the day we unveiled a wooden bench and plaque at the SWU and BASW offices - acting as a permanent memorial for our colleague, Donal Mullally, who passed away in April 2018. Donal was a committed trade unionist and always lit up a room with his smile and enthusiasm. I was fortunate to have marched with Donal at austerity campaigns and at Trade Union events. Donal's passion was contagious, and he always seemed to be positive about social work in an encouraging and committed way. I know Donal represented many BASW and SWU members in his TU work effectively and remained committed to fairness and a real sense of social justice. Donal is still missed dearly but this will be a lasting reminder of his commitment and activism.



Donal, pictured here third from the left, as part of the SWU representation at GFTU



# WORLD SOCIAL WORK DAY ASSIGNMENT

LAST  
CHANCE  
TO ENTER

Four grants of £500 are to be presented to winning Social Work Students undertaking an Undergraduate or Post Graduate Social Work Degree.

The criteria: a 750 - 1000 word assignment with the following title:

***“How do working conditions need to change to create the most conducive environment for social workers to provide the best support for service users?”***

All completed assignments will be judged by a Panel including representation from the General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU), Shahid Naqvi, PSW Editor and SWU Exec Member. All winners will be invited to the SWU AGM and Conference 2019 (Fri 27<sup>th</sup> Sept, Manchester).

**The closing date for the competition is 10<sup>th</sup> June 2019.**

Please forward your completed assignment before that date with a covering letter giving your Name, Address, University, Year of Study and Academic Tutor (if appropriate) to: [kevin.viney@swu-union.org.uk](mailto:kevin.viney@swu-union.org.uk)

The assignment should be typed, have your full name, the assignment question as the title, and must follow an academic process; such as word count and Harvard Referencing System.

Please note: By taking part you are agreeing to SWU using the assignment for future purposes such as newsletters or other forums. Only the winning assignments will be used. Winning assignments will be displayed at the forthcoming SWU AGM Conference. All winners will also be offered a delegate place at the conference with a contribution towards transport if necessary.



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Workers  
Union

PROMOTING THE IMPORTANCE OF  
*human relationships*



Designed by: Martha Rothblum

**WORLD SOCIAL WORK DAY  
19TH MARCH 2019**



# Professional Working Conditions in Wales



Allison Hulmes, National Director for Wales, BASW Cymru



In the last week I had the opportunity to raise the working conditions of social workers in Wales, by giving evidence to the *Plaid Cymru Care Commission Enquiry* - the first of its kind in Wales

The enquiry was chaired by **Dr. Dai Lloyd AM, Plaid Cymru's shadow spokesperson on social care**, and included representation from local government, health, and social care related fields.

The purpose of the commission is to test the viability of developing a *National Care Service for Wales*, including any structural, legal, workforce and other related issues and I was invited to provide oral and written evidence.

There are a number of themes to the enquiry and I chose to focus on the 'workforce' theme.

I presented the findings from the Bath Spa *Professional Working Conditions Research* published in 2018. Jermaine Revalier, the lead researcher, was able to isolate the Wales specific responses and they make disturbing reading. It's important to reinforce "that various studies have demonstrated that should working conditions remain in a poor state (as they are here) for an extended period of time it will lead to higher levels of sickness absence, turnover, and more mistakes/poorer performance at work."

This certainly seems to be the case in social work - levels of sickness absence due to stress and mental ill health are among the highest of all employment sectors in the UK, there is also a chronic under-recruitment problem.

Some of the headline results for Wales are:

- Working conditions for social workers in Wales are as bad as - if not worse than - the rest of the UK.
- The following four working conditions scored the same as the rest of the country. That is, they scored in the 5th percentile, which means that scoring is worse than 95% of the rest of the UK population, according to benchmark figures.
  - o **Demands:** the amount of work that individual employees have on.
  - o **Relationships:** suggests that relationships between staff can at times be strained.
  - o **Role:** social workers do not have a good idea of their specific role in the organisation.
  - o **Change:** social workers felt that organisational change is poorly communicated.
- The remaining three working conditions are poorer on average for Wales' social workers than they are for the rest of the UK.
  - o **Control:** social workers in Wales have a distinct lack of control in the way that they do their work.
  - o **Managerial Support:** this suggests that social workers have a lack of support from management in their organisations.
  - o **Peer Support:** although this scored better than the six other conditions (25th percentile), it was still worse than the UK average and worse than 75% of the UK benchmark scoring.
- Levels of stress and wellbeing were high - higher than an English average of benchmark respondents.
- Nearly half of respondents are dissatisfied in their jobs.
- 6 in 10 have attended work at least twice in the last 12 months despite being so ill that they should have stayed at home (known as presenteeism).
- Over 6 in 10 want to leave their job with the next 13 months.
- Over one third are looking to leave social work altogether in the next 2 years.

