



THE SOCIAL WORKERS UNION

The specialist union for social workers

e-BULLETIN | MARCH/APRIL 2018

Signing of the co-operation agreement

Tuesday 13 March 2018 was a great moment in the history of the Social Workers Union. The Co-operation Agreement between BASW and SWU was signed by John McGowan (General Secretary, SWU) and Ruth Allen (Chief Executive Officer, BASW) at the BASW Additional General Meeting in London. Now SWU and BASW are on an even firmer footing going forward together in cooperation, creating a strong future for both organisations. In recognition of the close association between SWU and BASW, SWU is an organisational member of BASW represented in all matters relating to BASW membership by the General Secretary.

John McGowan highlighted that “I am pleased that the co-operation has been signed by both organisations and reinforces our commitment to drive forward the professional agenda and also provide trade union support to BASW members who sign up to SWU.”



A recent quote from a SWU member:

As a social work student it is motivating to know I am joining social work at a time where BASW and SWU are at the forefront of fighting for a progressive social work, with social justice at its heart. As a profession we are stronger together and we all have a place in shaping the future of social work and challenging the impact that austerity is having. An important benefit of being a member of BASW and SWU is knowing that we are not on our own in facing these challenges and that certainly offers me reassurance as I continue on my journey to becoming a qualified social worker backed by BASW and SWU.

Rebecca Austin
Social Work Student - BASW and SWU member



We at SWU would love to hear from members regarding the positives of being a BASW and SWU member.



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/
Internet: www.swu-union.org.uk

THINKING OF BECOMING A UNION CONTACT FOR THE SOCIAL WORKERS UNION (SWU)?

A SWU Union Contact is a vital member of our team!

SWU's model of developing a network of Union Contacts offers an alternative to the traditional union shop steward approach by ensuring that employment negotiations are confined to paid SWU Trade Union and BASW Officials and your employer. This reduces the potential for tension between staff and management within the workplace, and ensures that you have fewer formal responsibilities than a traditional shop steward.

As a SWU Union Contact you will promote and encourage union membership and will usually be the first point of contact with the union for new and existing members in your workplace. You will also be the essential contact with SWU Officials to enable up to date information and ideas to be exchanged. Each SWU Union Contact has the support and guidance of a Trade Union Organiser who will meet with you regularly to ensure SWU retains strong links with our Contacts and members.

All Union Contacts will be reimbursed out of pocket expenses, will receive access to free General Federation of Trade Union (GFTU) Training and access to online professional development training from Dr Neil Thompson (Avenue Professional Development Programme).

Being a SWU Union Contact gives you access to:-

- Regular mentoring sessions with a SWU Trade Union Organiser
- Regular mailings and updates from SWU
- Access to SWU training, support and information
- Opportunities to recruit and encourage new members in the workplace and beyond
- Opportunities to promote and be involved in our campaigns
- Opportunities to get involved in events, rallies and demonstrations attended by SWU

SWU's future intention is to have at least one Union Contact in each workplace or large section and we need your support to make this a reality

However we don't confine UCs to the workplace and therefore welcome retired members, social work students, unemployed members, and social workers in alternative roles (ie advocates, carers, agency staff).



Simply being a member of SWU enables you to apply to undertake this important role

If you are interested in getting active and involved in SWU please contact:

Carol Reid,
National Organiser

Telephone:
07375 496315

email:
carol.reid@swu-union.org.uk

“Collective Voices” Anti-Austerity Monologues

As part of our media campaign to bring attention to the effects that the government’s austerity policy is having on both Social Workers and Service Users, we are planning a series of powerful monologues. These will be launched as part of a social media campaign later in the year.

We need to reflect the reality of Social Work in Britain today.

With that in mind we are inviting Social Workers to share their experiences and their stories. These will provide the basic script for the monologues.

Do you have something you want to say or a story to tell? Or just vent your frustrations?

We are asking for audio recordings, no more than 2 or 3 minutes long.

We plan to transcribe as many of these as required, which will then be given to actors to deliver to camera as a monologue.

We are looking for contributions from all ages, all ethnic groups, all experience levels and all regions of the country.



WOT YOU
GOT TO SAY?



SERVICE
USERS

SOCIAL
WORKERS

A
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T
Y

Poverty
Suicide
Homelessness
Loneliness
Food Banks
Evictions

staff cuts
Hostile Media
Fewer Resources
Excessive Workloads
No support

NHS

Community Care

If you have questions or want to discuss further, then please send them to: malcolm@mjordan.demon.co.uk

The GFTU Conference wrap-up



The General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU) held their weekend Union Building Conference in February, with SWU and BASW representatives rubbing shoulders with unions across a range of diverse sectors, from prison officers to teachers, psychologists to footballers.

