



THE SOCIAL WORKERS UNION

The specialist union for social workers

e-BULLETIN | JANUARY 2018

## THINKING OF BECOMING A SWU Volunteer as a SWU UNION CONTACT? Now is the right to be involved with the UKs fastest growing union

A Social Workers Union Volunteer and Union Contact (UC) is a vital member of the SWU team! SWU's model of developing a network of Contacts offers an alternative to the traditional union shop steward approach by ensuring that employment negotiations are confined to paid BASW and SWU Trade Union 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.

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 and with the support and guidance of a TU Organiser

SWU's ambition is to try and have at least one Union Contact in each workplace or large department.

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



**SWU  
Union  
Contact**

Volunteer Today

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

If you are interested in becoming a SWU Union Contact or in getting active and involved in the SWU please get in touch with our new Trade Union Organiser:

**Carol Reid**

Email: [carol.reid@swu-union.org.uk](mailto:carol.reid@swu-union.org.uk)

Telephone: 0737 549 6315



The only UK Trade Union designated for and run by qualified and registered Social Workers.

- Opt into SWU membership for a minimal fee when you join BASW.
- Two for the price of one, Trade Union membership and a Professional Association.
- We offer a duty system Monday to Friday 9am to 4.30pm.
- Part of a strong collective where YOU can be active and make a change.
- Recognised as experts in representation at UK Regulatory Councils.
- Advice to members from day one of membership\*
- Receive monthly ebulletins

\* Representation only after three months membership and excludes situations pre-existing membership.

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

**Carol Reid**

Email: [carol.reid@swu-union.org.uk](mailto:carol.reid@swu-union.org.uk)

## General Secretary's Update

It's now almost 16 months since I became SWU General Secretary and we've made some important progress since then with the General Federation of Trade Unions citing that we have been the fastest growing union in the UK over that period; but I am aware we still have a long way to go. The time is right now for SWU members to recruit and encourage non SWU members to sign up. The unique selling point is straightforward 'guaranteed employment representation' from qualified social workers for social workers. With our membership approaching 12,000 it would be great to build on this progress, and together with BASW the profession can be stronger. Additionally, we have already started our campaigning strategy which has seen us meet with a number of politicians through our activism with the Respect4SW campaign. We can build on this national campaigning, and respond to local campaigns once we start to develop our pool of volunteers (*see page 1*).

To keep you informed about all that we are planning and doing is why we launched our monthly newsletter and regular email bulletins. If you are a member and you are not receiving our emails or newsletters, please get in touch to update us on your contact details.

If you are a SWU member and want to get involved, this is the perfect time to let us know. I am delighted we now have Carol Reid as our first SWU National Organiser covering Campaign and Volunteer Development. Carol comes to SWU with a strong background in trade unionism and working in this area of expertise. I will offer Carol all my support and assistance to ensure that volunteers are welcomed and supported as part of the SWU team. I am really looking forward to working with Carol.

Last but not least, two Executive Members from SWU will remain active with the Austerity Action Group. This has already produced some exciting initiatives to build on the excellent work of the 'Boot Out Austerity' campaign.

I look forward to another active and busy year and welcome hearing from members, so please do keep in touch.