This research reveals a crisis in social work in Wales, a crisis that must be urgently addressed. As part of our professional working conditions campaign in Wales, Plaid Cymru have agreed to support an Assembly Members debate on working conditions for Welsh social workers, along with sponsoring a Senedd event where the lead researcher and Social Work Union, will present the findings and add to our calls for a task force to urgently address this crisis. We are also calling for the creation of a cross party group on social work in Wales, to focus attention on the needs of our profession.

**Allison Hulmes**  
**National Director for Wales**  
**BASW Cymru**

## Social Media

If you have not done so then please follow us on Facebook and Twitter - we are planning to post and tweet regular updates about the work and developments of the Social Workers Union.

### Monthly ebulletins

Monthly ebulletins are emailed to all SWU members. If you are not receiving this then please check what email address we have. The ebulletins are also published on the web site.

### SWU can be found on the following:

Twitter: SWU\_UK  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/socialworkersunionuk/](http://www.facebook.com/socialworkersunionuk/)  
Internet: [www.swu-union.org.uk](http://www.swu-union.org.uk)

The 2019 Conference and Annual General Meeting  
The Mechanics Centre, 103 Princess Street, Manchester M1 6DD

Conference registration and refreshments from 9.30am • Lunch and refreshments provided  
FREE to BASW/SWU Members • Non members £10 • Students, unemployed, retired £5

Please note the SWU AGM is members only

SWU AGM will take place after conference and lunch at 2pm - 4pm (Members only)

### Confirmed Speakers:

#### Emma Lewell Buck MP

As a Labour politician and former social worker, Emma is committed to building a society that works for the many, not the few. This belief fuels her work, particularly around food insecurity, something she believes is a sad indictment on the Conservative Government.

#### Colum Conway - Chief Executive, Social Work England

Colum became Chief Executive of Social Work England in September 2018. He is a registered social worker and previously led the professional regulator for social work and social care in Northern Ireland. Colum has worked in statutory family and child care services, early years policy and family systems support services.

#### Dr Neil Thompson

Dr Neil Thompson is an author and independent online tutor whose work is highly acclaimed across the people professions. He has held full or honorary professorships at four UK universities. Neil will be facilitating a conference discussion in his role as a SWU Ambassador.

#### Prof Keith Gidart

Keith is Professor of Labour and Social History at the University of Wolverhampton. He has appeared on television documentaries for the BBC. Specialising in working-class history, politics and culture from the late-Victorian period through to the 1980s - Keith will be giving an overview of trade union history and the importance of unions.

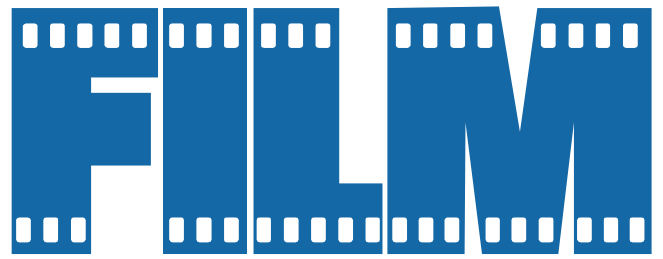


#### Banner Theatre Company - Live Theatre Show 'Free for All'

A new hard-hitting, entertaining and inspirational musical show from Banner Theatre - exposing the privatisers making big profits from our NHS. This show is a must-see for all health workers, trade unionists, social workers, health campaigners, students.

Register for Conference and AGM via  
<https://www.basw.co.uk/events/swu-conference-and-agm-2019>

From the team that brought  
you *I, Daniel Blake*:



## Sorry we missed you

A movie about a hard-up delivery driver and his wife struggle  
to get by in modern-day England

**Director:** Ken Loach     **Writer:** Paul Laverty

*Ricky and his family have been fighting an uphill struggle against debt since the 2008 financial crash. An opportunity to wrestle back some independence appears with a shiny new van and the chance to run a franchise as a self-employed delivery driver. It's hard work, and his wife's job as a carer is no easier. The family unit is strong but when both are pulled in different directions everything comes to breaking point.*

SWU will be credited on the new Ken Loach Movie. John McGowan our General Secretary enjoyed consulting on the movie and providing some additional opportunities to the writing team to engage with social work services and supports. We are presently trying to secure a private screening for SWU members prior to the release so watch this space.