There were flying visits from speakers and academics from as far as New Zealand, Kurdistan, Gibraltar and Venezuela, and political presence too in the form of Labour MP Lloyd Russell-Moyle, who gave an insightful, intuitive speech and Q&A session. A young Jeremy Corbyn in the making I thought (you heard it here first!).

Possibly the highlight of the weekend though, was delivered by John McDonnell. The Labour Party's Shadow Chancellor delivered an inspiring pre-recorded speech in which he praised the GFTU as it approached its 120th birthday for "dynamically leading the way in showing the transformative power of trade unions and community education".

But it wasn't all pats on the back. In-fact the weekend challenged reps to look at their own organisations to see what can and should be improved, how to stem and reverse the public's general apathy towards workers' rights and union organisation, and how to better work together across unions for the greater good.

It was an impressive line-up and an educational get-together. Overall the UBC reflected on new, cutting edge approaches to motivating and sustaining active memberships, notably through a union presence in every workplace. "No one organising model fits all, yet we can all learn from each other. There were clear inspiring workshops and examples that SWU & BASW will use to benefit our organisation," said SWU General Secretary, John McGowan.

Arguably the biggest 'take-away' from the conference though, was the spirit of unity and action in which proceedings were conducted. Yes, the fundamentalist side of the neo-liberal model is here to stay, while fascism and nationalism have found a new generation, but it is not all doom and gloom. Unions are enjoying a moment too, not just here but across Europe and beyond.

A definite ground swell of 'this rich-poor divide isn't good enough' is gaining momentum, anger is rising, and the green shoots of community-based protest are growing - just as it did 120 years ago. It increasingly feels as though the decade beginning 2020 could be looked back upon by future historians as a pivotal chapter in the modern-day human story - and I'm sure unions, once again, will have played their part.

Anthony Dhadwal
BASW Senior Press Officer

Learning with Dr Neil Thompson just got even easier for SWU members!

To celebrate World Social Work Day Neil Thompson's Avenue Consulting are increasing the SWU member discount on their e-courses from one third off to 50% off, and also offering a monthly payment plan for a subscription to the Avenue Professional Development Programme at just £5 per month.

The e-courses include *Emotional Competence: Developing Emotional Intelligence and Resilience* | *Time and Workload Management* | *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion* | *Getting Started with Reflective Practice* | *Handling Aggression* | *Safeguarding Children from Abuse* | *Dealing with Stress* | *Facing Death ... Enriching Life*. There is also a free course: *Making a Difference: How to have a Positive Impact on People*.

The Avenue Professional Development Programme is an online learning community based on principles of self-directed learning and geared towards developing reflective practice. It enables you to be part of Neil's online tutorial group. Up to now, SWU members have been able to get a half-price discount by paying the subscription fee for the full year in advance. But, it will now be possible to pay just £5 per month for a 12-month subscription.

If you have any questions, contact Neil directly at neil@avenueconsulting.co.uk.



A recent quote from a SWU member:



I always considered BASW my club and membership of SWU is a great bonus. With SWU membership, I feel supported and reassured that if needed there are people who know Social Work inside and out.

Jackie Mahoney
BASW and SWU Member

We at SWU would love to hear from members regarding the positives of being a BASW and SWU member so please do get in touch with your comments.



The Importance of SWU for BASW Cymru



I've been a social worker for the last 17 years and have practised in both adults and children's services. I've also been lucky enough to have spent a substantial amount of my career delivering training, coaching and mentoring social workers as well as teaching on undergraduate and post-graduate social work programmes.

As a professional officer at BASW Cymru for the last 18 months, I've had many varied and rich experiences. What stands out however, are the relationships and partnership working that I've experienced with SWU. This has been at its most visible in our collaborative response to anti-austerity campaigning. BASW Cymru and SWU marched alongside one another in solidarity, during our boot-out-austerity walk in 2017. It was important for all social workers, especially those who joined us during the walk and shared with us their stories of hardship, to see BASW and SWU alongside one another in solidarity, standing up for our profession.

Social workers are at the front line and are best placed to understand the impact that austerity policies have had on those who need care and support. They witness first-hand the hardship, they cope with the daily onslaught of doing more for less as local authority budgets continue to be slashed.

Social workers know that austerity measures have not worked for Wales, a recent Joseph Rowntree report states that a quarter of the population are struggling to make ends meet, with rates of poverty being higher in Wales than elsewhere in the UK. The latest data shows us that 710,000 people in Wales live in poverty. This figure consists of 185,000 children, 405,000 working-age adults and 120,000 pensioners. This has significant implications for Social workers in Wales, who are faced with the daily reality of families needing to use foodbanks (which then run out of supplies during School holidays) and early intervention/preventative programmes being cut.

