



THE SOCIAL WORKERS UNION

The specialist union for social workers

e-BULLETIN | FEBRUARY 2018

General Secretary's Update

This has been another busy month for all at SWU. We continue to try and meet up regularly with members, share issues and highlight what we are doing. The actions as part of Respect4SW are developing, and in addition to parliamentary discussions we should be able to expand this, with some further dialogue with SWU members and employers. Dr Jermaine Ravalier's relationship with SWU remains positive and I have enjoyed presenting with him at recent events with another one scheduled soon for the Merseyside BASW branch. It is always useful engaging with members and sharing the benefits of joining SWU. In addition, I am particularly delighted that SWU has a slot at the forthcoming Social Work Action Network Annual Conference in April. There will be more about this next month.

Interest from members being in the Union Contact scheme has been tremendous and I am always happy for more people to get involved. Not only is there support from our National Organiser, but additional online training from Dr Neil Thompson is offered, and GFTU union training for each Union Contact. I am certainly looking forward to meeting the first group at the training evening in Liverpool on Sat 28th April.

Additionally, we are active with the Austerity Action Group and we are now nearly ready to start developing our media clips, with opportunities for some SWU members to work with writers and film makers to produce short clips.

Last year's World Social Work Day Assignment Competition was a great success and I am happy that this will be continuing this year (see page 12). The quality last year was excellent and hopefully interest will remain high once more. Please share with as many Social Work Students as possible. Once more GFTU will be marking the assignment along with SWU Executive members (see photo on following page).



If you have not done so already, please get your friends and colleagues to sign up to SWU. We consider this to be a bargain at only £20 annually with BASW Membership, and £10 for students. Not only is employment representation guaranteed (which is not the case if you only have BASW membership) but we have additional benefits for members.



*Bargain price
Sign up today*

**John McGowan
General Secretary**

j.mcgowan@swu-union.org.uk



SWU Executive 2018

“Remember that SWU membership guarantees employment representation. Membership of BASW does not. Paying an extra £20 (£10) a year is great value.”

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

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**

Get involved with SWU

In order for a trade union to strengthen and grow, its not only important to recruit new members but to encourage current members to become more active and involved.

The reasons for this are:

- Active membership has a knock-on effect ... the more active and vocal the members, the more inspired less active members are to get involved in their union ... and non-members are to join!
- Active members send a message to employers, policy-makers, government and the media that we are part of a strong collective with a knowledge and insight into irregular practices, workplace difficulties, societal inequalities ... and we won't be dismissed.
- Successful campaigning such as SWU & BASW's joint Respect4SW is far more achievable with an active union membership who are not complacent and who understand the benefits of campaigning ... the benefits to us as social workers, and also to our service-users.

SWU Union Contacts (UCs) are more than "just volunteers" ... they are part of a distinctive and important team in the workplace or the university, undertaking the promotional groundwork that SWU & BASW full-time officers are unable to do due to busy caseloads. Social workers wishing to become UCs need not be limited to conventional statutory workplaces... we welcome social work students, retired social workers, unemployed or in alternative work roles - therefore providing an opportunity to advance and grow our union further. Simply being a member of SWU enables you to apply for this role.

Now is a great time to get involved in your union. Members **are** the union, we are its heart and soul, and if we don't feel it's as active as it could be then WE can change it. We've had lots of interest from social workers wanting to

undertake the role of UC ... why not join them and become part of our team!

The first training session has been scheduled for **April 28th in Liverpool** with input from Dr Neil Thompson. To book a place and discuss further (expenses are covered) please contact:

Carol Reid, SWU National Organiser
M: 07375 496315
E: carol.reid@swu-union.org.uk

A recent quote from a SWU member:

As a registered social worker, being a member of BASW and SWU enables me to stand up for the values of the profession I care so much about. It enables me to feel empowered and supported to call out bad practice, oppressive practice and gives me a sense of wellbeing.

Sian Jones
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 thoughts.



The importance of SWU for BASW England

I've been a Professional Officer for BASW England since July 2017 and I live in Sheffield. My social care experience spans nearly 20 years and I've worked in: private fostering; the Probation Service; youth offending; adult mental health; child protection and Care Leavers services. Trade union advice/support has been important throughout my careers and should not be underestimated. I've relied on the advice/support at different junctures in my career, including: applying for sponsorship from an employer to undertake my degree; managing organisational re-structuring and challenging unhelpful organisational cultures. Therefore, the 'unique selling point' of SWU, and being represented by a qualified social worker, I feel is particularly valuable to all practitioners.



I'm a strong believer that social work (across all areas/domains/sectors) is about personalities and relationships. This view may be criticised for being too simplistic - but in my experience the compatibility of personalities and managing/supporting relationships has been an important factor in my social work practice, the glue for effective teamwork and a significant factor in achieving positive outcomes for service-users and their family/support networks. This also relates to the circumstances of the social workers that SWU represent and their relationship with their employers.

