

A Message from SWU General Secretary John McGowan



I am pleased to share that I will be standing again for election to the position of General Secretary for a further term. I was absolutely elated to have been elected as General Secretary of the Social

Workers Union in 2016 and

being part of this union's terrific development since then has been an honour; particularly with the full support of our Executive Committee and from SWU colleagues. Importantly, I am aware that as a member organisation there is an opportunity for a SWU member to stand in any GS re-election therefore, I will keep any additional election statement until the call for nominations period is over.

It is now noticeably clear that SWU and BASW are separate organisations which maintain and promote their distinct identities, qualities, and strengths. For me, a professional association is an organisation established to unite and inform people working in the same profession. There are many advantages to joining an association as we all know as BASW members. It can also offer many further member opportunities linked to advice and representation, but it has no legal right to provide employment representation which was the very

reason why SWU was formed in 2011 as some employers were choosing not to recognise BASW and refusing to allow A&R Officers to represent BASW members. Thus, your present SWU membership is important as only trade unions have the statutory right to represent their members.

As a paid up SWU member you have guaranteed access to all the legal employment conditions held under The Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 and importantly, the legal right for accompaniment. It has additional benefits and a real uniqueness over other unions such as: It is the only UK trade union: **exclusively for and run by social workers and all SWU officials are social workers.**

As a member of the General Federation of Trade Unions we are developing every year in strength and member numbers and I look forward to seeing this growth increase further as membership continues to increase. In these challenging times our members need the best protection possible. I believe that together, BASW and SWU provide the best protection and advice for social workers, from social workers.

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

Making a Stand

SWU Chair explains her rationale in standing for the forthcoming Senedd Elections on May 6th 2021

Me ...

Born and brought up in the South Wales Valleys from a proud working class heritage, typically poor education so left school at 16; hence followed a vocational route into health and social care. I left Wales at 18, to undertake Learning Disability nurse training; during this time large institutions were beginning to close. This was 1984, an avid George Orwell reader, the year did not disappoint!

By March my family were part of the Miners' Strike, my father was previously a shop steward; the politics was raw, tough and unnecessarily harsh. Social Workers were expected to be 21 and have 'A' levels, both out of my reach at the time.

Later, it was the Human Rights issue pulled me into social work. I remain actively aware of the policy responses that have been developed over the past 30 years around understanding and responding to discrimination, abuse and neglect of vulnerable/at risk citizens. It is this issue that I have a PHD proposal that I am developing. With a very young family I undertook my Diploma in Social Work by working nights at weekends balanced with returning to a full-time role as manager of Short-Break service during the summer months. I have worked as well as studied and gained a Masters in Social Care Law, studying and researching in tandem with working. I have now worked full-time for 35 years in both health and Social Care and needed union representation formally on two occasions and informally on the same number during my 22 year Social Work career.

Social Work and Activism

Social Work is so distinct and specific that the unions I was seeking support from were by their own admission 'out of their depth'.
So, despite always



maintaining union membership - due to financial struggles this was always with a least expensive union. In work poverty is a reality as is precarious employment, this can be associated with caring responsibilities or as in my situation when you have made disclosures following raising legitimate concerns about risk in local authorities, the organisational response is to deny or victimise. Unsurprisingly, nothing fundamental changed within the local authority; some Social Workers retired, others became ill and those whom remained live in fear and an uncomfortable adjustment. I left incurring break in pension, continuous service status and became an agency worker. I also left the union and through word of mouth I joined SWU /BASW respectively. I instantly became an active Union Contact, next representing Wales on the SWU Executive Committee and now Chair of SWU.

Standing for the Senedd

The need for collaboration and partnership - something that SWU and BASW know all about is a key Social Work skill in harnessing change/as change agents. I attended TUSC's (Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition) Conference in November last year and have been keeping up-dated with the network of activists as the local government and National (in Scotland and Wales) elections approach. I expressed an interest in standing - spurred on by the deleterious 1 per cent increase announced at the beginning of March, clearly juxtaposed by the billions spent on a failed Track and Trace system in England (<https://www.bmj.com/content/370/bmj.m2805>)

fortunately local government and NHS have done this in both Scotland and Wales, and it would seem Scotland are offering a 4% increase.

Our Key Workers are not just health and social care workers they are; Unpaid Carers, Shop Workers, Drivers (food and transport), Cleaners, Teachers and the Communities who have pulled us together. I feel that if we vote the same we will get the same - this is why I feel compelled to stand to join as a collective voice. Standing up for no more cuts to public services. It is a watershed moment and the reason I am standing in Mid and West Wales Senedd Elections. I am standing because I believe that Wales deserves better.

As Social Workers we have seen first-hand the devastating impact of the past 10 years of cuts to public services; a thing called 'Austerity'. COVID-19 has hit Wales hardest, the impact of poverty and cuts to the poorest communities cannot be ignored. The increase of poverty, homelessness, youth unemployment and poorer health outcomes for Wales cannot be excused. The Government and the Senedd's decision to attempt to defend the 1% pay rise for the NHS is a national shame and I intend to get a better deal for Wales' NHS and Social Care Workers. Everything has changed in respect of how we are able to interact and undertake our lives. My worry is that nothing will change. The excuses have already begun *"no other public sector employee is receiving a pay rise" and that 1 percent was "the most we think we can afford."*¹ The absence of Social Care in the recent budget yet again kicks any real reform in the long grass as another round of Austerity is on the horizon. Health and Social Care in Wales is devolved and still the cuts have happened.

The lived reality

I have spent the past 15 years relocating from South Wales to Cardigan, an interesting journey that has led me to work as both Social Worker and Manager in the local authorities of Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire.

This has given me a unique and valuable insight into the needs and challenges of the

Mid and West Wales Constituency I seek to represent. COVID-19 has shown we are all connected and need proper public services, support and inclusion - 'until we are all safe none of us are safe'. Uniting the long proud history of Unions and unity TUSC is a true coalition with ONE aim to protect public services for us ALL. As a representative for Mid and West Wales I will be working on all fronts to support, advocate, articulate for a fairer society. Particularly, education, rural poverty, food poverty and equal access to healthcare resources. My experience, skills and knowledge is well suited to actively listening and representing the constituents of the region.

I will be of course maintaining my very proud honorary position as SWU Chair.

