

Phenomenal growth



I am delighted to report that the membership at SWU continues to grow significantly which is brilliant news. Presently, we are growing quickly beyond 15,000 members, which is phenomenal.

This reflects the growing presence of SWU in the workplace, and our ongoing popularity with Newly Qualified and Student Social Workers. Unionism is not about competition but about what we can offer at SWU, which is clearly important to our members, reflecting our growing success. We are the only union for Social Workers run by Social Workers; however, I still remain concerned about the negativity towards SWU from some members of a large UK union which covers Social Work and I would rather we all worked together for the common cause of raising the profile of Social Workers. Regardless, 'the proof is in the pudding' as membership not only grows but existing members continue to be keen to engage and support our development.

This newsletter highlights several examples of why people are joining SWU and want to be part of a growing union. We continue to have terrific member offers particularly with a lot of new free courses coming out soon from the GFTU. I have also

received several emails from new members advising me that they have just recently discovered SWU which led them to join BASW. This is indeed good news for both organisations as collectively we can be the voice of Social Workers, and if required, employment representation for SWU members from Social Workers who know our profession 'inside and out' and the main reason why I feel we are growing and keeping members. I am particularly pleased to see some further interest in Union Contacts with hopefully the next face to face training date being arranged soon or the online option available to complete the training.

I am also pleased that we have remained active with another major campaign supporting the Austerity Action Group (AAG) with our colleagues at BASW. The new AAG Remuneration Campaign is developing well with lots of interest and activity (see page 17). The first meeting of the SWU Campaign Group also took place on Tuesday 26th October and it was great to see the first three applications completed and considered by the SWU group. Further details on this to follow next month. The recent SWU Executive meetings have resulted in James Birchall being re-elected as Honorary President for a final year and Gerry Madden being re-elected as Treasurer for a 2-year period. The work of Gerry and James has been important for the development of SWU, and I am personally delighted to have their guidance for another term.

It was great to see so many faces from our 10-year history at a recent SWU event and to share the importance of our history and development.

Thank you.

Finally, this November World Leaders come together in Glasgow to discuss Climate Change, our environmental future and hopefully actions to reduce global warming. Have a look at *What I can do to make a*

difference (page 20) Disgracefully, we are one of the richest countries in the world, yet people are dying in winter unable to heat their homes or starving without access to decent nutritious food. We are already campaigning on this via the SWU funded Austerity Action Group and there is always an option to be involved further aag@swu-union.org.uk

John McGowan
General Secretary

j.mcgowan@swu-union.org.uk

SWU supports the Abuse of Public-facing Workers (Offences) Bill as part of the Service with Respect campaign

People in public-facing jobs across all sectors - including social work - have been subjected to rising hostility and abuse since the end of the COVID-19 lockdowns

A year ago the Institute of Customer Service (ICS) - which is the secretariat for the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Customer Service - found shocking levels of abuse in the customer service part of retail. The ICS team investigated if this was a larger issue across all front-line levels of customer services and research shows this to be the case. Abuse was seen across many different sectors including construction, hospitality, transport, contact centres, retail, and utility workers.

There is currently some existing legislation to protect essential workers, but not enough is being done to protect public-facing workers like social workers who aren't classified as such by the government. This is why BASW and SWU jointly petitioned Parliament earlier this year to [include social workers in the Assaults on Emergency Workers Act](#), and the fact that the 'Assaults on Social Workers' petition received over 13,000 signatures clearly shows that social workers need more protection at work.

The Social Workers Union (SWU) is delighted to have been approached by **Olivia Blake MP** - one of several cross-party MPs backing the ICS's [Service with Respect campaign](#) - to become involved. This campaign has a three-pronged approach to addressing the hostility faced by front-line staff:

1. Organisations to have a zero tolerance approach to staff abuse – including reporting, training, and supporting their staff. Trade unions are key supporters of this action.
2. An appeal for members of the public to stop and think about their actions.
3. Campaigning for the government to legislate with the [Abuse of Public-facing Workers \(Offences\) Bill](#). Blake introduced this 10-minute rule bill to create a new offence of abuse of public-facing workers and it is due for a second reading in January 2022.

The ICS has been running a series of employee surveys on the levels of abuse and hostilities faced every 2 months to get a read of the situation. This problem is getting worse; it's not going away. Here are some of the current realities of public-facing workers:

- 50% have experienced abuse/hostility in the past 6 months
- 60% have experienced face-to-face hostility
- 20% have experienced physical abuse
- 12% have experienced online hostility
- 37% effectively see experiencing abuse/hostility as part of their day job

No one should have to put up with that and everyone should be able to go about their job without fear of reprisal. When asked "Has it gotten worse in past 6 months?", employees replied:

- 38% said yes
- 47% said it has stayed the same

In an [article for the Guardian](#) **Denise Monks** of the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) said she could not remember a time in her career when she was not being spat at or threatened. She said, *'What is new over the past few years is a growth in vexatious complaints that come in weekly, or sometimes daily. Complaints are important because they help us learn what's going wrong, but now we'll see individuals making a series of complaints, often aimed at individual social workers.'* She also said that although the complaints may be baseless, they still need to be formally investigated, which takes time and energy away from other cases.

