

### Working Conditions Edition

Once more SWU, BASW and Bath Spa University have been at the forefront of the largest piece of research ever completed for UK Social Work with 3400 Social Workers taking the time to complete the lengthy and in-depth survey. The results are expected but provide a significant overview of what we all need to do before we see more social workers leaving the profession.

The new “working conditions report” is indeed further and continued evidence that the social work sector is in crisis, it is clearly evident throughout the research report that those who work in the sector are incredibly committed to their work, to maintaining the highest of standards for service users, and for the most part, they want to find a way to remain working in social work. However positive working environments are necessary for social workers’ psychological and physical welfare and to keep social workers in posts.

If this is not addressed then we will be facing a crisis; impacting on the loss of skilled, well trained and necessary staff who impact daily on our lives from the work social workers do covering all ages and backgrounds. The Government needs to listen to this. Once you identify the issues resulting in low workplace morale, addressing the working conditions of social workers is necessary to keep morale from further declining.

Social work continues to be an incredibly challenging

profession - with high stress levels in the workplace, excessive caseloads, the challenges of hot-desking, covering for colleagues who are sick and onerous procedures and timescales. On top of all this we are hearing that first line managers are feeling squeezed on one side by pressure from their own managers and on the other side by pressure from trying to support the staff they manage.



**John McGowan**  
SWU General Secretary

To say that social work is a challenging profession is of course something of an understatement. We all know the impact on social workers of cut-backs to services and staffing. These are an on-going challenge and we will continue our battle to fight them. SWU looks forward to working with BASW to address some of the issues and shall be campaigning significantly on raising the actions identified.

#### Key findings from updated research

Working conditions of social workers are still operating at poor levels and adding

to high levels of stress, presenteeism, job dissatisfaction, and intentions both to leave the current job and the social work profession entirely.

- 46% of social workers are dissatisfied in 2018 compared to 41% in 2017
- Nearly 7/10 social workers attended work while so ill when they should have taken time off
- 60% looking to leave their current job within the next 15 months compared to 52% last year
- Nearly 4/10 respondents looking to leave the profession entirely
- Over 40% social workers exposed to aggressive or physically abusive behaviours at least once a month from service users

Social workers remain dedicated to their service users and clearly want greater resources available for them.

## The solution

- Strong leadership and wellbeing support - improve the level of demand on social workers to reduce stress and attrition rates by employing more social workers; ensuring a consistent approach to caseload allocation and enabling flexible and remote working through improved technology.
- Ensure time for reflective supervision to work through complex cases.
- Manageable caseloads - provide administrative support to enable social workers to focus on caseload.
- Professional development - ensure social workers' managers have completed management training.
- Reverse the blame culture and give social workers respect and positive support.

**John McGowan**  
**General Secretary**  
j.mcgowan@swu-union.org.uk

## Call for Nominations SWU Executive Committee

**(1 x England representative)**

**The Social Workers Union (SWU) is the trade union dedicated to representing the interests of social workers and the social work profession.**

There is currently a vacancy for an England Representative. All candidates for election must be nominated by another member of the union. The National Representative from England, nomination must be by a member within the relevant nation.

To stand for election a candidate must meet the conditions set out in Bye Laws 1.4 and 1.5, a copy of the SWU rules can be found at [www.swu-union.org.uk](http://www.swu-union.org.uk)

The Executive Committee is made up of nine members (at least one member each from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) and up to five others (UK representatives). The President of the union is elected by the executive from the UK representatives.

**SWU encourages applications from Students/Newly Qualified Social Workers and black and minority ethnic (BME) who are currently under-represented on the National Executive of SWU.**

Information regarding terms of office for this vacancy can be found at [www.swu-union.org.uk](http://www.swu-union.org.uk)

Candidates must complete a nomination form.

**The closing date for receipt of nominations is Friday 3rd December 2018.** The full timetable for elections can be found at [www.swu-union.org.uk](http://www.swu-union.org.uk)

Completed nomination forms must be accompanied by an election statement of no more than 500 words together with a head and shoulders colour photograph in a TIFF or JPEG format. These should be sent via email to: [swu-admin@swu-union.org.uk](mailto:swu-admin@swu-union.org.uk). Please note that nominees need to provide full contact details including a telephone number and email address.