Carys Phillips
SWU Chair

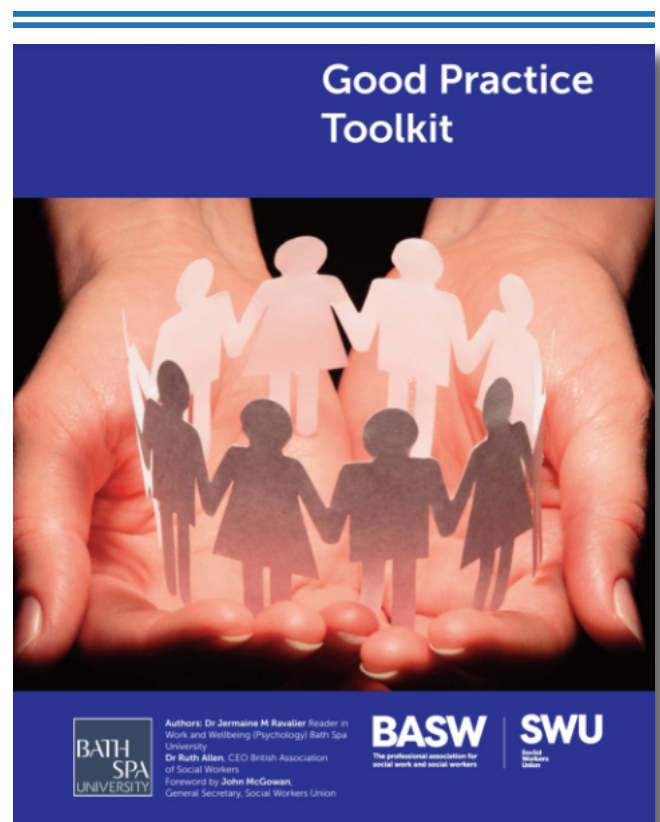
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www.tusc.org.uk

¹ Nadine Dorries in <https://www.politico.eu/article/nhs-pay-rise-british-government-pitiful/>

accessed 23/3/2021



Compliments

It is always great to hear from our members and thanks goes to our SWU Trade Union and A&R officers who continue to support the membership with their knowledge and skills.

- “Excellent support and advice ... given during this process.”
- “I just wanted to say a huge thank you for all your time, support, encouragement and guidance you have given me in recent weeks in order to pursue my grievance against I had nothing to be nervous about because you got a really good grip on my case!”
- “I have spoken about the commitment you have shown in relation to my case to everyone. I’m sure you this is the professional manner in which you work full stop.”
- “Thank you for your support yesterday. You really understood the issues I am facing in the workplace and you intervened at the right times.”
- “Thank you for everything you are doing on my behalf, I appreciate it more than you can imagine.”
- “I am writing to say the service has been a fantastic help to me. My representative did an excellent job. She was very professional, supportive, reliable, trustworthy and a great advocate who provided me with very good advice during a difficult time.
- I would also like to mention [her colleague] who I spoke to on several occasions while she was on leave. [He] was very professional, helpful and also provided excellent advice.”
- “Thank you to [my union reps] and the service for all the help. It was much appreciated.
- “Thank you very much for your support. This was a risky working situation but with your support this ended up positive, if I did not get your support the working conditions would not have improved.”
- “I would like [my rep] to be acknowledged for the fantastic service he provided in supporting me through a very difficult time.”
- “My whole experience from beginning to end was fantastic. At the time where things were very difficult for me in the work place, every person I spoke to made me feel instantly reassured and confident in the service being provided. I cannot praise enough ... my allocated officer for his sensitivity, support and encouragement. He represented me ensuring that the best outcome was achieved. Thank you!”
- “I've felt supported throughout my experience, listened to, difficulties acknowledged and have valued this experience, thank you.”
- “I have been very happy with the service received. Communication was regular and high quality. I felt that I was listened to and understood at a time that was very difficult for me. My allocated worker was great throughout from the progress of my issue to its conclusion.”
- “ My representative believed in me and more importantly was able to empathise with the issue. She was the right and appropriate person. Thank you ... for an outcome!”

- “I was very satisfied with the support I received. Always prompt, always empathic, from duty and from my rep. All of those I talked to got a good grasp of the problem very quickly. [My representative] advocated for me very well with my employers and was effective in supporting me and working towards a satisfactory resolution. I am very grateful to be a member of the union.”
- “Managed well and professionally.”
- “My advisor was knowledgeable, supportive and very helpful in a challenging situation.”
- “I specifically would like to thank my Union Rep ... for her professionalism and support. I felt she knew the legal aspects of employment law and ACAS guidance inside and out, which is in no small part to my claim going forward to an Employment Tribunal for unfair dismissal.”
- “Thank you so much I could not have achieved such an amazing outcome without your guidance, faith and support.”
- “I just wanted to send a final e-mail thanking you for all your support during my employment issue ... It was a difficult time for me and you and the union provided high quality advice for me throughout reaching what I feel was ultimately the best solution for me personally. I am now in a better place mentally and physically and that is the most important outcome.”
- “Once again, thank you to you and your colleagues at the SWU for all the assistance offered. I would highly recommend your services, and as always promote to anyone the benefits of membership.”
- “I really do not think I could have got to this stage without your commitment to advocate on my behalf, encouragement and empathy around my circumstances, representation at the various meetings and input to the numerous documents in relation to the grievance and appeals process.”
- “This is a new beginning for me in so many ways and thank you again for helping me to get there.”
- “I have nothing but praise for her and am very grateful that because of her work, I am going forward to an Employment Tribunal in July.”
- “Thanks again for all of your advice and support along the way. I have been so grateful to have been a member of the SWU.”

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.

SWU Updates: <http://swu-updates.org.uk/>

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

Union Contact Scheme Update

SWU National Organiser & Union Contact Scheme Manager, Carol Reid, is in conversation with two recently recruited SEWU Union Contacts - Chrissie Beatty, a Social Worker in adult social care working in a busy community team in Bournemouth; and Gordon Edwards, a Student Social Worker at Glasgow Caledonian University

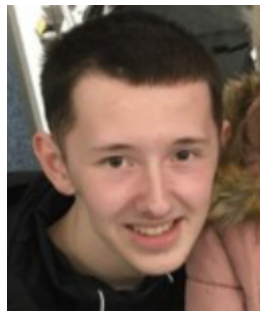


Carol: *What inspired you to become a SWU Union Contact?*

Chrissie: I went to the SWU conference in 2018 after taking part in the student essay competition and felt so inspired by the people I met there that I wanted to become more involved. Union members were talking about how to tackle issues that I really cared about - austerity, working conditions, equality etc, and I knew this was an organisation that could bring about real change and I needed to be a part of that.



