

SWU Executive Members: Role Description

Executive Members play a key part in setting SWU's direction and overseeing its aims and mission, as part of SWU's three-year plan. The General Secretary is elected by the membership then provided with a mandate from the Executive to manage the union, the SWU staff and SWU's key functions and legal responsibilities. Executive members can take on responsibilities and activities relevant to their interests and expertise and may represent SWU externally.

We are looking for SWU members committed to social work and trade unionism, who can represent the decision-making process covering members, and offer insight and accountability.

The time commitment includes attendance at up to six Executive meetings a year (online or in person) and occasional additional days such as attendance at AGM's.

Attendance at Executive meetings is remunerated (if applicable) and expenses can be claimed for other SWU activities.

The successful candidate would take office from the conclusion of the 2026 AGM for a 2-year or 3-year term, dependent upon the position.

Candidates for the SWU Executive must be nominated by two full voting members (other than the candidate themselves) and candidates must have been SWU members for at least 1 year continuously prior to nomination*.

* Unless a student application which are eligible to apply without being a member for 1 year.

All candidates must meet the criteria set out in the relevant role description.

SOCIAL WORKERS UNION

ROLE DESCRIPTION – SWU EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Key accountability: To the membership, to the union and to the social work profession

Key responsibilities: To be an Executive Member of the Trade Union and to represent the interests of the membership on the SWU Executive. To promote unionism.

Main responsibilities

1. To be a National Executive member of SWU – member of the SWU UK Executive
2. To attend SWU Executive meetings and development days (about 6 meetings per year) and other occasional necessary meetings. All meetings can be accessed remotely. Some meetings will have face-to-face options whenever possible.
3. To consider making further contribution to the Union through involvement in working groups and activism to promote trade unionism.
4. An opportunity to act as a SWU media spokesperson from time to time (training is available and this is not an essential role).
5. To represent the SWU at internal and external meetings from time to time.
6. To present at conferences and events (within SWU and BASW and externally) from time to time.
7. To employ the elected General Secretary to manage the union, the SWU staff and the SWU budget on their behalf.
8. To elect from the National Executive - the SWU Chair, SWU Vice Chair and Treasurer as SWU Honorary Officers.
9. National Executive Members: to keep the General Secretary and UK Executive abreast of member issues in their home country.
10. Any other duties appropriate to being a Trade Union Executive Member.

Person requirements

1. Ability and commitment to contribute to the decision making and professional considerations required of the union, on behalf of the membership.
2. Willingness and ability to commit the time required to be an Executive Member:
3. Ability to absorb complex information and make a full, reasoned contribution to the Executive.

4. Ability and commitment to contribute together with the SWU General Secretary to the collective leadership of SWU.
5. Ability to promote the social work profession and SWU through a variety of means and forums, including representing SWU at events when required.
6. An ability to understand the executive role of SWU and how this relates to SWU staff and the fulfilment of annual business and delivery plans within defined budgets.
7. A SWU member with a social work qualification, in good standing in the union.

Appointment & Term of Office

If applications outnumber places available, then Executive members are elected by the SWU membership and will take office from the conclusion of the AGM following the date of their successful election. An Executive Member will hold office until the conclusion of the 2nd or 3rd AGM (dependent upon position) following the one at which they took office. They can be re-elected for a further 2-year term of office (to a maximum of 4 consecutive years in total).

The Executive role is not a staff role. The post-holder acts in accordance with the BASW Code of Ethics, Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 and SWU policies and procedures of the Union. This is not a remunerated role, but the Executive Member will receive payment for attendance at Executive meetings (in person or by teleconference and if eligible) in addition to claiming expenses and may be funded to attend and be involved in a variety of professional activities on behalf of the union from time to time.

Development Opportunities:

Chrissie Beatty SWU Executive Member highlights what joining the Exec has meant to her.

'Having been a Union Contact for several years, I wanted to become further involved in SWU and support the work they do. I joined the Executive Committee with little knowledge of how a Trade Union operated but was welcomed and felt included from day one.

I have learnt a great deal from my fellow Exec members about the challenges facing social work and the impact it has on social workers and it has been rewarding to be a part of the decision making that will strengthen our profession and support our members. I have a passion for EDI and have been able to bring this to my role in the

Exec, by advocating for marginalized groups and by shaping policy. I have also benefited from further development and engagement in SWU conferences and events’.

Some recent Development opportunities offered to Executive Members in addition to the governance role:

- Opportunities for General Federation of **Union Training**
- Opportunities for specific learning such as **Media Skills** and **Campaigning Skills**.
- Opportunities to engage in **International Opportunities**. Previous trips have included Palestine, Prague and Canada.
- Opportunities to progress as an **Honorary Officer** of SWU.
- Opportunities to participate in **SWU subgroups** such as Media, Equality Diversity and Inclusion and Campaign Group.
- Opportunities to attend face to face **Conference Events** and online learning events.

Eligibility

All candidates for election must be a Member of the Union and have been a Member of the Union for a minimum of 1 year continuously immediately prior to nomination (except for student applications)

A candidate for election must be nominated by two Members of the Union. In the case of the National Representatives, nomination must be by two members within the relevant nation. Appropriate Executive applications will be reviewed by an SWU nomination committee for consideration and endorsement. The endorsement process will indicate whether or not an application is endorsed; however, applicants will still be entitled to stand for election where an election process is required.

Legal: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/52/section/46>