Nomination forms and role descriptions are available from the SWU website at [www.swu-union.org.uk](http://www.swu-union.org.uk) or via email from [swu-admin@swu-union.org.uk](mailto:swu-admin@swu-union.org.uk) (0121 389 9248).

If you have any general queries about this process please contact the SWU Administration Manager on 0121 389 9248.

**SWU** Social  
Workers  
Union

# General Federation of Trade Unions



The General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU) concentrates on servicing the needs of specialist unions. It does this by providing courses, creating international union links, parliamentary links, undertaking research for its affiliated Unions and providing ongoing support and assistance to all members with additional support for General Secretaries.

The GFTU has 30 affiliates with a membership of just over 250,000 and describes itself as the "federation for specialist unions." The GFTU offers a range of courses, from foundation to more advanced with the majority free for SWU members. The new training catalogue is soon to be launched with even more courses covering a range of topics.

John McGowan, SWU General Secretary sits on the GFTU National Executive Governing Body with a committee elected to meet regularly to manage the work of GFTU. SWU is a proud member of the General Federal of Trade Unions (GFTU). This section will provide an opportunity to meet some of the other unions affiliated to the GFTU. Meet the Artists Union England with information provided by Theresa Easton, outgoing General Secretary:

---

## Who are Artists Union England (AUE) and what do they do?

AUE represent visual and applied artists, and artists with a socially engaged practice. AUE grew out of the coalition government's austerity measures in 2014. Established mainly by women artists who were determined to raise the bar for the profession, challenge entrenched exploitative employment practice and inequality.

Artists are usually self-employed sole traders, working in precarious jobs and exposed to high levels of exploitation. As art budgets have either shrunk or disappeared completely, artists are expected to make do with less money or work for free. Lack of transparency from commissioners, is leading to job opportunities advertised with no budgets, leaving the artist to submit budgets with the lowest bid rather than the highest quality of work. Imagine having a job interview and negotiating the rate of pay as part of the interview process - this is what an unregulated industry looks like.



The average annual earnings of an artist are under

Outgoing Secretary, Theresa Easton

£10,000. Current Universal Credit roll out will have a devastating impact on artists on low incomes. Artists already on incomes below a financial threshold are having their working tax credits removed. Membership is small, but growing all the time, with around 350 members to date. AUE have a National Executive Committee made up of 9 volunteers which include two Co-Chairs, a Treasurer and acting General Secretary. We are all practicing artists, making a living and working in the industry. I am one of the original founding members and have recently stepped down from the NEC in order to develop a national organiser role. Sheree Angela Matthews is our new General Secretary taking the trade union forward, building on its strengths of establishing conversations and collaborations, in order to maximise our effectiveness for members.

The management, day to day activities, membership building and casework are carried out solely by the NEC as volunteer workers. We pay for support from a freelance administrator and IT specialist and are working towards increasing these support hours to free NEC members time up to focus on growing the trade union.

On founding the trade union, we have had a mixed reception from employers, arts organisations and commissioners. The lack of trade union activity in the cultural and creative industries means some of these institutions have little experience of trade unions,

acknowledging workers' rights, negotiation and consultation. Some employers have fully endorsed rates of pay guidelines established by a members working group. These guidelines have become vital to both artists and commissioners as they form the basis for paying artists.

Like a lot of industries, the creative industries are not immune to outsourcing, privatisation, corporatisation and "Artwashing" (using the arts to impose unaccountable profiteering policies and community wrecking gentrification). AUE works closely with campaign groups and jointly with trade unions to challenge neoliberal policies, reverse Tory austerity and help politicise our membership.

Examples include AUE actively supporting the successful *Art Not Arms* campaign to drop sponsors BAE Systems for George Osborne's vanity project *The Great Exhibition of the North*. AUE actively campaign to remove the inappropriate appointment of Elisabeth Murdoch, daughter of the media mogul, to Arts Council England's National Council. Still in place, Murdoch has responsibility for public spending on the arts. With a legacy like the Murdoch empire under her belt, AUE believe there is no place for Murdoch in publicly funded institutions. We continue to oppose this appointment.

AUE may be small, but we have and will continue to affect positive change for our members and the wider community.

## 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)

# Robert Tressell

The latest in our series of articles highlighting those historical influences that have led us to our modern Trade Unions.