Gordon: I was inspired to become an SWU Union Contact as I have always believed in the principles of advocacy and really believed I could be making a difference to my colleagues who were also student social workers - helping to signpost them to the right resources if they had any disciplinary issues, as well as helping them access the professional support service if there was any wellbeing issues.



Carol: *Why do you think it's important to join a Union and get active?*

Gordon: I think it is very important to join a union like the Social Workers Union because it can help develop awareness of activism

and the role it plays in our society, and how it also promotes change from a political level.

Chrissie: Social care is in crisis; it is overlooked and underfunded and the value of social work is not appreciated by the government and society as a whole. Only by coming together, can we amplify our voices into one to bring about changes.

Carol: *How do you promote SWU in your Union Contact role?*

Chrissie: Promoting SWU when everyone is working at home has been a challenge. I began by telling friends and colleagues that work across the local authority about my role, and they have been sharing information within their teams. I am in the process of setting up a SWU group on Microsoft Teams to provide a portal for updates and events, as well as a place to share ideas and support each other.

Gordon: I promote SWU in my Union Contact role by regularly informing my colleagues on my course about the existence of the Social Workers Union, the benefits of membership, and by ensuring that I can send them merchandise to advise them of the benefits of being part of a specialist union dedicated to social workers.

Carol: *What support have you received from SWU to successfully undertake the role?*

Gordon: I receive regular contact from my union contact manager advising of the continuous professional development opportunities available to me, as well as regular e-mails to advise me of the ways that I can promote activism within my

course by helping to recruit members. I can also access the professional support service if I have any wellbeing issues that might affect my role as a Union Contact.

Chrissie: I was very nervous about taking on the role of Union Contact because I had no experience of doing anything similar. However, SWU provided me with online training to help me learn more about SWU and the role of the Union Contact, I've also been given leaflets and other literature. Carol is always on hand if I have any questions or need advice.

Carol: *SWU is 10 years old this year and we've come a long way collectively since 2011. As an integral member of SWU how would you like to see your Union develop in the next 10 years?*

Chrissie: Over the next 10 years, my hopes for SWU are that membership will continue to grow and SWU will be at the forefront of discussions

with the decision makers, about issues affecting social work and the people we support.

Gordon: I would like to see lecturers from universities promote the SWU union during induction of new students and actively promote union membership. I would like to see the union develop closer links with universities and students as well as qualified and newly qualified social workers.

If Gordon and Chrissie have inspired you to become a SWU Union Contact in your workplace or university, please get in touch with carol.reid@swu-union.org.uk for further details about our current online induction process.

Carol Reid
National Organiser &
Union Contact Scheme Manager
carol.reid@swu-union.org.uk

Captain Sir Tom Moore (1920-2021)

Tina Peterson, SWU Union Contact and Executive Member, shares some personal thoughts regarding Captain Tom Moore.

As the very first National Day of Reflection passed on 23rd March 2021, many of us will have reflected on this past year with memories that will last all our lives. I'd like to pause for a moment to share one of my personal reflections.

It has been an incredibly difficult and tough year as we navigate and experience our lives during a worldwide pandemic. We have seen and heard things we never imagined, and the impact of our experiences will affect us all in many different ways. One truth is certain; human connection and hope has never been more important as we all try to adjust to a new reality.

My personal reflections included Captain Sir Tom Moore, the inspirational British Army Veteran whose personal challenge to walk 100 lengths of his garden raised a staggering £32.8 million pounds for the NHS, who sadly passed away last month from Covid-19 age 100.

I would therefore like to pay tribute to Captain Sir Tom; you are a legend and will be remembered forever. And as we look to the future with our own personal hopes and dreams, I'd like to quote his recognisable, inspirational words

“Tomorrow will be a good day”

Rest In Peace Captain Sir Tom.



Tina Peterson

Please sign the petition

Social workers should feel safe at work - petition launched

BASW and SWU have together launched a petition, asking the Government and Opposition to back an amendment to the Police, Crime and Sentencing Bill which would give social workers in England and Wales the same protections from assault whilst on duty that other public sector professionals have. The situation is different in Scotland, where the Emergency Workers (Scotland) Act 2005 extends protections to social workers enforcing child protection orders or carrying out mental health assessments.

The Police, Crime and Sentencing Bill (hereafter the Police Bill) currently going through Westminster contains a number of proposed changes to legislation that BASW and SWU are opposed to. The impact that these proposals would have on the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) community, such as criminalising unauthorised encampments without providing sufficient authorised sites, would be a severe breach of their human rights and fails to recognise their identity and culture.

The Bill also strengthens police powers to tackle non-violent protests that are viewed to have a disruptive effect on the public or Parliament, both of which are a direct violation of the right to protest. Protesting is not supposed to be convenient or given with the permission of a Government, it is an action that all individuals, groups and communities are entitled to.

Buried within the text of the Bill are also some positive proposals, for example the Bill closes the legal loophole for a person in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with under 18s who they are responsible for.

This Bill further enhances the Assaults on Emergency Workers (2018) Act which creates an additional offence to assault a number of frontline emergency workers including paramedics and those who work in the fire service.

Social workers were not included in the 2018 Act, and this new Police Bill provides the opportunity for Parliament to right this wrong.

Social workers often face threats, verbal and physical harassment, and assault, and they deserve the same protections as other frontline emergency workers.

The Police Bill will be at Committee Stage in May, which is where MPs can submit amendments to the content of the Bill and those amendments are then debated and voted on. This amendment stage is an opportunity to use our voice to influence the contents of the legislation and seek to improve it. This is why we want to add social workers to the list of professions that it is an additional offence to assault. Social workers are on the front line and are often an emergency responder in incredibly sensitive and volatile circumstances.

Social workers are entitled to parity of esteem with other public sector professionals such as health workers in the NHS. This is not an attempt to penalise those individuals who are genuinely vulnerable but a protection for social workers knowing that they enjoy the same legal status as other professionals in similar situations.

While BASW and SWU remain opposed to many aspects of the Bill, we also think all social workers deserve to feel safe at work, and that is what we are campaigning for.

Petition

As a result, we have launched a petition that we are asking people to sign in support of this campaign, so that we can stress to Members of Parliament that social workers are often at risk and need as much protection that can be offered.

You can sign the petition here:
<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/580431>

The GFTU Young Members' Weekend

Held every year, Young Members' Development Weekend 2020 promotes trade unions to young people and shows how unions are relevant to their lives at work and beyond. It is an opportunity for General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU) affiliated unions to campaign on the most important issues for young workers, give a platform to their organising activities and demonstrate the value that young members bring to the trade union movement.