# New connections, comradeship and support from Jeremy - highlights from the GFTU conference

## BASW Senior Press Officer Anthony Dhadwal provides details regarding the recent GFTU conference

John McGowan, General Secretary of SWU led a delegation of three, including SWU President James Birchall and BASW Senior Press Officer Anthony Dhadwal to attend the General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU) Biennial General Council Meeting in May.

It was a chance to make new connections, reinforce our current network and learn more about over 30 other unions that attended, including many that work alongside social workers such as educationalists, psychologists and prison officers.

Over three days, the conference also gave SWU a great insight into the history of the GFTU and the trade union movement.

How to highlight this, especially to younger generations was the theme of the event and one of the highlights was the unveiling of *The Many not the Few*, an illustrated history of Britain shaped by the people by Sean Michael Wilson and Robert Brown.

Engagingly done in comic-book style, the story is intended to resonate with a younger audience to educate them on trade unionism and its achievements.

Arguably the highlight of the event though was when we had the opportunity to press upon Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn and Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell the deteriorating wellbeing of many social workers in the UK due to massive increase in pressures.

They both agreed to work to improve the working conditions for social workers and end austerity by declaring their support for SWU/BASW's Working Conditions campaign.



John, Jeremy and Anthony



Right: General Secretary with John McDonnell



General Secretary presenting the SWU motion

SWU also tabled a motion, which was carried, calling on officials and fellow trade unions to support the research that Bath Spa University did on UK Social Workers: *Working Conditions and Wellbeing 2018*, which found distressing levels of poor conditions for social work.

The room agreed to assist SWU and BASW raise these issues across their own work. "Many of you work with social workers so please support this motion in any opportunity that comes your way," said McGowan.

Another big topic of the event was the ongoing political and social state of Kurdish people in Turkey. At the conference activist, Osman Baydemir spoke emotionally, despite only six months of English, on the plight of the Kurds in Turkey.

Osman is a Turkish politician, lawyer and human rights activist of Kurdish descent. He is currently exiled from his home in Turkey for being Kurdish - a mayor of his hometown, a human rights lawyer and an HDP MP facing "trumped up charges just because he is Kurdish."

McGowan highlighted that "... SWU in their wider role as part of the GFTU have continued to keep the matter on the trade union agenda.

He added: "It is the wider view of the trade union movement that Öcalan will have to be released for there to be lasting democratic settlement between Turkey and its Kurdish minority, which respects their rights, as currently their children are even denied learning their mother tongue in schools."



President, James Birchall, seconds the SWU motion

## Union Contact Scheme

**Carol Reid, National Organiser & Union Contact Scheme Manager provides an update on recent events and some dates for your diary**

### Union Contact Induction Day

The next Union Contact Induction Day takes place on **Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> July** at the Castlefield Hotel, Manchester, and is a great opportunity for SWU members to find out more about becoming active in helping to develop and strengthen their trade union. Our growing team of SWU Union Contacts are vital to the expansion and voice of SWU, and we value their time and energy. At the time of writing there are just **2 places left** for the July induction, so be quick and drop me an email at the address below if you'd like to attend. Don't worry if you miss out as we run the induction days three times a year, and the following one will be in November.



### Compass Event, Manchester

The Compass Social Work Recruitment Event on **6<sup>th</sup> May** was another great opportunity for SWU to meet social workers of all ages and levels of experience. As ever we had a great deal of interest in our stall, which we share with BASW, and it was good to speak to social workers and students who recognise the value and relevance of trade union membership and collective action. I was again assisted on the busy stall by one of our excellent SWU Union Contacts, Tina, who helped in providing information and discussing her own reasons for promoting and supporting SWU. We have Union Contacts in universities and workplaces all around the country, and it was lovely to see those who came to say hello at the Compass Event.

### Durham Miners' Gala

I'm very pleased to announce that SWU will be providing a free coach trip for our Union Contacts and wider membership to the wonderful **Durham Miners' Gala** on **13<sup>th</sup> July**. This historic event has become a showcase for trade union solidarity, with an array of banners from all around the UK and a marvellously festival atmosphere. I've seen many wonderful speakers there from the Labour and Trade Union world including Tony Benn, Jeremy Corbyn, Denis Skinner, etc etc. If you're not familiar with the Gala have a look at the Association's website which explains it's history and more: <https://www.durhamminers.org/gala> It's essential that SWU develop a presence at such events as we become more visible and vocal as a trade union. For further details and to express an interest in our first trip to Durham Miners' Gala, please email me at:

carol.reid@swu-union.org.uk

## BASW Merseyside, New Branch Meeting, 13th June

I'm particularly pleased to be advertising the first meeting of the new BASW Merseyside Branch which is taking place on **Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> June** at the **Quaker Meeting House** in Liverpool city centre. As a Liverpudlian this will be my local branch, and I'll be attending the first meeting too.