A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots

**SWU** Social Workers Union

Robert Tressell and the Ragged Trousered Philanthropists

Robert Tressell wrote "The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists" in Hastings between 1906 & 1910. Much of the book is based on his experiences of working in the town as a signwriter and decorator. Tressell was the pen name of Robert Noonan who was born in Dublin in 1870. He was brought up in Ireland and England but left to make a new life in South Africa where his daughter, Kathleen was born in 1892. He returned to England at the outbreak of the Boer War in 1901, and settled in Hastings with his widowed sister Adelaide.

Robert Tressell's book The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists is the first important working-class novel in English literature, written between 1906 and 1910 and first published posthumously, and very abridged, in 1914.

The working class has championed this novel about their experience and written from their own point-of-view like no other working-class novel in Britain.

In 1901, Tressell settled in Hastings and joined the then only Marxist group, the Social-Democratic Federation. Frequently unemployed, Tressell wrote the *Philanthropists*. He died of TB in a workhouse hospital in 1911 and was buried in a pauper's grave.

The transition from industrial capitalism to monopoly capitalism at the end of the 19th century, necessitates a change to the traditional novel plot. *Cash Nexus* replaces personal "stories" between members of opposed classes. Tressell portrays honestly typical characters in typical circumstances and develops a collective "hero", thereby revolutionising the genre and contributing to socialist realism in the English novel.

*The Philanthropists* presents an epic portrait of working-class existence in the early days of imperialism. For the first time, an impoverished group of workers takes centre-stage in an English novel. They are duped by what they read in *The Daily Obscurer* and Tressell castigates them for the 'philanthropic' acceptance of their destitution, their acquiescence that a good life is not "the likes of us" and that their children should inherit this lot.

## Robert Tressell and the Ragged Trousered Philanthropists

Robert Tressell (the pen name of Robert Noonan) was an Irish house painter, who worked in Hastings and died in poverty in Liverpool, in 1911. His *Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* is one of the most influential, and greatest, novels to deal with the world of work. Here one of his characters talks to the workmen about their problems, and the way forward:

'It is an admitted fact that about thirteen millions of our people are always on the verge of starvation. The significant results of this poverty face us on every side ... It is childish to imagine that any measure of Tariff Reform or Political Reform ... can deal with such a state of affairs as this ... You will still have to slave and drudge to gain a bare sufficiency of the necessities of life. You will still have to eat the same kind of food and wear the same kind of clothes and boots as now.



Your masters will still have you in their power to insult and sweat and drive. Your general condition will be just the same as at present because such measures as those are not remedies but red herrings, intended by those who trail them to draw us away from the only remedy, which is to be found only in the Public Ownership of the Machinery, and the Organisation of Industry for the production and distribution of the necessities of life, not for the profit of a few but for the benefit of all!

That is the next great change; not merely desirable, but imperatively necessary and inevitable!  
That is Socialism!

For more information or a free download of *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* from the Robert Tressell Society here: <https://www.1066.net/tressell/>

## Working Conditions

The working conditions that staff are exposed to are important considerations for employers and employees alike. Those working under positive working conditions are more satisfied in their jobs, perform better, make fewer mistakes, and are less likely to leave or go off due to stress and mental health sickness absence. From an organisational perspective this means more committed employees, and social workers in particular who can provide even greater support for their service users.

In the summer of 2018, Dr Ravalier re-ran the working conditions survey, which was first sent to all BASW and SWU members in the UK in the summer of 2017. The survey, which was responded to by over 3,400 UK social workers, looked at working conditions, and how these conditions influence various outcomes such as stress, presenteeism, and intentions to leave the profession. 2017 findings demonstrated social workers working under extremely poor working conditions, with these conditions subsequently impacting a number of other negative outcomes.

Findings from 2018 have, unfortunately but perhaps predictably, demonstrated that virtually all measures we included have worsened since last year. Therefore, working conditions (which consist of the number of demands social workers have, how much control they have at work, support from management, individual understanding of their role within an organisation, and how well the reasons for change are communicated) have worsened somewhat since 2017, with this year's findings showing that social working conditions are worse than 90%-95% of other UK employees. The only exception to this is peer support, which was found to be performing better than 2017 levels.