John McGowan, SWU General Secretary highlights that *"the GFTU Young Members' Weekend has established itself as one of the most exciting, high impact Labour Movement events to inspire younger workers to understand more about their unions, the labour movement and the challenges we face politically and in the workplace. It is a high octane event where SWU members will meet other young activists and learn together in an engaging way, with great support and a 'can do' approach so that you can really make a difference in workplaces in the future."*

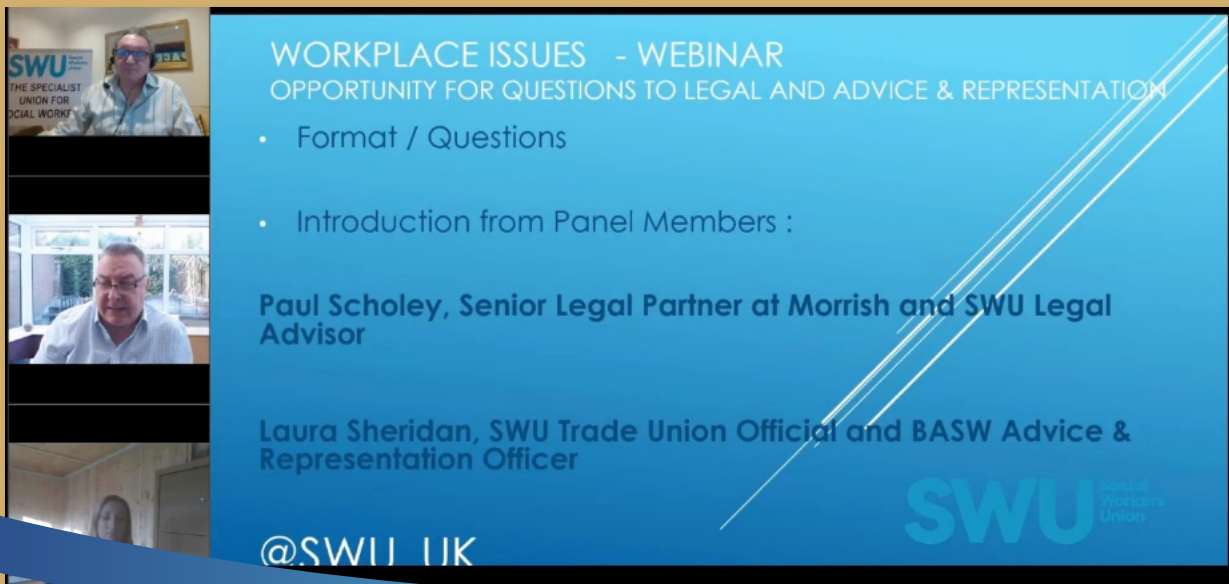
The event is fully funded by the GFTU who will cover receipted transport and all learning materials, meals, and overnight accommodation. The GFTU Young Members' Weekend - Fully Funded and is free to SWU members and SWU Social Work Students members aged 30 years of under are eligible to apply for a place.

The dates are **Friday 18th - Sunday 20th June 2021** at the fantastic Quorn Grange Hotel in Leicestershire. To apply for a place please contact j.mcgowan@swu-union.org.uk. The deadline for applications is strictly June 1st at 12 noon.

SWU Webinar – Workplace issues

On 31st March the Social Workers Union (SWU) held another webinar, offering social workers an opportunity to talk to SWU directly about workplace issues - and hear from a panel of Advice Representation Officers and legal experts. The next Webinar is scheduled for Wednesday 7th July 6pm – 7pm and links will be shared soon to book this.

The recording of the webinar is now available to watch online.
<https://www.basw.co.uk/talk-swu-workplace-issues-webinar>



WORKPLACE ISSUES - WEBINAR
OPPORTUNITY FOR QUESTIONS TO LEGAL AND ADVICE & REPRESENTATION

- Format / Questions
- Introduction from Panel Members :

Paul Scholey, Senior Legal Partner at Morrish and SWU Legal Advisor

Laura Sheridan, SWU Trade Union Official and BASW Advice & Representation Officer

@SWU UK

SWU Social Workers Union

Formal Notice

SWU 2021 Annual General Meeting Friday 24th September 2021

The 2021 Annual General Meeting of the Social Workers Union will be held online and joining instructions can be found here:
www.basw.co.uk/events

As per SWU rules, the SWU Executive shall have power to make and provide a provision for an AGM meetings to be held using electronic means, and to provide for electronic communication for members, including facilitating provision for members to vote and speak by appropriate electronic means.

The timetable is as follows:

30th July 2021:

Deadline for receipt of motions

3rd September 2021:

Notice of any proposed amendment to rules given in writing to members

17th September 2021:

Deadline for amendments to motions

Motions must be signed by 10 members and submitted to the Executive Committee by the above date.

Amendments to motions must also be signed by 10 members.

Please visit www.swu-union.org.uk to register your attendance. Entry to this event is FREE for SWU Members.

We are always willing to assist union members with the drafting of motions.

Please send an email to joanne.marciano@swu-union.org.uk for such assistance. Motions should be submitted by email to joanne.marciano@swu-union.org.uk

Membership numbers must be stated and will be checked.



Call for General Secretary Nominations

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

SWU is now seeking nominations for its General Secretary. The General Secretary will be employed for 30 hours per week and serve for a 5-year period.

General Secretary

The General Secretary is the most senior staff position within SWU and the selected candidate will play a key role in taking the union forward in the next step of its evolution.

The General Secretary shall act as the Chief Executive Officer to the Executive Committee and assist the SWU Executive in the formulation of, and implementation of SWU's values and strategic goals leading to the organisation achieving its set objectives. This is an opportunity for an individual who is passionate about the success of the Social Workers Union and Social Work in general and who has a track record of leadership and working in partnership with other organisations.

The successful candidate will take up office on the 23rd October 2021 and shall hold office for no more than five years.

To stand for election a candidate must meet the conditions set out in Bye Laws 2.4 and 2.5. A copy of the SWU rules and details of the application process can be found at www.swu-union.org.uk.

Nomination forms, role description and person specification are available from the SWU website at www.swu-union.org.uk or from Joanne Marciano, joanne.marciano@swu-union.org.uk (0121 389 9248).

Please contact Joanne Marciano if you would like to speak to someone informally about standing for this position.

Can an Employer Require Employees to be Vaccinated?



In this article our experienced [Employment Law Solicitors](#) explain the Health and Safety Disciplinary at work.