SWU Ambassador **Professor Jermaine Ravalier** of Bath Spa University has collaborated on a study of 12,000 UK teachers and found that 40% of primary teachers and 20% of secondary school teachers had reported negative parental behaviour.

The Service with Respect campaign aims to keep the government is focused on this issue and for the Abuse of Public-facing Workers (Offences) Bill to act as a deterrent to abuse of public-facing workers - which is the same type of protection afforded to essential workers and also certain types of social work in Scotland. SWU supports this campaign, alongside over 200 organisations from across many industries.

SWU General Secretary **John McGowan** said at the most recent Service with Respect campaign roundtable meeting:

'I have been a social worker for over 20 years and hostility and abuse towards social workers has always been a problem. Tensions exist when social workers arrive unwanted or have to intervene urgently. Social workers are welcomed with open arms when offering a support package, but in the context of adult and child protection we're dealing with very vulnerable individuals who are experiencing a difficult time in their lives.'

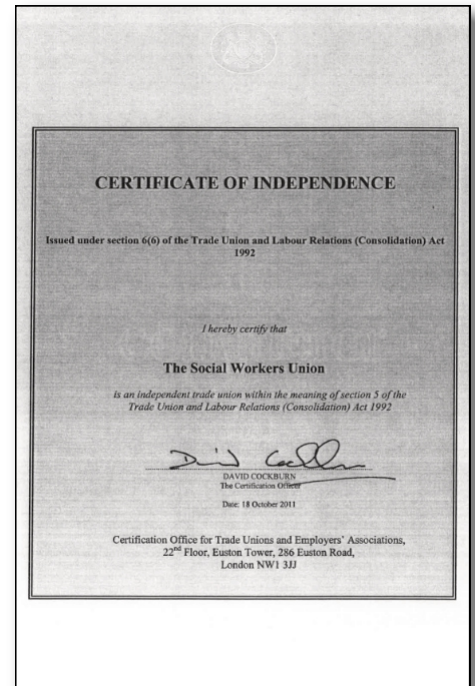
Social workers were included in 2005 Emergency Worker Act in Scotland (Scottish Parliament) but they were not included in 2018 Assaults on Emergency Workers Act (UK Parliament) despite our petition to Parliament that received over 13,000 signatures. Our members clearly want this protection, and this Service and Respect campaign is standing up for the protection of social workers and other overlooked professionals.'

SWU 10th Anniversary Celebration

The Social Workers Union marked a historical date for our union on 18th October as the final part of our 10th Anniversary Celebrations

SWU held a small celebration in Birmingham to mark the 10th anniversary of our union gaining its certificate of independence from the UK Certification Officer for Trade Unions on 18th October 2011.

Honorary SWU President James Birchall opened the event with his heartfelt remarks. Previous SWU General Secretaries Hilton Dawson and Bridget Robb shared memories of their involvement with the union's formation and history. Current General Secretary John McGowan spoke about how far the union has come and about his vision for SWU's future.



SWU Ambassadors Dr Neil Thompson and Professor Jermaine Ravalier discussed their current projects, and two new SWU Ambassadors were announced - renowned cartoonist Harry Venning and Emma Lewell-Buck MP. Harry was also presented with a SWU Ambassador Award. SWU Chair Carys Phillips finished with an appreciative toast to the Advice & Representation team and the SWU Union Contacts who are such vital parts of our union.

There was a live music portion near the end in which Austerity Action Group (AAG) Chair Angi Naylor played a few of our favourite and original protest songs on her guitar. John McGowan kept the beat as the drummer for *The Austerions* live band music. SWU Executives both past and present, SWU Officers, Union Contacts, SWU Ambassadors, Campaign Collective, GFTU, Morrish Solicitors, BASW Representation and other key supporters and contributors to the union's success over the past decade were in attendance.

We give sincere thanks to all who attended for your continued support, and hope that next time we will be able to have a much larger face-to-face celebration event. Everyone is also invited to join in the [digital celebration of SWU's 10th Anniversary](#) that includes videos and blogs from SWU Executives both past and present discussing the history and work of the union, our renowned Trade

Union Advice & Representation Service team, SWU Union Contacts, and some notable SWU Campaigns.

Here's to another 10 years of social workers supporting social workers and the continued fight for social justice!



James Birchall opens the celebrations



Angi Naylor warming up the guests



General Secretaries, Presidents and Assistant General Secretaries all together



Live band for the night - *The Austerions* with SWU member Peter Unwin on vocals



GFTU colleagues at the event



Union Contacts celebrating quietly

To celebrate our 10th year Trade Union Licence we have some great competition prizes to give away

Please send your competition entries to Joanne Marciano:
joanne.marciano@swu-union.org.uk

Competition 1:

SWU 10th enamel badges

To win a badge please email Joanne with the header **SWU Badge Comp**.
Ten winning entries will be drawn.