However, there were also a number of other worrying findings. Levels of stress were higher than the English average, and nearly half of all social workers are dissatisfied in their roles. Furthermore, 6 in 10 are looking to leave their current job, and nearly 4 in 10 looking to leave social work altogether. Furthermore, levels of presenteeism (i.e. going into work when



**Dr Jermaine Ravalier**

you are so ill that you should take time off of work) were high with two thirds admitting to doing so at least twice in the last 12 months. Finally, levels of negative behaviour and abuse experienced from service users were also high. Over a quarter of respondents receive abuse online (i.e. social media) from either service users or their family at least once a month, nearly two-thirds are exposed to abuse or aggressive words in person, and 4 in 10 are exposed to abuse words in person.

To be a little more specific, respondents described 'workload' as the biggest cause of stress, with this typified by having a caseload which is too high (or complex), and too much/repetitive paperwork. Respondents also wanted greater support from management and better (and more frequent) reflective supervision, which was particularly important. Furthermore physical working conditions were a problem for many, with hot-desking, lack of adequate IT/flexible working arrangements particular difficulties. Finally, however, respondents described that a lack of adequate resources (obviously closely related to the government's austerity agenda) was a particular stressor. This shows that, despite all of the above, social workers want the best for the people that they work with.

Since the 2017 work we have had a number of meetings with MPs to share the findings, and in May 2018 we had a debate in the House of Lords on the subject, and questions have been asked in parliament. BASW and SWU have jointly launched the *Respect for Social Work* campaign and we have spread the word at various events. Since the 2018 findings were launched at the Social Work Standing Conference we have arranged a parliamentary 'meet and greet' event to have parliamentarians, MPs, and Lords work on the working conditions pledge. I (Dr Ravalier) and colleagues are developing a wellbeing and

working conditions toolkit for social workers and social work employers, and we will launch this at a parliamentary event early in 2019. The toolkit will be available for download from the BASW website, so keep an eye out for future developments!

I, SWU and BASW are determined to improve working conditions for UK social workers, and will continue to work hard until we manage to do so!

**Dr Jermaine Ravalier**  
**Bath Spa University**

## Parliamentary Update on Working Conditions Campaign

Lien Watts (Head of the Advice and Representation Service/ SWU AGS) and I met with Helen Hayes MP, Labour, in Westminster on 9<sup>th</sup> October. I explained how the research came about and what it was aiming to look at. Lien described the main outcomes of the research project into the working conditions of Social Workers and related this to the experiences of the A and R team. In response to a question from Helen Hayes I explained that following a meeting with Lord Roy Kennedy of Southwark, he had instigated a debate in the House of Lords. Also Yvonne Fauvage MP, Labour, had raised the matter in the House of Commons. Helen Hayes suggested she would try to arrange a select committee inquiry into Social Work working conditions. She said she was hoping it would come off. She advised us to make links with the Labour front bench and ask for a possible debate in the House of Commons. Both Lien and I felt this was a very positive meeting and that Helen Hayes was genuinely interested and sympathetic to the problems affecting Social Workers in the workplace. Both Lien and I highlighted the dangers of Baby P situations arising and, as Lien pointed out, the problems affect safeguarding issues with the elderly as well as children and other vulnerable groups.



I then met with Clive Betts MP, Labour, on 17<sup>th</sup> October to discuss our campaign on working conditions for Social Workers as a result of the research undertaken by Dr Jermaine Ravalier, Reader in Psychology at Bath Spa University.

You may remember SWU was instrumental in creating a debate on this subject in the House of Lords led by Lord Roy Kennedy of Southwark. Clive Betts is regarded as a veteran of the House of Commons having been an MP for 26 years. He has served in a number of roles and is currently Chair of the Housing, Local Government and Communities Select Committee.

Also taking part in the meeting was Dr Ruth Allen, the Chief Executive of BASW, Dr. Jermaine Ravalier, author of the report and Lien Watts, Head of the Advice and Representation Service. Jermaine took the lead in talking about his research. "Things need to change," he said. Ruth followed asking about how we are going to bring about change adding that resources are part of it.

Clive Betts said there was a Select Committee Enquiry into Children's Services which was due to commence in January. It was expected to conclude in the Spring. It would, he said, be a real opportunity for the committee to look at working conditions, lack of resources, stress, etc. He would hope to invite us to give evidence to the enquiry .

Lien talked about the impact of a lack of resources and funding pressures on Councils from the perspective and experience of the Advice and Representation Service. "We will look at this in the enquiry," commented Mr Betts. Jermaine told an alarming story of a Social Work Manager who had seriously considered suicide because of the pressures he was under. Mr Betts went on to talk about Care Workers and the severe crisis society was experiencing, particularly in London. From the evidence he said that we have to increase taxes to pay for it. We all agreed that this was one of the most exploited group of workers in the UK.