Can you be disciplined for not complying with health and safety procedures at work?

In the wake of the pandemic, health and safety in the workplace has become a significant focus. Employers are trying to implement social distancing and COVID-19 compliant rules, thus may look to enforce disciplinary procedures against employees found to be failing to comply.

Employers can take disciplinary action for breaches of health and safety in the workplace. Where employees fail to cooperate with reasonable management instructions, disciplinary procedures can be commenced. Whether an instruction is reasonable will be determined by a variety of factors, current legislation will be considered, as well as the degree of risk to the employee and others and the reason for non-compliance. Employers have a duty of care towards all staff (including themselves), and where employees seriously breach health and safety measures, it is likely any disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, will be considered to be reasonable.

Where health and safety protocols are not followed by reason of an employee's disability, the employer may have to consider making reasonable adjustments depending on the policy in place and the possible disadvantage to the employee. Disciplinary proceedings for non-compliance that occurs as a result of a disability, may be found to be discriminatory.

Can an employer require employees to be vaccinated?

Potential issues may arise in relation to the COVID-19 vaccine, which at the moment is not mandatory by law. ACAS have provided guidance that states "Employers should support staff in getting the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine, but they cannot force staff to be vaccinated." Depending on the workplace, some employees may be required to

get the vaccine in order to perform their role, and as such disciplinary action may be taken if refusal is not reasonable. Again, employers should be considerate of discriminating against employees who have health conditions that mean they cannot take the vaccine, or those for whom the vaccine might otherwise be unsuitable.

The reasonableness of health and safety dismissals was discussed in the case of Newbound v Thames Water Utilities Limited.

Mr Newbound breached newly implemented health and safety procedures in relation to wearing breathing apparatus at work. He was dismissed on the grounds of gross misconduct, after 34 years of service. The Court considered the reasonableness of his dismissal and held, firstly, that where rules are newly introduced, employers must ensure that employees understand the significance of such rules or policies and are trained accordingly. Mr Newbound was not made aware of the disciplinary consequences of not using the safety equipment in question, nor had the employer ensured health and safety regulations were followed properly prior to his dismissal. The fairness of the treatment was also considered: Mr Newbound's colleague received a written warning, the disparity between the treatment of the two contributed to the finding of unfair dismissal. However, it is key to note that despite Mr Newbound being held to have been unfairly dismissed, a reduction in compensation of 40% was applied due to contributory fault.

Health and safety cases tend to be tricky. Employers are quick to take the moral high ground about the safety of employees and the public (as well they often might) and Tribunals are not quick to criticise employers who are, on the face of it, looking to protect the workforce or others. But Newbound shows that not every error of health and safety must necessarily lead to dismissal - and long and unblemished service should be taken into account.



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 to find out more
or call **033 3344 9600**

Campaign Corner (April)

SWU / Austerity Action Group Renumeration Campaign

Ongoing campaign about the extent of people who suffer as a result of the unfair rules and the extent of regional variation in enforcement.

SWU / Bath Spa University

Bath Spa University and SWU presently working together on a new piece of research which seeks to develop and make available best practise supervision for social workers and related professionals.

Smacking Ban Campaign

SWU working with a wide cohort of stakeholders and Parliamentarians to discuss the smacking ban campaign, next steps and how we can work together. Presently looking at a House of Lord's Members Bill.

SWU / BASW - Assaults on emergencies workers campaign and petition

The petition now has over 12,600 signatures

The petition is asking the Government to submit an amendment to the Police, Crime and Sentencing Bill, to make it an additional offence to assault social workers when on duty. Currently, professions that it is an additional offence to assault include all frontline emergency workers – except social workers.

SWU Recent Blogs (April)

World Autism Awareness Week 2021

<https://www.basw.co.uk/media/news/2021/apr/swu-blog-world-autism-awareness-week-2021>

Smacking Ban Campaign: Amendment to the Domestic Abuse Bill - protecting adults and children from violence

<https://www.basw.co.uk/media/news/2021/apr/smacking-ban-campaign-amendment-domestic-abuse-bill-%E2%80%93-protecting-adults-and>

SWU's Upcoming 10th Anniversary

The Social Workers Union is pleased to announce plans for our 10th Anniversary celebration. 21st June 2011 is the day that BASW set up SWU and we will be hosting an online celebration that runs for the ten days leading up to this date.

Join us on June 12 - 21 for an online showcase celebrating the history and future of SWU. Each day we will publish new content that reflects on SWU's past, how far we have come as a trade union, and where we're going. You will see video messages and blogs from current and former SWU Executives, the Advice and Representation team, the first ever member of SWU, SWU campaigns, and more.

During this celebration we will also announce the winners of the SWU Assignment essay competition for World Social Work Day 2021. This competition remains open for entries until 4th June so social work students in the UK still have a chance to enter to win one of four £500 grants.

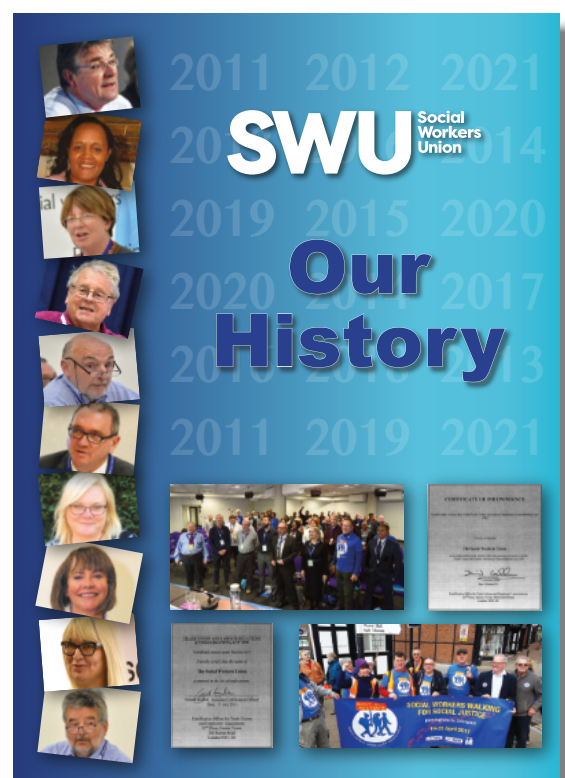
10 years is an exciting milestone and you are all invited to enjoy the virtual festivities!