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

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

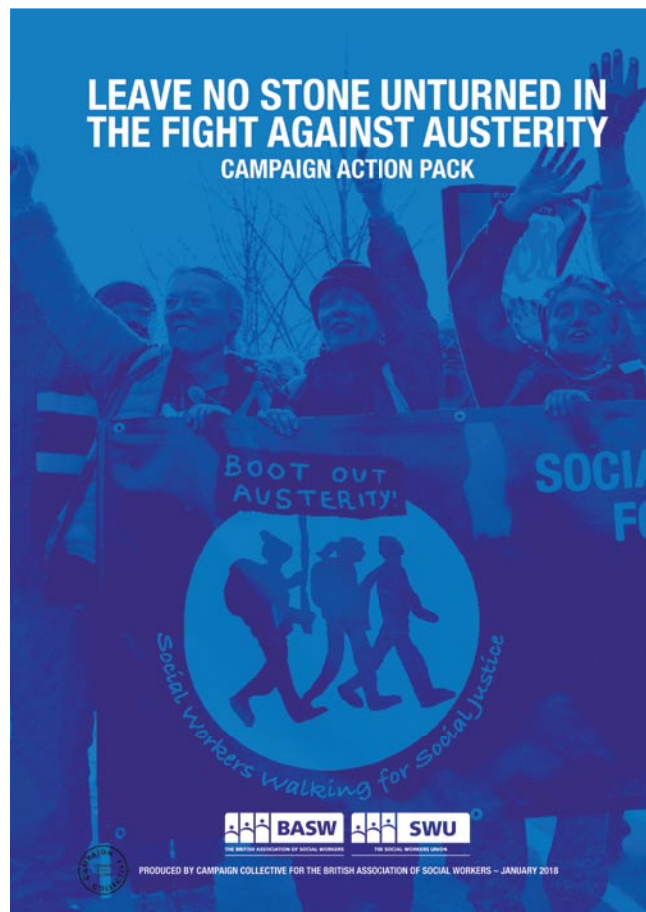
To book your complimentary, no obligation financial health check call 08000 85 85 90 or email [appointments@lighthousefa.co.uk](mailto:appointments@lighthousefa.co.uk) quoting reference **SWU1**

# Austerity Campaign Action Pack is launched by BASW and SWU

A new 'campaign pack' to help people protest against austerity is now available from BASW and SWU, drawing on lessons learned from a 100-mile Boot Out Austerity walk in April. The step-by-step guide outlines everything from how to organise public meetings, rallies, and awareness-raising film nights, to setting up petitions, lobbying and contacting the press.

It contains templates for writing letters and information to ensure organisers meet legal requirements in areas such as copyright, licensing and data protection. Participants on BASW and SWU's Boot Out Austerity walk trekked from Birmingham to Liverpool to highlight how cuts were affecting people, particularly the most vulnerable.

BASW chair Guy Shennan said the walk attracted huge support, showing the strength of public feeling against the economic policy "People's lives are blighted. Disabled people continue to suffer. We had so much knowledge from Boot Out Austerity that could contribute to future campaigning and we had the idea to put our knowledge together." Shennan said



the campaign pack was a practical guide to "turn Boot Out Austerity from a small band of walkers into a large-scale movement".

The austerity pack was launched with a public meeting at the University of Salford where



*SWU General Secretary,  
John McGowan*

one of the main speakers was Doug Nichols, General Secretary of the General Federation of Trade Unions. "The whole intellectual underpinning, if you can call it that, of the neoliberal and austerity agenda foisted on the country since 1979 is unravelling. There is a new mood. Enough is really enough the scale of human suffering is too much to endure. We have to return to the social. We have to create an equal society and a caring culture. What better way to celebrate this new beginning than with the country's fastest growing union representing professionals on the front line of both the extreme social problems that exist, but also on the front line of the organised fight back," said Doug Nicholls about the pack.

This was followed by an additional launch in Wales with one of the main speakers, SWU General Secretary, John McGowan. He said the pack helped give opportunity for campaigning experience. "The polls tell us that people power is on the rise," he said. "Being an activist can be difficult, it can be stressful, it can be very challenging, but it is incredibly rewarding. This pack is a wonderful opportunity to be more active."

To download the Austerity Campaign Action Pack follow this link: [http://cdn.basw.co.uk/upload/basw\\_60542-4.pdf](http://cdn.basw.co.uk/upload/basw_60542-4.pdf)



*General Secretary  
of the GFTU,  
Doug Nichols*

## A Vigil for Lindy

The BASW Cymru launch of the Anti Austerity Campaign Pack *Leave No Stone Unturned* <https://www.basw.co.uk/aag/> brought a number of the Boot Out Austerity walkers to Cardiff to share their experiences and listen to others who were also standing up and fighting for social justice.

Our meeting was held in one of the majestic University buildings that border Alexander Gardens, a public park which had become the focus of media attention following the awful news about “the woman who died in a tent in the park.” As the coroner’s investigation was ongoing her name had not been announced but that was not going to prevent locals from organizing a public vigil to remember her as well as highlight the plight of homeless people which took place on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2017.