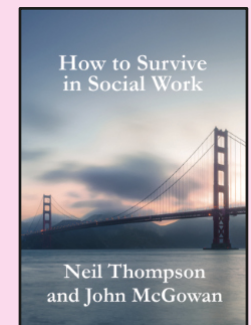


Competition 2:

How to Survive in Social Work by Thompson and McGowan

To win a signed copy please email Joanne with the header **SWU How to Survive Comp**.

One winning entry will be drawn.

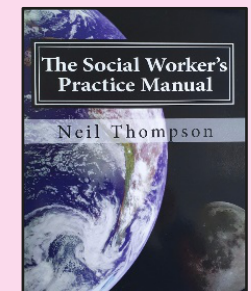


Competition 3:

The Social Work Practice Manual by Neil Thompson

To win a copy please email Joanne with the header **SWU Social Work Manual**.

One winning entry will be drawn.

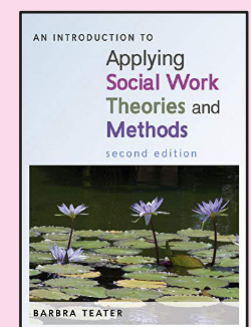


Competition 4: *(only for SWU Student Members)*

Applying Social Work Theories and Methods by Barbra Teater

To win a copy please email Joanne with the header **SWU Student Book**.

One winning entry will be drawn (thanks to the Open University).

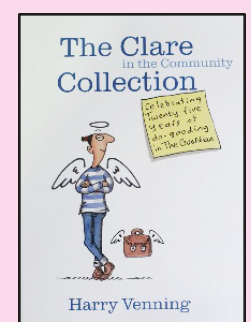


Competition 5:

The Clare in the Community Collection by Harry Venning

To win a signed copy please email Joanne with the header **SWU Clare Comp**.

One winning entry will be drawn.



Good Luck

Union Contact Scheme Update

Recent months have been a 'breath of fresh air' for Activism as rallies, demonstrations and marches have taken place in towns and cities up and down the country. Like many like-minded and life-long trade unionists, I'm in my element at such events and have recently attended anti-arms fair demonstrations in Liverpool, People's Assembly and Gypsy Roma Traveller events in Manchester, and of course our wonderful SWU 10th anniversary event in Birmingham where trade unionists and activists congregated for a night of celebration.

Whilst these are obvious and literal examples of activism, there are many more equally important ways to be a trade union Activist in your everyday life - and it needn't be 'additional' or 'separate' to work, but in conjunction with and alongside it.

Recruiting members and 'mapping' your workplace are hugely important activities for the SWU Union Contact. Think about where members are situated, and importantly, where are they lacking? Introducing yourself and sharing leaflets, pens, and badges is a great way to remind people of the importance of union membership when it's perhaps something they hadn't prioritised or considered. This also helps you discover the colleague who'd make an excellent Union Contact with some support

and encouragement, or the student member on placement who'll share details with their cohort back at Uni. Having conversations and sharing information is vital - Why is it important to join a union and how do you join SWU? Discussions, information and sharing links are all important elements of workplace Activism, and can be done online too when working from home.



Campaigning is Activism, and SWU's collaboration with Campaign Collective provides plenty of help and support for any Union Contact or SWU member wishing to initiate a worthwhile campaign. Submissions are assessed by our Campaign Group, and if successful you will be supported in progressing with your Campaign - an exciting and valuable opportunity to become involved in grassroots Activism.

SWU's Austerity Action Group gets out on the streets with visible Activism collaborating with lived-experience activists, SWU Union Contacts, and representatives of likeminded collectives. The AAG is leading on the current Remuneration Campaign highlighting the valued support and recognition of lived-



People's Assembly - October 2021

experience Activism, and if you'd like to get involved in promoting this campaign please get in touch - aag@swu-union.org.uk

All of the above is Activism and it's all valuable so please continue in any way you can. Please ensure your contact details are up to date for receiving important information and updates, and please make me aware of any changes to your employment location. It's

important that we know where our Union Contacts are situated - and where we need to focus on recruiting more of you! Together we are stronger.

In solidarity.

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

SWU Ambassador, Dr Neil Thompson, provides members with another free course

Making health and well-being a reality

There is much talk these days about 'employee wellness', 'health and well-being at work', 'corporate well-being' and so on. It is partly a recognition that the workplace has become increasingly pressurised and far less worker friendly than was the case before. There are many reasons for the problems in the first place, not least austerity. And, of course, SWU has made a major contribution in terms of its campaigning and the research it has commissioned as part of a concerted effort to improve working conditions for social workers. It is therefore understandable that many employing organisations are trying to do their bit to help by investing in employee wellness initiatives, recognising that healthier and happier workers are more productive and are less likely to face the problems brought about by stress. So, in theory, with employee wellness, everyone should benefit.



However, what I have found in my training and consultancy work is that many people just don't know where to begin. What does it actually mean to say that an organisation is committed to health and well-being to reduce stress and improve the quality of working life? What steps need to be taken? What is likely to work and what could potentially make matters worse? Understandably, many managers are struggling with these questions and more because it is such a big and complex area. Likewise, some trade union representatives have told me they want to play their part, but they too are not clear about the best way forward to develop an approach that is not just tokenistic.