SWU was set up on 21st June 2011

"Pursuant to the resolution by BASW Council on 21 June 2011, it was resolved by BASW to establish a trade union which is to be called 'The Social Workers Union' and to adopt rules for such trade union" (BASW AGM, 2011). The Social Workers Union was therefore established on 21st June 2011.

The fact that BASW did not have a statutory right to represent members at disciplinary hearings meant that sometimes employers would refuse to allow BASW to represent. The only way to gain statutory rights was to become a trade union and for BASW members to join SWU. Importantly, SWU has a legal right for its A&R officers to attend and represent at disciplinary and grievance procedures unlike BASW, offering an extra layer of support for its members.

John McGowan, SWU General Secretary said *"I recall the period before the formation of SWU particularly well as I was on BASW Council before and after the formation of SWU; and because of the threat to Advice & Representation it was something which we absolutely had to do. The official union registration process was the first hurdle achieved thanks to sound legal advice coupled with the enthusiasm from BASW Council to form a union. I was on the very first SWU Executive and I remember the joy when we received on 18th October 2011 our certificate of independence from the UK Certification Officer for Trade Unions. I am presently working on a SWU History which will be emailed to all members on the 21st June and it has been a pleasure pulling this together."*



Book Review

Hidden Narratives from Social Workers of Colour

In just one publication, this Anthology provides significantly in-depth knowledge and understanding linked to anti-racism and wider themes relevant to social work practice. No matter what stage you are at in your career and understanding, the key learning points will refresh and introduce learning opportunities in a mixed style that is easy to understand, and one that is extremely well written from the varied contributors and diverse formats. Racism can be an uncomfortable and difficult thing to talk about, but just because something does not directly impact on you does not mean you should turn away from it. In fact, that should be even more of a reason to speak up.

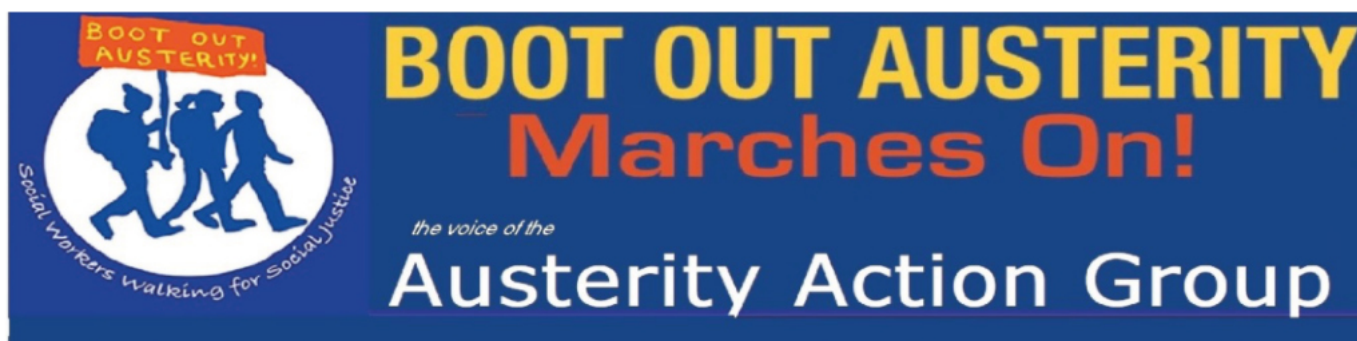
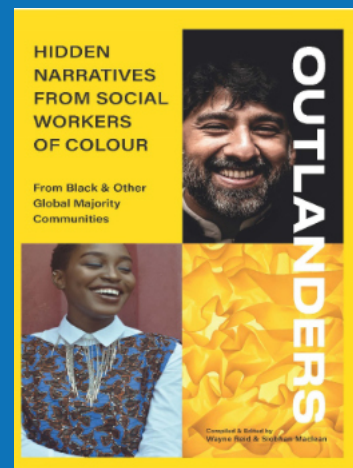
It is excellent to have available a publication that brings together key elements of the personalised impact of racism and importantly within this there is learning for us all to reflect on in one collection. Importantly, the subject is presented in a way that will be helpful to professional social workers across the whole continuum of professional life. Furthermore, other professions

involved in working with people and developing professional practice will no doubt find its contents relevant and especially useful and insightful. I have no hesitation in recommending this publication for practice teachers, students, social workers, trade unionists and managers.

I will continue to use my position and privilege to amplify under-heard voices wherever I can and able to do so.

Further info: <https://www.basw.co.uk/media/news/2021/feb/outlanders-hidden-narratives-social-workers-colour>

John McGowan
SWU General Secretary



Austerity Action Group (AAG) is a key vehicle in SWU & BASW's ongoing campaign for a more socially just society



The women's state pension fiasco

From @mumsnet (22nd April 2021)

"Thousands of women may have been underpaid £10,000s from their state pension - how to claim"

Thousands of older women are being underpaid their pensions. Pensions commentator and former pensions minister Steve Webb explains why this has happened, who is affected, and which of these groups will not be contacted but will have to make an active demand to get what they are due - including one group of about 5,000 women who are only getting about £1 a week. Thanks to Mumsnet user Viques for suggesting we launch a campaign to help find the 5000.



When I published a research paper a year ago entitled 'Are thousands of older women being short-changed on their state pension?', little did I realise that the answer would be that nearly 200,000 women have been underpaid around £3 billion. Amazingly, the simple calculator that we created to help people understand the issue has had over half a million views since then. The good news is that Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) has said that it will now check hundreds of thousands of records and will contact people where it finds errors. The groups it is actively looking for are:

- Married women on the 'old' state pension who should have been automatically upgraded to a 60% basic pension when their husband turned 65 but where this did not happen; broadly speaking, these are cases where the husband turned 65 on or after 17th March 2008, when the automatic uplift was introduced.
- Widows on the old system whose state pension should have been reassessed when their husband died but where this did not happen.
- People aged 80 or over not receiving the £82.45 per week 'Category D' pension rate which depends purely on a simple residence test and is not based on National Insurance contributions.

However, it would be a mistake to think women on a state pension can simply wait for a cheque to drop through their letter box. There are several groups of women who could improve their state pension but only if they take action.

The first is married women not getting a 60% basic pension (currently £82.45 per week where the husband is on a full basic pension) and whose husband turned 65 before 17th March 2008. Before that date, women only got the married woman's rate if they put in a claim. DWP are not looking to contact these women as the Government's position is that the onus is on the woman to claim. If you are in that position, you need to put in a claim. Although it will only be backdated 12 months, the sooner you claim, the sooner your pension will be increased. (We are however complaining to the Parliamentary Ombudsman about this whole system as many women were clearly unaware of the need for this 'second' state pension claim).