Those words kept going over and over in my head, “she’s the woman who died in a tent in the park,” one of those “ear worms” that you cannot get out of your head. Well I did get it out of my head and onto paper as a song: <https://youtube.com/SAVZ8smSAkM> “The woman who died in (the tent) in the park”

Those words become the refrain going round and round and round, while each of the lines in the verses are examples of the often

banal responses uttered by people to fill the embarrassed space at such news. Responses that you and I have to have ready to inform and educate and hopefully enlighten the public that homelessness is not a choice it is a political situation created by this government. ... “Has she been homeless long?” - surely just one day is too long! ... “Where did she come from?” - does it matter, will that change the situation? ... “We tried to help she wouldn’t engage” - metaphors that support services are often so tightly boundaried they are of little use to people like her. Then of course the gathering to salute her memory which I was privileged to be at and able to sing at the foot of the statue of Aneurin Bevan, one of the founding fathers of the welfare state - a system based on the principles of equality of opportunity, equitable distribution of wealth, and public responsibility for those members unable to look after themselves. The current government seems hell bent on destroying this system which we as the Social Workers Union pledged to stand up and defend at our AGM. “This Union pledges full support for BASW’s decision, following the successful Boot Out Austerity march, to continue its determined anti-austerity campaign. This AGM confirmed SWU’s ongoing commitment to the Boot Out Austerity campaign, and mandates the executive committee to seek ways to achieve this.”



Taking part in the vigil was one such way, launching the Austerity Action Pack another. Putting links to other campaigns on our @SWU\_uk social media pages and alerting you to TV programmes like Channel 4's week of programmes on homelessness and specifically rough sleepers, particularly *Her Name was Lindy* [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0eNRN3F\\_Bs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0eNRN3F_Bs). Finally put a name to "the woman who died in a tent in the park."

The banner made by the Cardiff support group Left Outside Alone who organized the vigil says it all:

***Don't Make Today's Children  
Tomorrow's Homeless***

**Angi Naylor  
SWU Executive &  
SWU Rep on Austerity Action Group**

## 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)

## Book Reviews

*(See advert on following page)*

### Workers Play Time

*edited by Doug Nicholls:*

The scripts, along with Doug Nicholls' informative introduction, are inspiring and motivational, and instill a feeling of pride and gratitude to the working class men and women whose strength and struggle laid the foundations of today's Trade Union movement. It would be great to see these plays performed in secondary schools and colleges to enable young people to develop an awareness of the working class history that appears to be missing from the national curricula and mainstream media.

### Trade Union Education -

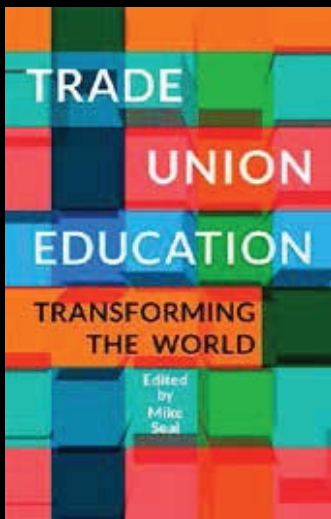
### Transforming the World

*edited by Mike Seal:*

For those of us who are perpetually frustrated by the hidden history of the Trade Union movement (and, in fact, working class history in general) this book is a breath of fresh air. From the very start it highlights and emphasises the importance of the Trade Unionists' role as "educator", and our duty as Trade Unionists to inform, encourage and motivate our members. Knowledge is power, and this book provides an insight and understanding of the importance of education from a trade union perspective, and its positive impact upon organising locally, nationally and internationally.



## A new publishing imprint dedicated to trade unions and organized workers



### **Trade Union Education: Transforming the World**

Edited by Mike Seal

Trade union education has been in the doldrums for years – it generally lacks modern teaching methods, has outdated content and avoids key areas of history, economics and politics. This book aims to change all that – to mark out new ground that will bring trade union education back to life.