So, what I decided to do was to develop an online course about these issues to help people get a clearer picture of what is involved and thereby help them develop a more realistic strategy for responding to the major problems involved. I also decided to make the course available free of charge for a limited period as part of my contribution to improve working life for social work colleagues. It is called Promoting Employee Wellness and is available at:

<https://www.udemy.com/course/promoting-employee-wellness/?src=sac&kw=promoting+empl>

Dr Neil Thompson is an independent writer, educator and adviser and a visiting professor at the Open University. He is also a SWU Ambassador. His website is at www.NeilThompson.info

15% OFF

- CONVEYANCING AND PROPERTY LAW -
- WILLS, PROBATE AND ESTATES -
- FAMILY LAW AND DIVORCE -

USE CODE "AUTUMNI5"

FOR UNION MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES ONLY
OFFER ENDS 30TH NOVEMBER 2021



033 3344 9600



morrishsolitors.com



info@morrishsolitors.com



Harry Venning accepts SWU Ambassador Award

A bit about Harry:

Harry Venning is an award-winning cartoonist, illustrator, and comedy writer best known for creating the Clare in the Community cartoon strip following the life of a social worker and a BBC Radio 4 sitcom starring Sally Philipps. He has won UK Cartoon Art Trust Strip Cartoonist of the Year and the Sony Radio Comedy Award.



How impoverished the British social work scene would be without his superb artwork and rich sense of humour! A weekly contributor to THE GUARDIAN with the CLARE IN THE COMMUNITY strip, his work has also appeared in THE MAIL ON SUNDAY, SUNDAY TELEGRAPH, INDEPENDENT, SUNDAY TIMES, THE STAGE, and RADIO TIMES as well as publications in Canada, Switzerland, South Africa, and New Zealand - plus books, lots of books. Harry is also a member of the exclusive CARTOONIST CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN with work displayed in the Cartoon Museum, London.

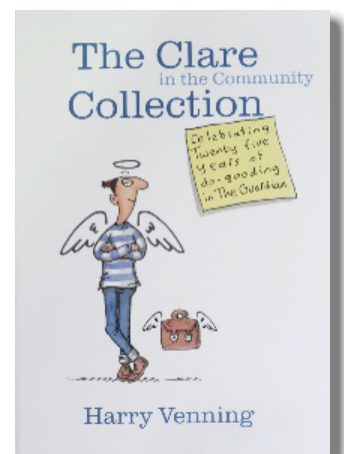


Commenting on the Award, Harry said, *'I am honoured to become a SWU ambassador for a profession that I have continuously poked fun at for the last thirty years. As someone who has never been a social worker, I should like to thank social work for providing me with a good living, as well as many good friends along the way.'*

Speaking about SWU new Ambassador, General Secretary of SWU John McGowan said, *'This is the second time we have reached out for Ambassadors to represent the union and it builds on recent recruits such as Dr Neil Thompson and Professor Jermaine Ravalier. The union continues to grow every day as the only specialist union for social workers and our new ambassadors are well placed to share all the positive work we do with a range of audiences. The calibre of these recent recruits once more emphasises the*

important place we have as one of the largest growing specialist unions in the UK, which is a feat we have achieved in a relatively short time frame.'

To celebrate Harry's appointment, SWU has a signed copy of Harry's book: *The Clare in the Community Collection*. To win a copy please email Joanne with the header **SWU Clare Comp**. A winning entry will be drawn. Please send entries to joanne.marciano@swu-union.org.uk



SWU also appointed Emma Lewell-Buck MP as a SWU Ambassador. Emma will be presented with the award soon so watch this space for a further feature.

Westminster Forum

SWU Chair, Carys Phillips, was really pleased to talk on Priorities for the care workforce.



I was really pleased to be asked to give a five-minute talk to *Westminster Education Forum* on behalf of the *Social Workers Union* on **Priorities for the care workforce - recruitment and retention, improving leadership stability, and dealing with the challenge of burnout amongst staff**. This was an 'England only' event picking up upon the 'Independent Review of Children's Social Care' in England entitled 'A Case For Change'. The invitation to talk on this topic seemed as vital as SWU's role and lived experiences of supporting Social Workers across the UK. SWU is the only trade union for, and run by, qualified and registered social workers. Social Workers are trained to understand the impact of social policy on the children and families we work, has the largest working-class entrants of any profession. The majority of the profession are female, yet remains a male led profession.

Steve McCabe MP, the Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on a Fit and Healthy Childhood began the day, with Cordelia Law the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Torbay Council led following the break and the

Workforce session. The Deputy Editor of the Forum, Sean Cudmore from Westminster Education Forum closed the half-day event.