The second group who should get on the phone is women on the old state pension who divorced after starting to draw their state pension. Such women can potentially get a substantially increased state pension by using their ex husband's National Insurance record. But DWP will only do this calculation once they are notified of the divorce. If you don't tell them about your divorce, nothing changes.

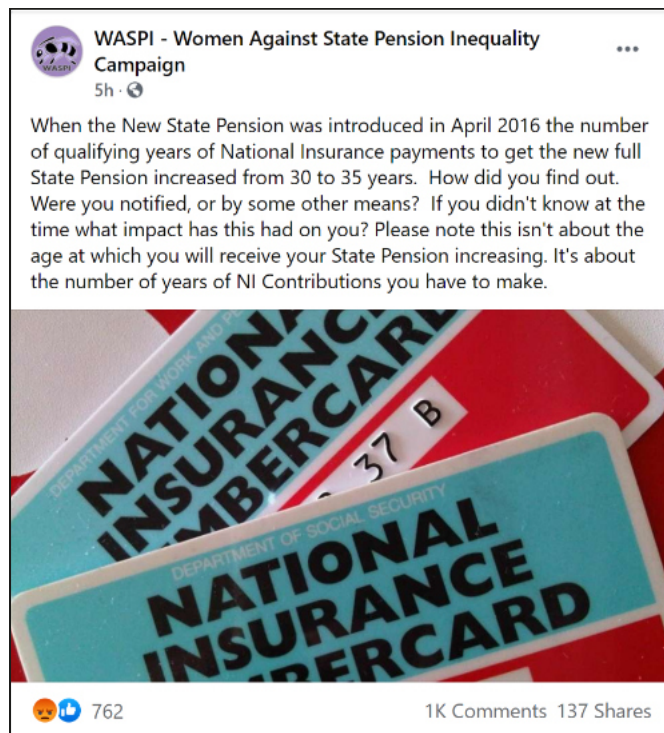
The third group is a small group of women who have zero entitlement to basic state pension, and who may just be getting a pound or two a week in total. This usually comes from the old 'Graduated Retirement Benefit' scheme which ran in the 1960s and early 1970s. These women are in a special position because even if their husband turned 65 before March 2008 they can still make a claim which will be backdated all the way to their husband's 65th birthday.

We think that there are probably around 5,000 women in this last group in Great Britain and the backdated amounts they can receive can be huge. I have recently helped three such women who got lump sums of between £30,000 and £60,000 as well as a big increase in their weekly state pension.

For the three groups I suggested should contact the DWP, I appreciate that contacting the Department can be very difficult. The best number to call seems to be 0800 731 0469. You should ignore the message that encourages you to ring off or go to a website. You then choose an option from the menu that best fits what you are ringing about, and you need to be prepared to hold on, but you should eventually get through.

Finally, all of the discussion so far has been about the old state pension system, for those who reached pension age before 6th April 2016. But growing numbers of people reached state pension age after this date. The new state pension is very different and the provisions for women to derive pensions from a late husband are much more limited. But there is some provision for widows (and widowers) and I am starting to hear reports that this is not always working in practice. We have created a new website to help you check which is at www.lcp.uk.com/newstatepension.

Steve Webb is a former pensions Minister and is now a pensions commentator and partner at consultants LCP



WASPI Facebook, 23rd April 2021
many of us have been caught out with this

End Fuel Poverty

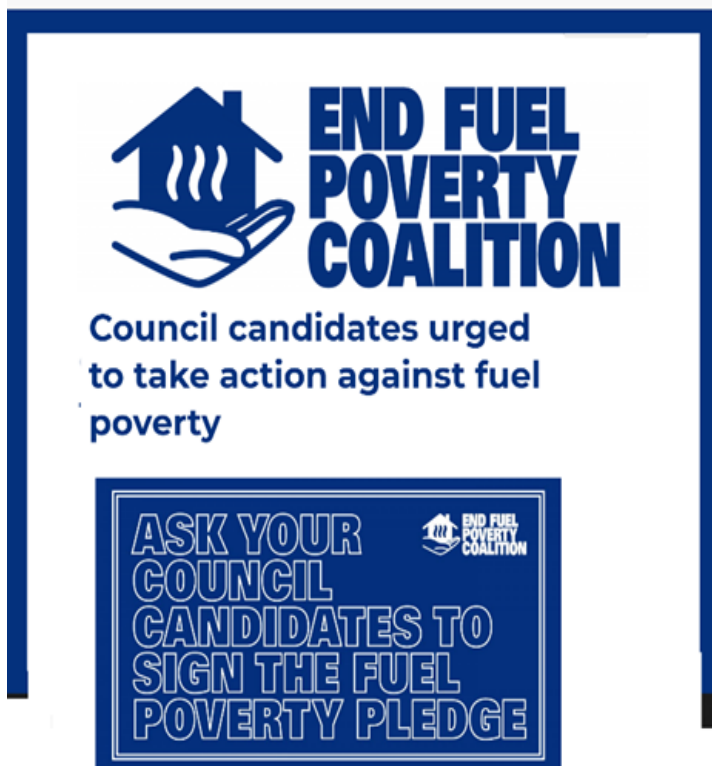
Early in the year the Austerity Action group signed up as members of the End Fuel Poverty Coalition enabling us to make and build new alliances.

With the local Elections fast upon us EFPC are putting out a lot of material about the effects of fuel poverty and have prepared a pledge for candidates to commit themselves too.

Please do follow the links and present your candidate with the Pledge.

- News story: <http://www.endfuelpoverty.org.uk/council-candidates-urged-to-take-action-against-fuel-poverty/>
- Campaign page: <http://www.endfuelpoverty.org.uk/end-fuel-poverty-councillor-pledge/>
- Tweet: <https://twitter.com/EndFuelPoverty/status/1379788802365984772>

1379788802365984772



Candidates standing for election to local authorities across England have been urged to take action to end fuel poverty.



April was the 4th anniversary of our 100-mile walk.

Should we be celebrating or screaming from the rooftops.

A picture says a thousand words.

Angi Naylor
SWU Executive Member and
Co-Chair of Austerity Action Group

SWU Assignment 2021: Social Work Student Essay Competition Open Until June 4th

SWU's World Social Work Day Essay Assignment Competition 2021 will remain open for submissions until Friday, 4th June 2021. Four £500 grant prizes will be awarded to the most compelling essays.