Social work practice is about human contact and relies heavily on personal interactions, but sometimes I think the importance of 'being personable' is overlooked by practitioners, managers and service-users alike. In my experience, the pleasantries of showing courtesy, empathy, respect and humanity are not always prioritised by all - but they really do make the everyday processes of assessment, planning, implementation and review easier and more productive. Of course, not all personalities are compatible, and in order to develop effective and meaningful professional relationships I feel it's important this is acknowledged and self-awareness is promoted. An adage which springs to mind is "It's not what is said, but how it's said".

For social workers to be more accepted by service-users, colleagues, professionals from other disciplines and the general public, I think we need to streamline and simplify our discourse and language - in a way which stays true to our social work values (and individual personalities) and helps us to make more meaningful professional relationships inside and outside of the social profession.

I look forward to a having a long career with BASW (and working in partnership with SWU) by doing my utmost to champion social work and hopefully improve the perceptions of the social work profession and the working conditions within it.

Wayne Reid
BASW Professional Officer

Merseyside BASW Branch with The Social Workers Union (SWU) - Social Working Conditions

Tuesday 17th April 2018

Quaker Meeting House, 22 School Lane, Liverpool, L1 3BT

Book Online (see BASW events page at www.basw.co.uk)

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 will cover the following areas of discussion:

- 1) How do social workers working conditions compare to that of other professions in the UK?
- 2) What are the levels of stress, job satisfaction, presentee-ism, and turnover intentions of social workers?
- 3) What are the causes of stress in UK social workers?
- 4) What can we do about the research findings and what action has been implemented?



COMING SOON ...

The Social Worker's Practice Manual

By Neil Thompson

With a Foreword by Professor Mark Doel

Not a textbook, a hands-on manual of practice – a practical guide from one of the UK's most respected social work authors.

Divided into thirty sections, each covering a key area of practice, this essential handbook will be invaluable to newly qualified social workers, students on placement and more experienced workers and managers wanting to get the best results.

I am very pleased to be able to recommend Neil Thompson's new publication. Neil has a great ability to write and talk about complex issues in an accessible way. Here he draws on his many years of teaching, practising and working with social workers to help us better understand the complexity and richness that is social work. His values, knowledge and communication skills shine through. I thoroughly recommend this manual, not only to students and newly qualified social workers, but also to those with much more experience.

Joe Godden, Professional Officer, British Association of Social Workers

Only £24.99! ISBN 978-1-910020-39-5

Learn online with Neil Thompson. Visit www.NeilThompson.info to find out more and receive 50% discount for online learning as a SWU member.

Liberating Arts and Being Part of The Union

Way back in the '70's the Strawbs had us all singing *Part of The Union* and although some of the words are dated its popularity remains. The question rises then is singing a union activity? Whilst many people happily pay their subs, not everyone is drawn to being an active participant in their Union or Association. Just saying the words Branch or Union Meeting can make a room empty faster than shouting Fire!

So what would happen if you invited people to come and listen to some music and stories, throw in curry and conversation or samosas and soft drink or even invite them to do "a little protest march?" Well as many of you know those were the sort of things we

did on the *Boot Out Austerity* march to engage with members and yes it worked! So my answer is "you bet singing is a union activity".

The hundred mile walk may have finished but not our campaign to *Boot Out Austerity*, so I jumped at the chance to attend a GFTU conference calling itself *Liberating Arts Festival* and meet with others who see performance and the arts as ways to advance the trade union movement as well as campaign on issues of social justice. Right from our very beginnings unions have gone out with our colours raised - not to the mast, but to beautifully and skillfully embroidered banners, which I assume is where headlining act Banner Theatre Company takes its name.

Banner Theatre rightly billing themselves as “Britain’s foremost radical theatre company” and SWU “Britain’s fastest growing Union” have become firm friends over the last year. Firstly giving us a musical send off to the Walk, and later in the year joined us at the SWU AGM where they gave an abridged version of their new show *Rise Like Lions*. A show which exposes the 30 year plot to privatise the NHS, played to a packed house at the festival. Alongside them a similarly named play called *We are the lions Mr Manager* captured the essence of the 1976 Grunwick Strike, a dispute that saw all the major unions unite behind a group of Asian women who were demanding fair pay; amazingly this production was undertaken by just two people!

Alongside this were a number of workshops such as how to make the most of media opportunities; and opportunities to listen to masters of their craft like the marvellous Tony Garnett sharing his experiences of making such notable films as *Kes* and of course *Kathy Come Home* - the film title that I had worked into the verse of the (much sung) *Social Workers Chant*. Sadly courage failed me to share that fact with him. It was also an opportunity to make new friends in Steph & Sara from Salford Community Theatre who shared their experience of working with the local community to relive Walter Greenwood’s 1930’s book *Love on the Dole*. Key to the story is the famous “Battle of Bexley Square,” where the National Unemployed Workers Movement held a demonstration against cuts in the dole; the subsequent battle with the police and of course the aftermath!