For further details and to register your attendance please go to the BASW Events page:  
<https://www.basw.co.uk/events/merseyside-branch-meeting>

## Promoting SWU in Workplaces

One or two of our Union Contacts have been in touch with me for clarification about promoting SWU to their colleagues to highlight the benefits of membership. This will often include putting various leaflets and materials on noticeboards and/or tables in and around office workspaces and communal areas. I want to reiterate that you are perfectly able to continue to do this and should there be any occasion when you are told that this is "not allowed" please ensure you inform me. Complexities do arise when noticeboards are locked within a glass cabinet, but generally speaking there is nothing to stop you distributing SWU materials in your Union Contact role.

Please do keep me updated as I'm here to support you.

## Parliamentary Ambassadors

You will no doubt have seen the request for Parliamentary Ambassadors from our General Secretary within recent weeks. This interesting role will include making contact and seeking consultations with local councillors to discuss SWU's ongoing working conditions campaigning. It came as no surprise to me that the majority of respondents to this role were also SWU Union Contacts who I'm proud to say have showcased their own political understanding through union activism. I'm sure they will be excellent in the Parliamentary Ambassador role too.

## AGM - 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> September

The SWU AGM is fast approaching and will include a Fringe Meeting on the evening of **Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September** at the wonderful Mechanics Institute in Manchester. We are keen for our Union Contacts to be part of this event which will include a "round table" discussion with a well-known special guest speaker. We are very excited about this event so watch this space for further details.

## Request for articles for newsletter

Please remember to contribute to this Newsletter whenever you can. The Newsletter is produced for SWU Members and we really value your input. If you have anything you'd like to share, whether a couple of paragraphs or a larger article, please let us know and we'll be happy to publish it.

**Thank you for your continued commitment to SWU - together we are strong.**

**Carol Reid**  
**National Organiser & Union Contact Scheme Manager**  
[carol.reid@swu-union.org.uk](mailto:carol.reid@swu-union.org.uk)

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or call **033 3344 9600**

**BASW England and SWU response to serious youth violence. The response is part of the Home office's current consultation on serious youth violence.**

<https://www.basw.co.uk/resources/basw-response-serious-youth-violence-consultation>

## General Federation of Trade Unions



SWU on the GFTU National Executive for another two years  
Everything about the GFTU is designed to support and strengthening the rebirth and growth of trade unions. SWU is proud to be part of the GFTU and to assist in reconnecting the trade union concerns for social justice and campaigning and to build a new generation of activists.

The General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU) concentrates on servicing the needs of specialist unions. It does this by providing courses, creating international union links, parliamentary links, undertaking research for its affiliated Unions and providing ongoing support and assistance to all members with additional support for General Secretaries. The GFTU has 29 affiliates with a membership of over 270,000 and describes itself as the “federation for specialist unions”. The GFTU offers SWU members a range of courses, from foundation to more advanced with the majority free for SWU members. provide an opportunity to meet some of the other unions affiliated to the GFTU.

### GFTU Executive



**Aegis**  
THE UNION

**aep**

**Artist Union England**

**BAKERS FOOD AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION**

**BECTU**

**Community**  
for a better working world

**community**  
for a better working world

**ggca**

**GMB UNION**

**IFMA**

**LMA**

**Musicians' Union**  
**mu**

**napo**  
Production Staffs' Union

**nars**

**NAUTILUS**

**pcs**

**POA**

**PCA**

**THE POA UNION**

**National Union of Journalists (NUJ)**

**prospect**

**sau**

**SUE**

**SWU**

**tssa**

**Voice**

**WGGB**  
The Writers' Union

Aegis

Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP)

Artists' Union England

Bakers Food and Allied Workers' Union

Bectu

CCISUA

Community

GGCA

GMB Union

Institute of Football Management & Administration (IFMA)

League Managers Association (LMA)

Musicians Union

NAPO

NARS

National Union of Journalists (NUJ)

NAUTILIS International

PCS

PDA

Prison Officers' Association

Professional Cricketers' Association (PCA)

Professional Footballers' Association (PFA)

Prospect

Scottish Artist Union

Society of Union Employees (SUE)

Social Workers' Union (SWU)

Transport Salaries Staffs' Association (TSSA)

Voice

WGGB The Writers' Union

**GFTU Affiliates**

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*See over for details.*



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