This year SWU invites undergraduate and postgraduate social work students across the UK to reflect on this question: **"I want to make a difference" is a common phrase used by social workers and students when asked why they joined the profession. So is choosing to become a social worker a political decision as well as an action and, if so, are all social workers activists by default? Discuss.**

Our competition question this year has been developed within the context of World Social Work Day 2021's theme 'Ubuntu: I am Because We are - Strengthening Social Solidarity and Global Connectedness.' This is the first theme of the 2020 - 2030 Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development and it is a concept and philosophy that resonates with the social work perspective of the interconnectedness of all peoples and their environments.

This is an opportunity for social work students to reflect on the current nature of social work and the intent they bring to the profession. Today's students will become practitioners in a world still reeling from the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a time of unprecedented challenges and the future of social work depends on those who want to make a difference.

See Page 19 below for details on how to complete and submit your SWU Assignment. Completed assignments will be judged by a panel which will include representation from the Austerity Action Group, Carys Phillips (SWU Chair), and Geraldine Nosowska (UK Chair BASW).

The competition winners will be announced during SWU's 10th Anniversary online celebration that will be taking place from June 12th - 21st. Can't wait until June to read insights from bright social work students? The four winning essays from the 2020 WSWD Essay Assignment Competition are available to read here.

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:

"I want to make a difference" is a common phrase used by social workers and students as to why they joined the profession. ...So is choosing to become a social worker a political decision as well as an action and if so, are all social workers activists by default - discuss

All completed assignments will be judged by a Panel including representation from the Austerity Action Group, Carys Phillips - SWU Chair and Geraldine Nosowska - UK Chair BASW.

The closing date for the competition is Friday 4th June 2021.

Please forward your completed assignment before that date with a covering letter giving your Name, Address, University, Year of Study and Academic Tutor (if appropriate) to: joanne.marciano@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.



I Am Because We Are
STRENGTHENING SOCIAL SOLIDARITY & GLOBAL CONNECTEDNESS

WORLD SOCIAL WORK DAY
16TH MARCH 2021
#WSWD2021

SWU Social Workers Union



Campaign against physical punishment of children

SWU has been active with the Association of Educational Psychologists , Royal College of GPs and Baronesses Lister, Walmsley and Bennett in shaping a possible Lords Private Members Bill regarding making it illegal to smack a child in England.

Physical punishment against children has no place in the 21st century. The international evidence tells us that it can have serious impacts on children, and that it is not effective.

England's law is behind the times. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was signed by the UK in 1990, requires the prohibition of all corporal punishment in all settings. Article 19 of the UNCRC requires states to take legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect children from all forms of physical or mental violence. The UN Committee on the Rights of the child has affirmed that this includes protection from all forms of corporal punishment.

The case against physical punishment of children

Research shows that corporal punishment frequently leads to a lower quality of the parent and child relationship, poorer mental health in childhood and adulthood, higher levels of aggression and anti-social behaviour and an increased risk of being a victim of physical abuse. It can be a contributory factor to the overall levels of ongoing stress felt by children now being recognised as part of research into the impact of ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) on children's later development. Social Workers Union strongly believe that smacking is harmful to a child's mental health. It models aggressive behaviour and communicates to children that it is acceptable to use violence as a means of expression. There are many other more effective ways of teaching children right from wrong than by hitting them. Force escalation is a key issue. Research shows that when force is used there are changes in brain activity that led to an escalation in the degree of force used. In a survey of parents, 2 in 5 admitted to using a different degree of force than intended.

SWU and the Association of Education Psychologists will be presenting a motion at the General Federal of Trade Unions AGM this month seeking the full support of all member unions.



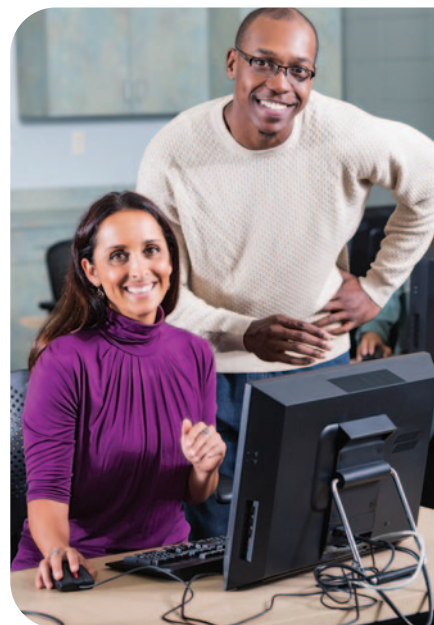
Only **£25** a year with your present BASW membership (**£10** a year for students)

Every year, the Social Workers Union skilled TU Officers help Social Workers with a range of different situations, from the small and easily resolved, to more significant and prolonged conduct issues. Disciplinary and grievance procedures, including representation at internal hearings – this is only guaranteed if you are a SWU member.

Remember – investigations into professional social work practice and allegations of misconduct – where this is done by your employer, representation is only guaranteed* if you are a member of SWU.

SWU sits on the National Executive of the General Federation of Trade Unions. Have a look at the access you get as a member to GFTU training and development. SWU is one of the fastest growing unions in the UK – be part of the progress.

Being part of a strong growing trade union is a vital and recognised way of successfully being part of the Trade Union movement. Help us campaign for better working conditions, pay and professional recognition. If you want to join SWU or learn more about becoming actively involved as a Union Contact get in touch: carol.reid@swu-union.org.uk or email SWU Admin: joanne.marciano@swu-union.org.uk



Belong to a Social Work union that:

- is lobbying MPs and Peers to improve working conditions for social workers.
- partners with organisations to support good working conditions and with opportunities to be active as a SWU Union Contact.
- campaigns to change legislation bills.
- collaborates with external unions and continue to be active through membership of General Federation of Trade Unions and ongoing union campaigns.
- funds the Austerity Action Group and opportunities to get involved.

As a SWU member you get:

- Full guaranteed employment representation*
- Free advice and support from A&R and Union Contacts
- Free financial health check from Lighthouse Group
- 10% off Morrish Solicitors
- General Federation of Trade Unions free training courses
- Discounted training from Avenue Professional Group (Dr Neil Thompson)
- Opportunity to be active as part of the trade union movement
- Monthly Newsletter

**Terms and conditions apply regarding new members and levels of representation*

Please check your membership to continue or opt in to being a SWU Member through BASW membership

SWU can be found on the following:



www.facebook.com/socialworkersunionuk/



www.swu-union.org.uk



[SWU_UK](https://twitter.com/SWU_UK)