



The specialist union for social workers

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING A MEMBER OF THE SOCIAL WORKERS UNION AND BASW?

Membership of the Social Workers Union is an additional benefit to members of BASW (The British Association of Social Workers) and our membership fee is £25.00 per year (or £10.00 per year for students and unwaged). **SWU is an independent trade union and is proud to be associated with BASW but our legal status as a Trade Union means that SWU members are better protected and their rights to representation in any meeting with an employer are safeguarded. (Subject to eligibility criteria.)**

Only Membership of SWU will guarantee employment representation from a TRADE UNION. BASW members are not guaranteed employment representation if an employer does not recognise BASW or refuses access. **This is why it is important to join SWU or to continue your membership to make sure it does not lapse.** SWU and BASW work together through a cooperation agreement to provide a highly beneficial and cost effective optional joint membership.

Our two organisations are committed to offering this because we consider it to be the best offer we can make together for Social Workers. We believe it enables us to be strong for professional development and voice, strong for ethics and human rights, strong for representation of social workers when needed, and strong in influencing government and employer policies in the long term. Together in cooperation we are building a social work-led movement.

Becoming a member of the Social Workers Union is optional and we respect every choice but we believe this offers the best cover and security for social workers and their profession. If you are unsure whether you have opted into being a member of SWU you can ask Member Services (0121 622 8401) or check online via www.swu-union.org.uk. **This is important as from September 2017 SWU implemented the three-month rule agreed by members at the 2016 AGM.**

The three-month rule explained:

The three-month rule will mean that a new BASW member who has not joined SWU will not be offered Trade Union representation from SWU until **after 3 months of continued SWU membership and provided the issue was not pre-existing at the time of joining SWU or becomes active within the first three months of membership.** The new rule will help to prevent misuse of membership - similar to "trying to buy insurance after the crash". This is an important change as not all employers previously recognised or authorised BASW Advice and Representation (A&R). **Only membership of SWU guarantees Employment Representation. (Subject to the eligibility criteria as per the three-month rule above.)**

WHY JOIN SWU AND WHY YOU MIGHT NEED US

Every year, the Social Workers Union and BASW's related Advice & Representation (A&R) Service help over 1000 Social Workers with a range of different situations, from the small and easily resolved, to more significant and prolonged conduct issues.

Here are just some of the issues we have helped members with recently:

- Disciplinary and grievance procedures, including representation at internal hearings - unless you are a SWU member, your employer could legally refuse to allow access to representation by BASW.
- Issues around discrimination in employment and access to training - this is something we can provide advice upon and, if you choose to take formal action, a SWU member has the **right to be represented** by an Official of a Trade Union *of their choice*. BASW itself is not a trade union so your employer could refuse them access.
- Investigations into professional social work practice and allegations of misconduct - where this is done by your employer, again, your employer could refuse to allow BASW to accompany you. Although not a legal requirement, most employers would agree to allow a representative of a certified trade union, as SWU is, to accompany you.
- A range of Social Work Student placement difficulties - including situations where the placement is breaking down or has broken down.
- Representation at Employment Trials - This will be arranged if our Solicitors assess that the case has a 50% or more chance of success.

Being part of a strong collective trade union is a vital and recognised way of successfully bargaining with employers for better working conditions, pay and security. If you want to join SWU or learn more about becoming actively involved go to www.swu-union.org.uk or email us at swuinfo@swu-union.org.uk today!