Working in such a pressured environment is taking its toll on the health and well-being of social workers in Wales. As a Consultant Social Worker mentoring social workers at all levels, I witnessed first-hand the corrosive effects that being overworked and undervalued has on the morale and resilience of excellent and ethical practitioners. Newly qualified social workers habitually working until 9 or 10 pm most days (including weekends) to get reports completed and keep up with their case recordings. The impact on their health and family relationships inevitably led to high levels of stress and sickness.

Conversations with social workers have continued in my role as a Professional Officer for BASW Cymru, although in this role, I speak to social workers throughout Wales and what unifies them all, is that the concerns and the pressures are the same, irrespective of locality. Having a dedicated social work Trades Union staffed by qualified social workers, that implicitly understand the challenges faced by the profession, is vital. SWU is the only Trade Union that can offer this.

In recognition of the challenges faced by social workers, BASW in partnership with SWU launched the 'Respect for Social Work Campaign' (following on from the research into working conditions for social workers undertaken by Jermaine Revalier at Bath Spa University) to lobby and influence Westminster and devolved Governments, in improving the working conditions for social workers in the UK.

The key to being able to shape, influence and direct the future of our profession is to act collectively and be a member of the only truly independent voice for social work and social workers in the UK - BASW and SWU together. BASW and SWU working in partnership, ensure that social workers are valued, that they have the correct environment and tools to do their jobs, that their mental health and well-being is protected and that they have the resilience to do the most difficult and rewarding job there is. Trade Unions have historically,

played a central role in securing the rights and conditions of workers in Wales and this is just as important today.

World Social Work Week is almost upon us and I would urge you to become a member of SWU and BASW because #MembershipMatters #MaeAelodaethynBwysig

Allison Hulmes
Professional Officer
BASW Cymru

Want a Union Meeting with a difference?

Invite SWU Executive Committee Member Angi Naylor to perform a range of protest-based songs and poems from Pete Seeger through to the Boot Out Austerity songs and poems.

It's a FOLK SINGERS job to comfort disturb people & disturb comfortable people *Woody Guthrie*



Songs of Solidarity
Poems of Protest



BOOT OUT AUSTERITY
Marches On

www.boot-out-austerity.co.uk

@anginaylor 07713295853 anginaylor@aol.com www.basw.co.uk/aag

Merseyside BASW Branch
with The Social Workers Union (SWU)

SOCIAL WORKERS WORKING CONDITIONS

TUESDAY 17TH APRIL 2018

6.30- 8.30PM

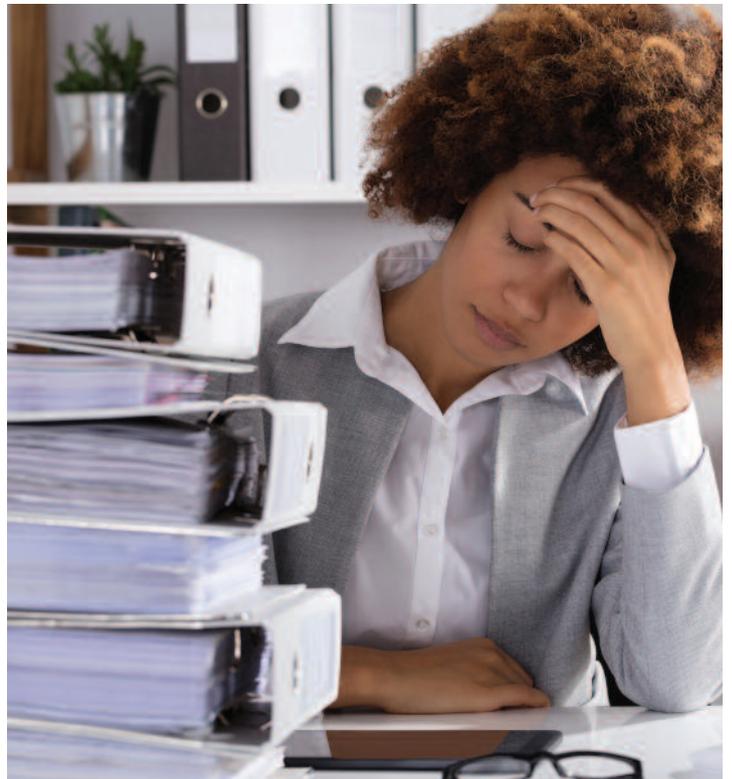
GEORGE FOX ROOM , QUAKER MEETING HOUSE, 22 SCHOOL LANE, LIVERPOOL L1 3BT

HOW do social workers working conditions compare to that of other professions in the UK?