Workforce - Priorities for the care workforce - recruitment and retention, improving leadership stability, and dealing with the challenge of burnout amongst staff

Carys Phillips, Chair, Social Workers Union
Lisa Hackett, Delivery Director, Frontline
Councillor Cordelia Law, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Torbay Council

The advantage of this was the opportunity of listening to all the participants you can see in the screenshot below, views from lived experience of the care system, of provider organisations, Ofsted regulators, social work educators, leaders and Baroness Walker, was herself a Social Worker. Commonalities from the speakers was that there was no need for



any legislative or other reforms, 'the law is fit', but **resources were needed**. This message was accompanied by a suggestion of a 'national promise' to re-start preventative services that were lost as the state dismantled support in line with the Austerity measures. Social Policy has to change and the messages to government were clear, the social determinants of poverty have not changed since 1945!

Social Workers are trained to understand the impact of social policy on the children and families. This workforce has witnessed and be qualifying through the impact of a decade of Austerity in their workplaces, employment conditions and in the society, Social Workers live and work within. Over this time Social Work has experienced a growing managerialist response (domineering, enforcing cultures of compliance and silence to an increasingly demotivated workforce) in response to the diminishing resources, higher and more complex caseloads. This impact was viscerally described as a 'disgrace - a social equality and economic disaster' in 2018 by Professor Philip Alston, the UN Special Rapporteur on Poverty in the UK. This awful reality existed prior to COVID 19! Social Work exists in increasingly complex and traumatic social situations as one prominent case has painfully highlighted. It was in 2018; when a *Looked After Child* from Camden was placed in *supported accommodation*, she was reported to be taking drugs, drinking alcohol and later pregnant. This 18-year-old teenager was placed 'on remand' (for stealing and I assume had no other accommodation or support) at HMP Bronzefield - where despite calling for help on four occasions received none; and, gave birth alone, *baby A* died, published a week before the conference. Whilst Government is to close the 'loophole' through secondary legislation. This will continue to leave all 16-18-year-olds exposed to such on-going risks of trafficking, exploitation and has largely and widely been described as 'inhumane' (Wilde) by those who work and campaign for children's rights Social Workers are part of this and provide an example of the day-to-day challenges in both seeking resources and support.

Concerns from Social Work

We now know, COVID-19 has highlighted all of society's inequalities still further. SWU has long called for an end to social inequality as well as Austerity; and, will continue to do so. The Social Policy failures are leading to Social Workers experiencing increasing 'moral distress' and burn-out as evidenced in the survey undertaken in 2021 by SWU. Whilst there will be National Insurance increase intended to '*fix social care*' (Johnson) but is already heading towards the NHS backlog first. The initial 1% pay recommendation for NHS staff coupled with 0% pay freeze across the public sectors, is a demoralising reality for the social care workforce. This sits alongside the Government's determination to halt the £20 Universal Credit on the 6th October 2021. SWU stands alongside a growing majority that continue to describe alternatives, broadly based on social justice, it is all possible, but only with political will. Welfare Benefits were 20% of average income - they are now 12% and unsurprisingly the lowest it has **ever** been.

Leadership

The statistics are grim and social workers **are** leaving the profession. The pandemic has made conditions worse. Much is written about the reasons of the current crisis, street level bureaucracy and the potential for the demise of the profession. Leadership of Children's Social Care and Social Work in England has been and will be influenced by its Leaders; the Chief Social Worker for Children and Families Isobel Trowler. Leaders, Directors of Children Service, OFSTED, Regulators, Social Work England (previously HCPC). Governments set the scene and conditions for Social workers in undertaking their roles between the continuums 'agents of the state' and 'agents of change' in children's lives. SWU's work and optimism for the profession and its leaders for the future are part of its on-going work. One of the speakers; Sue Butcher, was an example of a leader advocating the need for strong voices and directed the conference to the ADCS North East Submission again being clear about the absolute poverty and need for change.

Social Workers are required to maintain CPD be registered and regulated, the requirement for leaders be registered and accountable in the same way is unfortunately missing. There is a concern that our leaders are not being as bold in the demand and defence of resources, nor being held to the same expectations. Research into the experiences of Social Workers highlighted the organisational issues, workplace culture and overwhelmingly, the more experienced and skilled are more likely to be referred to regulators and in some cases this was raise practice concerns around culture and poverty of resources. Leaders have a big role to play Social Work is complex and requires leaders who are able offer to clear challenge and articulate the voice of social work in a call for proper funding. The shrinking of local authorities and the reliance on the marketisation of social care has increased need and failed in every indicator possible. Social work exists within patchwork quilt of responses, services and indeed leaders, as many of the Speakers had pointed out the legislation in place is permissive the issues sit with resources and as Garret suggests, *don't waste any more ink* as the need is adequate social policy responses, resourcing! Social Work, post pandemic continue to see the current crisis that has led to a rocketing of social injustice.

SWU Works to support the Retention Social Workers

Social Work has a wide and broad reach across children and adult social care. It is a distinct role that SWU an active Union and works in solidarity to promote *emancipatory social change* based upon rights and entitlements. An example is the 'Remuneration Campaign' that the Anti-Austerity Group (SWU/BASW) have to ensure the voices of those with lived experiences are financially rewarded without any detriment to benefits income. The 'toolkit' is available to help practitioners, employers and leaders achieve better working conditions. There are two elements to this; a practical guide and a self-assessment and planning tool/approach.