The collection features 16 insightful essays from 20 individual practitioners, each with long experience of popular-education techniques.

Paperback | 296 pages

£9.99 | \$16.95

978-1-78026-425-7

ebook 978-1-78026-426-4



### **Workers' Play Time: Seven Scripts from Seven Struggles**

Edited by Doug Nicholls

There is a rich tradition of theatre dealing with workers' and trade union struggles through the centuries that can go unacknowledged by the literary mainstream. Often, such plays are staged in alternative venues and too often their scripts are not gathered in any archive and are in danger of being lost.

*Workers' Play Time* is an anthology of seven such scripts, many of which are appearing in print for the first time.

Paperback | 312 pages

UK: £9.99 US: \$16.95

978-1-78026-427-1

ebook 978-1-78026-428-8

**Workable** is the joint book publishing initiative of the General Federation of Trade Unions and independent publisher New Internationalist. We believe that the stories, ideas, creativity, organizing and educational experiences of trade unionists need to be more widely shared.

All revenues raised from this venture will be reinvested into trade union education and publishing.

Please send an outline of any proposals for publication to: [workable@newint.org](mailto:workable@newint.org)

### **Ordering**

All books are available to order from bookstores worldwide. Ebook editions are available from all major retailers.

### **Also available from:**

New Internationalist's Ethical Shop in the UK: [ethical.shop.org](http://ethical.shop.org)

### **Bulk orders:**

Wholesale discounts start at 35% for orders of 15 or more copies.

Contact: [workable@newint.org](mailto:workable@newint.org)



**New Internationalist**

In our regular feature the **Social Work Musketeer** starts off the new year by providing us with a recipe for living



Happy New Year to you all let's hope that 2018 is going to be a positive year for everyone. Stay positive, remain optimistic but most of all be kind to yourself.

January's Social Work Musketeer blog is a simple one peeps. I have written a Social Work recipe for keeping yourselves on track. Remember, you are unique and this is what makes you so special. A Degree may educate you, but no one can teach the wisdom you already possess. Do not underestimate your own wisdom and value your worth!

The greatest minds, thoughts and ideas did not start with books alone. Enjoy!

Ingredients:

- 1 Cup of you
- 1 Cup of humour
- 1 Cup of resilience
- 1 Tea spoon of assertiveness
- Add Reflection, Empathy and Kindness (REK)
- Mix together and bake for a lifetime

Firstly, add a cup of you into the mixing bowl. Do not take anything away, do not add any additives, stay true to yourself and place the whole of you into the mixing bowl. People spend a lifetime wondering if they have made a difference, Social Workers don't have that problem.

Now add humour and share a smile, a joke or laughter. What is good for the soul is good as a whole. If you run out of humour, replace with a smile until you're able to replenish your inner shelf and restock those missing ingredients. When we laugh we cannot be anxious at the same time. Don't take life too seriously!

Now sprinkle resilience into your mixture, not too much, as the sensitivity of your mix may become hardened. Look after your ingredients and your mix will look after you.

Remember, the stronger the

mix, the more it will rise. So if your cake has fallen flat don't panic and stay calm.

At this point you will need to add some assertiveness, a teaspoon full should be just enough. Your mix needs to challenge those disconcerted taste buds. If the world appears shady, then turn that shade into a light and let your mixture breathe.

Last but not least add some elements of REK. Reflection will make you consider your mix when it does not feel right. If at first you don't succeed, don't give up. Life is only a reflection of what we allow ourselves to see.

Then add a little empathy. If you understand your ingredients your cake is more relatable. Sharing your cake will break down those barriers and create a place of understanding. It's okay to share, as I say sharing is caring.

Now sprinkle some kindness all over your finished cake. Take care of your inner smile, value what you have learnt, understand it and never let anyone undervalue your worth. Happiness is knowing that there is a cake in the oven. Be your own kind of beautiful.

When your cake is ready, stand back and let it cool. When things are too hot you may get burnout. When your cake has cooled down then serve your cake to the world, add cream and enjoy the merits of your wonderful work.

Everyone you know is fighting a battle that you don't know about. Be Kind.

**Social Work Musketeer**