I had a touch of the goosebumps as I sang *Dirty Old Town* from the warmth of the People’s Musuem café whilst looking across the river to modern day Salford and imaging a matchstick Lowry picture. It was Salford not Dublin and it was the voice of Ewan McColl not

The Poges that first launched this song. And It was Ewan McColl then known by his birth name James Henry Miller who marched with his neighbours to Bexley Square and who having witnessed the brutality and injustice went on to become a political activist of the singing kind.

So what is this article about? It’s about celebrating our union history. It’s about campaigning for social justice. It’s about the many ways you can engage with your Union. It’s about the opportunities you can access with your SWU membership to the numerous (much reduced if not free) courses run by GFTU and advertised in its brochure *Education for*

Action - Educating Trade Unionist for Workplace and Social Change. Courses which enhance both the individual’s experience of trade unions and gives opportunities for members to be more effective Union Contacts. The very same brochure in which I found the Liberating Arts

Course, the experience of which has helped me to put together a one hour show *Songs of Solidarity, Poems of Protests, Boot Out Austerity Marches On*.

How about you doing your bit - invite me to come and perform in your area and show that “You’re Part of The Union.”

Check out the links - book on to a course, catch Banner Theatre or Townsend Productions as they tour the country with their shows.

Contact Angi: @anginaylor or anginaylor@aol.com or via SWU.org.uk

www.gftu.org.uk/

<http://www.townsendproductions.org.uk/shows/we-are-the-lions-mr-manager/>

www.bannertheatre.co.uk/

**Angi Naylor
SWU Executive**

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

BASW London and the Austerity Action Group present

ACTION AGAINST AUSTERITY!

Tuesday 6th March 2018

6.30pm (Refreshments from 6pm)

The Hall at St Margarets House, 21 Old Ford Road, Bethnal Green, London E2 9PL

Five minutes from Bethnal Green Tube station & from Cambridge Heath Overground

(CLICK HERE for directions to The Hall)

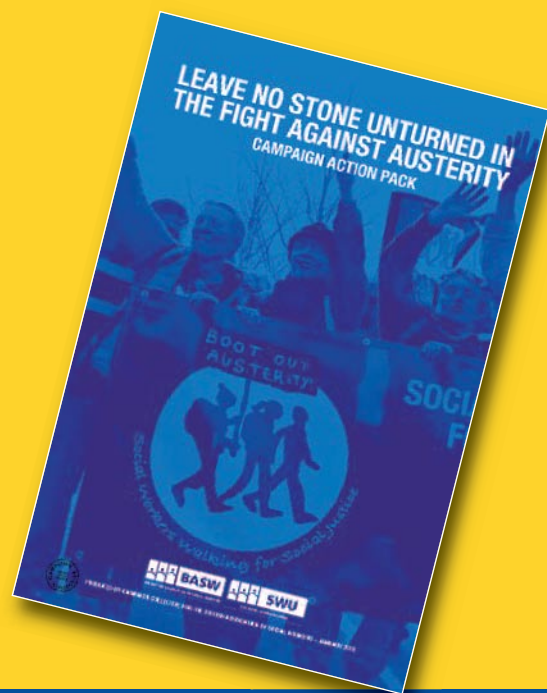
**COME TO A PUBLIC MEETING
JOIN SOCIAL WORKERS IN OUR FIGHT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE**

And learn about ways of campaigning, big and small,
from speakers including

- Jane Tunstill, Emeritus Professor of Social Work
- Roger Lewis, Disabled People Against Cuts
- Tom Griffiths, People's Assembly Against Austerity
- Social workers from the Boot Out Austerity march
- Psychologists For Social Change

And through film, poetry and song

**FREE EVENT. SOCIAL WORKERS, ALLIES
& ALL CONCERNED CITIZENS WELCOME!**



For further info/bookings visit
www.basw.co.uk/events



SWU Meets the Minister - Parliamentary Update



I chaired a meeting with the minister for Care and Mental Health, Jackie Doyle-Price MP in Westminster on 28th November. The Chief Social Worker (Adults), Lyn Romeo was in attendance. Also

present was Dr. Jermaine Ravalier from Bath Spa University, Maris Stratulis BASW England Manager, Lien Watts Assistant General Secretary of SWU and Head of the Advice and Representation Service, and Madeliene Jennings BASW Senior Parliamentary Officer. There were also some other staff from the Department of Health at the meeting.