Concluding

SWU membership is growing. All unions are reporting an increase in their respective membership. This reflects the growing activism in Social Work that sits alongside the reputation, respect and evidenced based hard work. SWU inspires and collaborates to ensure the voices of Social Workers are heard, like today, Research into Working Conditions and the current work looking at Supervision in Social work. SWU is working for decisive change from the failed managerialism in Social Work towards social work that sits with climate justice and equity for all, building on community and co-production. And, of course continues to offer first rate representation and the promise it made 10 years ago when it first formed.

References

An independent review of children's social care in England A once in a generation opportunity to transform the children's social care system and provide children with loving, safe and stable families. <https://childrensocialcare.independent-review.uk>

Statement on Visit to the United Kingdom, by Professor Philip Alston, United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights 16 November 2018 Professor Philip Alston <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23881>

Damning report published into death of baby born to teenager in prison cell <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/sep/22/damning-report-published-into-death-of-baby-born-to-teenager-in-prison-cell>

Chris Wild Author and Campaigner 'The state of it' 'Damaged' the trigger to this legislation was the crisis and scandal of children as young as 11 and 14 deaths in unregulated settings in 2021 by local authorities in England and Wales <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lancashire-58512743> when professionals are forced to act, because of institutional constraints and or in way that was contrary to their beliefs/ understanding

SWU: Social Work's Six-Point Urgent Action Plan <https://www.basw.co.uk/media/news/2020/jul/swu-social-works-six-point-urgent-action-plan>

North East Submission to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care <https://adcs.org.uk/assets/documentation/NorthEastSubmissiontotheIndependentReviewofChildrensSocialCare2.pdf> the Care Review must also recognise the impact of reductions in local authority funding and press for significant investment to reverse the loss of early help capacity in local areas.

A Subject of Concern: The Experiences of Social Workers Referred to the Health and Care Professions Council Worsley, Aidan Richard Clive, McLaughlin, Kenneth and Leigh, Jadwiga <http://clok.uclan.ac.uk/17966/1/17966%20KENHCPC%20paper%203%20FINAL-3.pdf> 'it is evident that all our participants became involved in the HCPC (regulator) process because they had experienced some form of conflict with management from within their organisation. Although all of our participants have said they attempted to resolve the issues they encountered internally'

Paul Michael Garrett, 'A World to Win': In Defence of (Dissenting) Social Work - A Response to Chris Maylea British Journal of Social Work (2021) 51, 1131–1149 doi: 10.1093/bjsw/bcab009 Advance Access Publication February 2, 2021

Professional working conditions BASW and SWU are campaigning for improved professional working conditions as half of UK social workers intend to leave the profession <https://www.basw.co.uk/what-we-do/campaigns/professional-working-conditions>

Social Workers Union and Bath Spa University begin new research on reflective supervision best practices

<https://www.basw.co.uk/media/news/2021/mar/social-workers-union-and-bath-spa-university-begin-new-research-reflective> 29/3/2021

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/sep/07/boris-johnsons-plan-to-fix-the-crisis-in-social-care-is-no-game-changer>

Stina Fernqvist (2020) Street-level bureaucracy and categorization processes in social workers' encounters with parents who have financial and cognitive difficulties, Nordic Social Work Research, 10:3, 245-256, DOI: 10.1080/2156857X.2018.1547218 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/2156857X.2018.1547218>

Chris Maylea, The end of social work British Journal of Social Work (2021) 51, 772–789 doi: 10.1093/bjsw/bcaa203 Advance Access Publication December 3, 2020

First ever chief social worker for children and fast-track training to lead social work reform <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/first-ever-chief-social-worker-for-children-and-fast-track-training-to-lead-social-work-reform> Press Release, Michael Gove 2013

Black History Month (October) from a Social Justice and Labour Movement Perspective

by Lyse Hurd, SWU Trade Union, Advice and Representation Officer

As Black History Month 2021 comes to an end, I recall when I was in Malawi back in 2004. An advert came on the radio that said it was Black Awareness Week. I said to my friend, who was a Black Malawian, that I found it ironic that a country that was predominantly made up of Black Africans, had to have a 'Black Awareness Week'. But Malawi, like many in the former 'British Empire' continue to fight the notion that to be White is to be in charge.

In the United States, Black History Month is in February, to correspond with Abraham Lincoln's birthday and Fredrick Douglas' birthday. The latter was a well-known American Black orator, abolitionist and social reformer. We would recognise the values he held as those we recognise in social work today.

So, how do we, as social workers and trade unionists acknowledge Black History Month? In researching this article, I couldn't help but note that there is a direct link from the social justice movements throughout history to the labour movement both here and in other countries. This line leads directly to what we do as social workers. It is how our profession was born. In that vein, I would illustrate these connections by pointing to some important Black unionists, activists and social workers who have led the charge - and some still fighting it today - into making this country, and the world, a place where every voice in the valley and hills is heard, not just the few at the top of the mountain.