WHAT are the levels of stress, job satisfaction, presenteeism, and turnover intentions of social workers?

WHAT are the causes of stress in UK social workers?

WHAT can we do about the research findings and what action has been implemented?



PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION LED BY:

John McGowan, General Secretary of the Social Workers Union and
Dr Jermaine Ravalier, Senior Lecturer Bath Spa University
and author of a [recent study into social worker wellbeing](#).

THIS EVENT IS FREE TO ATTEND

Social Work Musketeer



Social interaction is a basic and fundamental human need. Studies have shown that infants who do not receive this often fail to thrive, and even die young. The need for social interaction doesn't change as we reach our twilight years. In fact, it may become even more important to thriving in advanced age than diet or exercise.

Loneliness can lead to depression and increased negative emotions; these are significant risk factors for dementia/Alzheimer's disease. To put this simply, lonely people may become fearful and chronically stressed, which causes them to remain isolated from others. It creates a health-damaging and unfulfilling prophecy.

This month's Social Work Musketeer Blog- is a simple poem about loneliness and dementia. Remember, don't let dementia become YOUR reason to imprison someone further. So, step into their reality!

The Protector

Do you see me, what do you see?

It's lonely in a crowd.

Do you know my name, I think you do? You call me him or her, he or she.

I am here you know, I have lived many years, many truths but now I'm silenced.

Do you see me?

The world has changed, it's so different now. I see people talking into their hands. I'm here, maybe you could talk to me.

I will light up if you speak to me, just like your hand when you speak into it.

You seem rushed today, really busy but you're in my home. Maybe tomorrow, yes tomorrow will be different?

I've lived a lifetime, so another day will not matter. All my days are all the same now.

You wash me, you feed me and then you go away. You rarely smile, only when you speak to the light in your hand, do you smile.

Do you see me, do you know me now?

Sometimes you're the only one I see all day, all week, all month.

I know you care, you must do, as you visit me.

I enjoy laughter, but you never smile. You don't seem happy to be in my here.

You know everything about me, you write about me in a book. What do you write? You never say. Maybe you're writing something special.

You talk about vulnerable and concerns, you have a lot of thoughts about me but you never ask me.

You see me naked - do you see me now?

Do you?

With love
SWM

Additional free SWU member discounts as part of your £20

Avenue Professional Development Programme

Offered by Prof. Neil Thompson as a SWU member benefit with half-price membership and a one-third off discount on Avenue e-learning courses.

Half-price membership would amount to £59.40 instead of £118.80 (£99 + VAT) per annum to SWU members. SWU members, as part of the same benefit, offered a one-third off discount on Avenue e-learning courses (i.e. £19.99 instead of £29.99).

To take up this offer please contact Joanne Deakin, SWU Admin Manager: j.deakin@swu-union.org.uk



GFTU Training Courses and reduced price accommodation at Quorn Hotel

SWU are members of GFTU. There are almost 100 courses offered on the General Federation of Trade Unions website with the majority **free for SWU**



members. This is a great membership benefit and adds value to the joining fee of £20 along with guaranteed employment representation and being part of the trade union movement.



All courses are listed on the web link brochure. To apply for any of the courses please download an application form and forward it to SWU Admin Manager: j.deakin@swu-union.org.uk For courses and application form go to: <http://www.gftu.org.uk/>

Course places cannot be guaranteed but you will be notified of availability once you apply.

Morrish Solicitors SWU members will be offered a 10% discount with Morrish Solicitors, one of the leading legal firms. If you are looking for friendly, professional legal advice, along with welcome savings, SWU members will receive a wide range of discounts and benefits, giving you peace of mind.

To access this member benefit and find out more please go to: <https://www.morrishsolicitors.com/socialworkersunion>



Lighthouse Financial Group - Complimentary financial health check

Want to get a grip of your finances, but unsure where to start? Help is at hand - the SWU recently appointed Lighthouse Financial Advice as its preferred provider of personal finance advice and they are offering all members a complimentary, no obligation financial health check.



All SWU members are entitled to a no obligation, complimentary financial health check with a Lighthouse Financial Advice adviser, who will explain how you may be able to:

- build up a nest-egg tax-efficiently, for yourself or for your children or grandchildren
- boost your pension provision, so you will be able to enjoy a comfortable retirement
- protect your family's income, so they have enough money if the worst happens
- take your pension and get the best possible income
- pay for long-term care
- pass on your wealth to your loved ones in a tax-efficient way.