Dr. Ravalier discussed his research into Working Conditions of Social Workers which had been undertaken by him for the Social Workers Union. This meeting was part of an ongoing project of meetings with Parliamentary figures to discuss the findings of Dr. Ravalier's research. An interesting discussion followed covering such topics as the considerable amount of unpaid overtime undertaken by Social Workers, the high turnover of staff, the large number of staff saying they were intending to leave the profession, the excessive use and high cost of agency staff, the high caseloads, the lack of resources and the high level of stress. Interestingly the Minister thought that BASW and SWU were rival organisations. I explained there were close links between the two organisations

and we both upheld the same code of ethics for Social Work. All members of SWU are currently also members of BASW.

Lyn Romeo, the Chief Social Worker (Adults), said they were working on some of these issues. The Minister said she would do all she can to support Social Work.

On 23rd January there were three separate meetings with MPs in Westminster. Unfortunately I was unable to attend as I was away on holiday. The first meeting was with Jo Platt MP Labour for Leigh. She is a member of the Community and Local Government Select Committee. The second meeting was with Hywell Williams MP Plaid Cymru. The third meeting was with Anne Marie Morris MP Conservative for Newton Abbot.

Hywell Williams agreed to put in a request for a Westminster Hall Debate on the findings of the report. Jo Platt has offered to push for a Community and Local Government Select Committee enquiry.

James Birchall
SWU President



..... if you want to write or record a script

SWU is planning a series of six 2 minute videos showing the experience of frontline social workers and service users facing austerity. Each will be a monologue based on the famous 'Talking Heads' series. If you know a good writer, have an idea or wish to write a script please get in touch and we will forward you our information leaflet: malcolm@mjordan.demon.co.uk

Hogwarts school of wizardry now recruiting social workers. We need you!



Voldemort is back!!! But this time he has the assistance of his devilish twin sister Austerity May. The two dark forces have united in their bid to ramp up society's Ills.

Hogwarts School of Wizardry is now recruiting exceptional Wizards who are wishing to learn the magical art of Social Work. This course will require experienced Wizards who are fearless, brave and emotionally intelligent. Your learning will earn your Social Work Wizardry Wands, in addition to your Community Spell Wands. These Wands are only awarded to the most successful candidates for high performance community magic.

You will be able to achieve the impossible, and hopefully save humanity from the limitations within community services. Austerity May is a tricky lady and has taken ransom of all public spending. She will lead you into a false sense of security, so you must have an understanding of the dark magic within - BREXITSPELLIAMUS - and not be fooled by the tom foolery of Political Non Magic Folk.

The many victims and societal casualties will require your magical powers to turn the "Grey Sky, Blue" once more. (*Mr Blue Sky* being an emotive song of choice here). All interest should be directed to the present time lord Jeremy Corbyn, a man who appears to be winning many feats and gaining momentum and popularity.

It has been advised by the Wizardry Council that the recruitment of Magical Social Workers has fallen. We need to restore faith and love back into our work and let the World see the wonderful things we do. Are you ready for the challenge?

"Be a light not a judge, be a role model not a critic, be the solution not the problem. Social Work is in your blood."

Requirements of Wizardry Social Work

All Wizards must undertake a spells test. Social Work Wizards should be coherent in all Good Magical practices, and have a proven track record for good deeds.

For example, saving unicorns from extinction or the successful cultivation of "money trees" for people in need.

You should be able to undertake a caseload of many Muggles/fellow magic folk and deliver a first class service, even when you're all spelled out. You should be able to mix with all living creatures, in particular Muggles. Muggles are half-bloods who require sensitivity and empathy in order to empower them and guide them. This will allow accreditation towards your equality and diversity skills in a time of great confusion.

You must be able to work autonomously and avoid all Dark Magic that has taken a hold of World Politics. You need to be able to challenge dark souls, who may wish to curb your enthusiasm. All wizards will be supplied with a broom stick on receipt of qualification and will be taught the fine art of flying to work.

You may accrue flexi hours, but as Social Work Wizards the opportunity for time off is limited so dedication is a noble requirement. You will be rewarded by additional caseloads, but don't be disheartened, see the positives and enjoy the view.

Supervision's may be authenticated by suspicious dark hearts! So be careful with the information you share as the Dementor's (Dark Spirits) are monitoring you closely. Watch for signs of these Power Hungry Spirits, who may feel the need to share your personal information in order to limit your personal goals, I guess this is popular culture these days but don't worry SWU will take care of you.

If you are able to meet all of these requirements, then I guess your vocation is set. If anyone is able revive the old "growing money on tree's trick" then you will avoid the difficult selection process with immediate effect.

All Applications should be sent to the Grand Wizard himself, Dumbledore-McGowan at Castle SWU. Join up today in the respect of Social Work.

Remember the journey of Social Work Wizards starts with self-belief. We may not always win the battle but we can Win-the-War.

Social Work Musketeer



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**