I had previously asked for a select committee enquiry into working conditions but as been mentioned many of these issues will be addressed by their enquiry into Children's

Services. I then asked Mr. Betts if we could have a debate in the House of Commons on the Working Conditions of Social Workers. He said there were a number of ways to go about it. The enquiry will start in January and will have evidence sessions. The committee will report in the Spring. The Government then has two months to respond to the report. Mr Betts said members of SWU and BASW should contact their own members of Parliament to enlist their support.

The next meeting was with Liz Twist MP, Labour, who is a member of the Housing, Local Government and Communities Select Committee. Jermaine gave details of the research. Liz Twist replied that we see it all over; stress, strain, excessive workloads and lack of funding. "You don't need to convince me!" she said. Ruth and Lien spoke. Liz Twist informed us she would be attending a debate about social care that afternoon. In response to a question from me she mentioned a backbench debate. Ruth was talking about linking this into ADCS and ADAS. Liz Twist was clearly on our side.

**James Birchall**  
**SWU President**



James and Lien continue to be active with MPs



Improved working conditions  
and wellbeing for  
**social workers**



Improved working conditions  
and wellbeing for  
**social workers**

**46%**  
job  
dissatisfaction

**40%**  
exposed to  
aggressive  
behaviours at  
least once per  
month

**60%**  
looking to leave  
their job



**7/10**  
attend work  
whilst ill

**4/10**  
looking to leave  
the profession  
entirely



**Strong leadership**



**Fair pay and  
careers**



**Reduced  
bureaucracy**



**Professional  
development**



**Wellbeing support**



**Quality time with  
individuals and  
families**



**Manageable  
caseloads**



*UK Social Workers: Working Conditions and Wellbeing (August 218) Bath Spa University*

**BASW**  
The professional association for  
social work and social workers

**SWU**  
Social  
Workers  
Union

**BASW**  
The professional association for  
social work and social workers

**SWU**  
Social  
Workers  
Union



## Why I am supporting SWU

Dr Neil Thompson is an independent writer, educator and adviser. He is an ambassador for BASW Cymru and a Lifetime Achievement Award holder. He edits a free e-newsletter at [www.humansolutions.org.uk/bulletin](http://www.humansolutions.org.uk/bulletin) and his website and blog are at [www.NeilThompson.info](http://www.NeilThompson.info)

As a long-standing trade unionist with a strong commitment to social justice I welcomed the development of the Social Workers Union. I have been pleased and proud to be able to support the union by being involved in the annual conferences, by giving SWU members a significant discount on my online learning resources and by being involved in the training of union contacts.

Social work is a difficult and demanding job and we need to be on our mettle if we are to do it effectively without creating problems for ourselves in terms of stress, burn out or just plain exhaustion. For many years we talked about the need for both staff care and self-care. Staff care meant that, if employers wanted to get the best results from their staff, they needed to make sure that their employees were well supported, valued and safe. Self-care meant that we have to be

realistic in terms of balancing our own needs against those of the people we serve and/or our employers and our profession more broadly. These days, both these elements (staff care and self-care) tend to go under the heading of workplace well-being, an emerging philosophy that is premised on the idea that everyone benefits from workplaces being positive and supportive environments.

Part of the reason for the development of this approach has been the increasing pressure in workplace settings. Neoliberal thinking, with its emphasis on allowing the market to shape economic and social policy, has been dominant for some time now, resulting in higher levels of inequality, greater pressure on businesses to be profitable and the expectation that slimmed down public services can achieve more with less, and that the voluntary and community sectors can fill the gaps created by the underfunding of public services. All this adds up to immense pressure on staff and managers, and, potentially, greater conflict between staff and managers.



Dr Neil Thompson

The net result is that the modern workplace is a highly pressurised environment, with a high proportion of people struggling to respond effectively to the demands made on them. The result can so easily be stress and related health problems, poor performance, blocks to learning, increased conflict and ill-feeling, higher levels of sickness absence, low morale and a general sense of malaise. So often I have come across what I call the stress cycle, which describes how excessive pressures can lead to problems, those problems lead to increased pressure and thus more stress, and round and round the cycle goes, creating untold problems, not only for the individuals concerned, but also for many people around them.