To book your complimentary, no obligation financial health check call 08000 85 85 90 or email appointments@lighthousefa.co.uk quoting reference **SWU1**

WORLD SOCIAL WORK DAY ASSIGNMENT

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 can social workers solve austerity?”

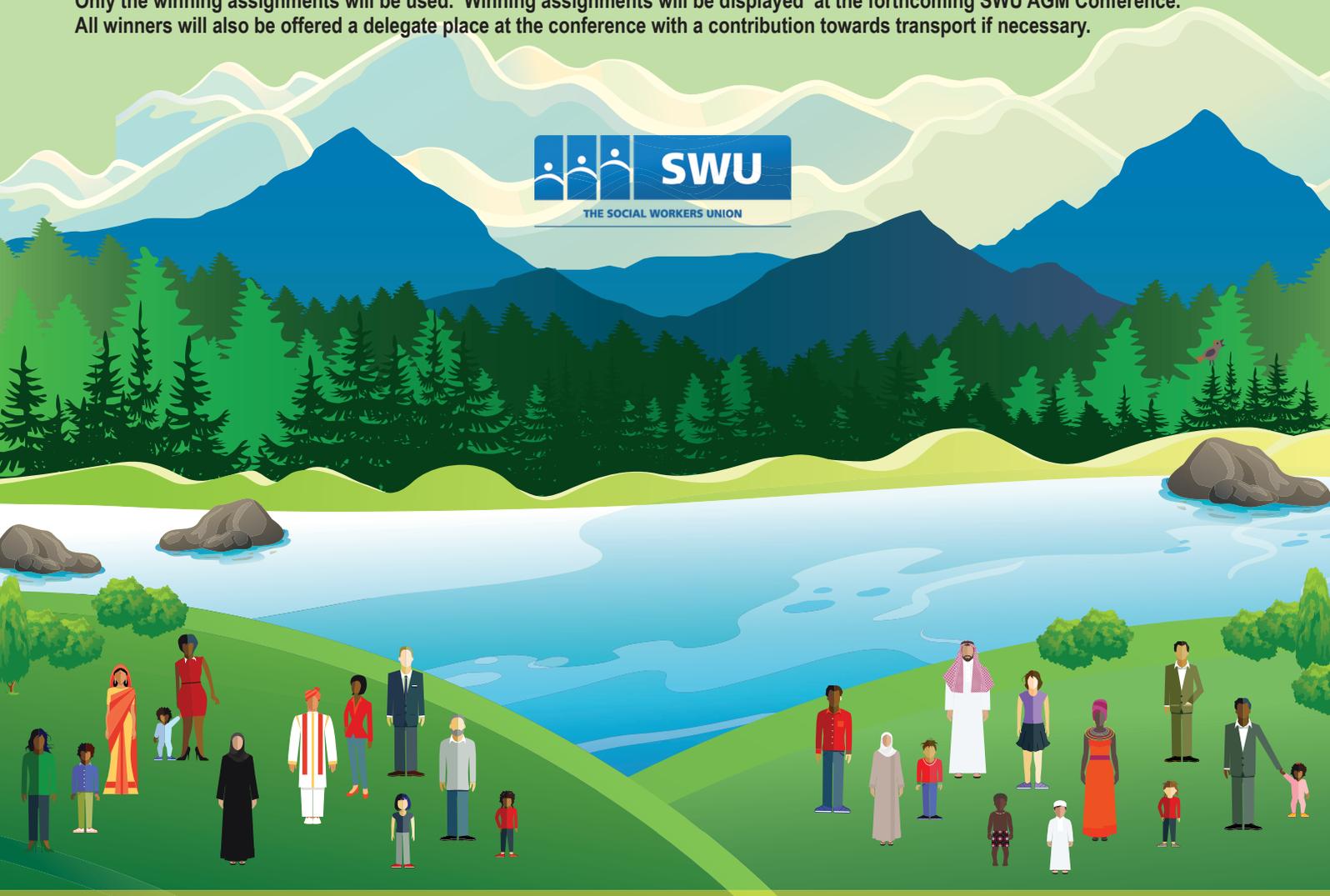
All completed assignments will be judged by a Panel including representation from the General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU) and the SWU Executive.

All winners will be invited to the SWU AGM and Conference 2018 (date to be confirmed).

Please forward your completed assignment after 20th March and no later than 11th June 2018 with a covering letter giving your Name, Address, University, Year of Study and Academic Tutor (if appropriate) to: swu-admin@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.



**WORLD SOCIAL WORK DAY
20TH MARCH 2018**



www.ifsw.org