One of the first social justice activists, Alice Kinloch, co-founded the African Association

in the late 19th century. Alice Kinloch advocated for equal and fair treatment of the indigenous populations of the 'British Empire.' She set up the African Association as a means for Africans across the world to fight colonialism and oppression of the native populations in countries impacted by colonial rule. The group petitioned Queen Victoria to cease the oppression of the native populations of countries in the 'British Empire.'

Sir Bill Morris became the first Black General Secretary of a trade union in 1991 when he became the General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union. He became a member of T&G in 1958 when he was only 20 years old and built his career from there. One of his first major disputes was in relation to trade union recognition, an issue which is an important part of trade union representation even today.

In 1963, Dr. Paul Stephenson, OBE the first Black social worker in Bristol, discovered that the bus company would not hire Black crew on their buses. He organised a successful boycott of the bus company after hearing about the story of Rosa Parks in the USA who refused to give up her bus seat to a white person after a long, hard day at work. Dr. Stephenson was suggested as a replacement statue for the one of the slave traders that was removed by the people of Bristol last summer.

Moving across the pond, we can note some very inspirational labour leaders and social workers who have not only inspired those in their own countries, but also those around the world as well, so they are worth mentioning and investigating. For instance, Whitney Moore Young, Jr. was a prominent labour activist who was also a qualified social worker. He particularly concentrated his social activism toward ending discrimination in employment in the United States.

Dr. Dorothy Height assisted in the organisation of the *March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom* in 1963 where Martin Luther King, Jr gave his famous

"I Have a Dream" speech. Dr. Height and another female advocate were crucial in ensuring that a female voice was heard that day as none were originally scheduled to speak. Daisy Bates, activist and educator was briefly allowed to say fewer than 200 words.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is perhaps the most inspirational employment and civil rights activist in the world. The day before he died, Dr. King made the following remarks to the crowd gathered in Memphis to support the sanitation workers. His words have just as much meaning today as they did on 3 April, 1968:



"We've got to give ourselves to this struggle until the end. Nothing would be more tragic than to stop at this point, in Memphis. We've got to see it through. And when we have our march, you need to be there. Be concerned about your brother. You may not be on strike. But either we go up together, or we go down together." ~ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., *I Have Seen the Mountaintop* speech, Memphis, TN 1968.

So, whilst we celebrate the many activists, social workers and labour leaders who've come before us, we cannot forget that their work, unfortunately, is not complete. We have to carry on the struggle for them and for the people who come after us. But in order to do that, we have to be prepared to dig deep into our own psyches. Many people remain directly impacted by racism and oppression. Those who do not experience racism have a responsibility to look at the racism occurring around them, acknowledge it and even ask yourself what role you may have inadvertently played in it.

So, how do we acknowledge Black History Month? We push our employers to act rather than speak - give us anti oppressive practice training that is real and useful. Don't just mention 'diversity' at the end of every meeting and training and think you are done. Push for unconscious bias training and participate honestly and reflectively in it. If someone says that you have said something or done something they find oppressive or offensive -

listen. Take it on board and openly discuss it. Make sure you and your colleagues are having open discussions about diversity issues on your cases. Don't always rely on your Black colleagues to educate you. Show them that you are prepared to educate yourself - and maybe even teach them something they didn't know. Stand up for each other, because as Doctor King says - "...we go up together or we go down together!"

New Affiliate of General Federation of Trade Unions



In a ground-breaking step following lots of discussion around a strategic policy paper on rebuilding links with community organisations, the GFTU has admitted into full membership the Workers Education Association (WEA).

Simon Parkinson, CEO of WEA, said, *"We're excited about this new mutual membership agreement with GFTU. Working together unions and community organisations can play a significant part in building and strengthening communities and giving them a voice. I'm looking forward to the skills exchange between our two organisations' tutors and members and co-developing innovations in adult education policy."*

If the WEA can help the GFTU to forge relationships with our existing partners, and together we can help communities develop confidence, skills and a voice through both our education programmes, we'll be delivering by our social justice mission - empowering learners and building communities."

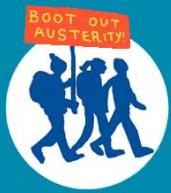


The General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU) concentrates on servicing the needs of specialist unions. It does this by providing courses, creating international union links, parliamentary links, undertaking research for its affiliated Unions and providing ongoing support and assistance to all members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

General Secretaries and union staff. The GFTU has 30 affiliates with a membership of over 260,000 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.

SWU sits on the GFTU National Executive Governing Body with a committee elected to meet regularly to manage the finance and work of GFTU. SWU is a proud member of the General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU).



Austerity Action Group

Lived Experience Fair Remuneration

Austerity Action Group, funded by the Social Workers Union (SWU), releases campaign toolkit

As a nation, we rely on the public and charitable services which are available to us and it is vital that they meet our needs. Yet government rules freeze people out of contributing meaningfully to the development of these services.

This includes people at the sharp end of government cuts to spending (often called austerity) and those with lived experience of relying on the help of charities, to anyone who uses council services or is in education.

Tax rules and benefits regulations mean that it is difficult for charities, local government, universities and other providers to pay people to give their honest opinions on the services they rely on. Payment for this expertise or advice is often referred to as **remuneration**.