There are no magic answers to these problems, but the least we can do is pull together and support one another through these difficult times. And that is, of course, a key part of what trade unionism is all about. We are fortunate to now have a union that is dedicated specifically to social work issues and concerns, a union that works closely with BASW, our professional association, to create the best set of circumstances for social work to thrive and flourish so that we can do the best we possibly can to address the needs of the people we serve. As I have said time and time again, we make life very difficult for ourselves if we try to empower others without feeling empowered ourselves. SWU is a key part of that empowerment, as it offers the opportunity for us to take the term 'union' literally, to bring people together.

**Dr Neil Thomson**

Learning with Dr Neil Thompson just got even easier for SWU members! Thompson's Avenue Consulting for 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](mailto:neil@avenueconsulting.co.uk).



## Whatever legal help you need, we're there for you.

We are friendly, professional and affordable. And we work across the Trade Union movement.

In addition to our **free personal injury service**, SWU members receive **exclusive benefits** including:

- ▶ **10%** discount for wills and probate services
- ▶ **10%** discount for residential conveyancing and commercial property services
- ▶ **10%** discount for family and matrimonial law services
- ▶ **10%** discount for criminal/motoring offences and court litigation services

Visit [morrishsolicitors.com/socialworkersunion](https://morrishsolicitors.com/socialworkersunion) to find out more  
or call **033 3344 9600**

# Union Contacts Update

Our November Induction Day for new Union Contacts in Manchester is now fully booked and I'd like to thank all of the wonderful SWU members who contacted me requesting further details. If you missed the chance to attend this time, please do keep a look out for our next event which will take place early next year, venue to be confirmed.

Union Contact Induction Days are advertised in our Newsletter, online and via social media, and they are a great way for SWU members to learn more about the Union Contact role, meet the SWU team and, importantly, meet each other. It's an informal gathering of around fifteen people which includes presentations, activities and information relating to trade union recruitment, campaigning and activism. Prior Union knowledge and experience is great but not essential - more important is a keenness to get active and involved in your Union.

Many of our current Union Contacts are taking advantage of the excellent free training opportunities available through the General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU). The majority of the courses are free to all SWU members and I'd urge anyone interested to follow the link below to have a look at what they offer: <https://user-tkb9xx.cld.bz/Education-for-Action>

We will soon have a SWU Updates website which will be accessible via a link from our main website page. This will be an exciting addition to our online communications and provides us with an opportunity to keep SWU members up to date with meetings and activities. Watch this space!

I have recently received a request to meet with a fellow-trade unionist, Helene Geelhard, a practicing social worker and a workplace steward for "Vision", a trade union in Sweden. Helene is keen to exchange information and ideas in relation to how social workers are organised and the

circumstances in which they work, both in Sweden and in the UK. This should be an interesting meeting and I will provide an update following it.

I'd like to remind Union Contacts that we are planning to have a "Union Contact Corner" in future SWU newsletters and we look forward to receiving input from current and future UCs. Spreading the word is an important part of the UC role, and contributing to your Newsletter provides you with a vital opportunity to do so. A paragraph or so will be acceptable for submission, and we'd like comments about, for example, what inspired you to become involved; why you feel it's important to strengthen and develop your Union; or discussing the benefits of dual-membership with BASW. These are all important points that will inspire SWU members.

If you have a few minutes to write a paragraph on one or all of the above points, or if you have any other comment you'd like to add to "UC Corner" please send them to me at [carol.reid@swu-union.org.uk](mailto:carol.reid@swu-union.org.uk).

Finally, I am very pleased to be able to say that, as at the end of October, we have an overall total of **42 Union Contacts**. Around half have attended our Induction Days and the remainder will be attending the next and subsequent dates. All of you should be very proud of this excellent achievement which shows that we are growing from strength to strength. Please continue to spread the word and encourage your colleagues to join SWU and become active. YOU are the Union, and TOGETHER we are STRONG.

**Carol Reid**  
**National Organiser**

**On the following page are some recent pictures from SWU AGM and Conference where Union Contacts spoke about the benefits of being part of the union and belonging to BASW.**





**THE SPECIALIST UNION  
FOR SOCIAL WORKERS**

**Membership  
only £20  
for BASW  
Members**

**–**

**SWU and BASW  
together**