Coalition of charities, campaigners and individuals write to the Treasury to call for rule changes to the tax system to allow service users with lived experience to have their say on how services are run without it affecting their welfare. Many organisations such as charities, local government and universities work with people with lived experience of issues such as poverty and homelessness to shape and improve their services.

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) advises that the best practice is for participants to be paid for their expertise - and the Government often mandates this to be the case, for example in the accreditation of university courses. However, research by the Austerity Action Group - which is funded by the Social Workers Union - found that over a third (35%) of

people giving their advice and expertise through research and involvement opportunities said they accepted a reduced rate of payment for their time or only took expenses due to worries that remuneration for their expertise would affect their benefits or tax.

In more than a fifth (22%) of cases there was no payment made at all, which was more likely to affect those with a long-term health condition, disability, people of colour and other marginalised groups.

“Using lived experience is not cost free, either emotionally or physically,” one service user said, responding to the survey. “If I am making a contribution to a project I expect to be paid, just like all the other professionals or consultants around the table. There also needs to be payment for preparation, it is not easy just to rock up and share some very traumatic and discriminatory experiences about services.”

Another respondent explained the impact of poor remuneration practices: “I have previously had to declare my earnings from such involvement, which then affected our family income, and my mental health because of the stress of worrying about whether and how much my benefits would be affected. My disabled daughter had similar issues, and we had to go through the process of getting her earnings recognised as therapeutic earnings, which I had to organise on her behalf.”

“I give a considerable amount of unpaid time to training healthcare professionals, trainee nurses, social workers, physios and dieticians,” one respondent explained, adding: “It takes a

lot of time, particularly the preparation as I want to do a good job. I don't claim because of the system of sending forms which I can't access because I do it on my phone and I don't have a printer."

The research comes as a broad range of charities, campaigners and individuals have written to Rt Hon. Lucy Frazer QC MP, the new Financial Secretary to the Treasury, to ask for the Government to make two changes to tax rules to ensure that participating in research and involvement opportunities is exempt from tax. Campaigners have also called for clarity that this earnings exemption also applies to income assessed for benefits thresholds.

Angi Naylor, a social worker and Chair of the Austerity Action Group, said the sector relies on people with lived experience of issues to contribute to research and service development. "[Research] is a key way that we

can create new services or policy recommendations. But tax and benefit rules mean that these people aren't being rewarded for their time and expertise - these people are experts through lived experience and should be treated as such."

Dr Peter Unwin, senior lecturer in social work at the University of Worcester, said: "At the heart of the development of many university courses are the views and experiences of people who our graduates will go on to work with. It is essential that their voices are heard and that they are fairly remunerated for their expertise."

"This research reveals why we are calling on the Government to make minor changes to tax and benefit rules to ensure anyone participating in research and involvement opportunities should be able to accept full payment for the expertise they bring to charitable and public organisations."

Get involved in our campaign

Thank you for expressing an interest in helping our campaign for fair remuneration for people like yourselves. We're asking you to help our campaign in three ways:

- [Send a letter to your MP](#)
- [Send a letter to your local paper](#)
- [Send out social media content about the campaign \(#LivedExperienceFairRemuneration\)](#)

Please let us know how you get on. You can email aag@swu-union.org.uk.

See this link for sample letters:

<https://www.basw.co.uk/media/news/2021/oct/arcane-tax-rules-silence-vulnerable-groups-new-research>

Social Media

If you have not done so then please follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram - we post and tweet regular updates about the work and developments of the Social Workers Union.

Monthly Newsletter

Monthly newsletters are emailed to all SWU members. If you are not receiving this then please check what email address we have.

The newsletters are also published on the web site.

SWU can be found on the following:

Twitter: [SWU UK](#)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/socialworkersunionuk/

Instagram: www.instagram.com/socialworkersunion

Internet: www.swu-union.org.uk



NOW OPEN FOR APPLICATIONS

Download an application form here:

<https://www.basw.co.uk/swu-campaign-fund>

The Social Workers Union (SWU) has partnered with Campaign Collective to help its members engage in activism and campaigning for the next 12 months in a unique partnership.

A new campaign fund from the SWU has been created which members of the trade union will be able to draw down from in order to access professional support for issues and causes they're passionate about. The SWU, with help from Campaign Collective, will now be able to better respond to the regular requests they receive from their members to deliver impactful campaigns on a range of issues. The partnership builds on previous activity delivered by Campaign Collective on behalf of SWU, such as public affairs activity on working conditions and media work around the impact of lockdown on social workers.

Simon Francis, Founder Member of Campaign Collective said,

"We're delighted to be working in partnership with the Social Workers Union. The challenges facing social workers and the people they work with are urgent and pressing. Yet too often the media and politicians fail to recognise the issues social workers face on the frontline. We hope this campaign fund will start to address this imbalance and ensure the voices of the vulnerable and of social workers are better heard."

John McGowan, SWU General Secretary, said,

"This is a terrific way for SWU to support member-led campaigns. Our members are passionate about their union being actively involved in campaigning, and this rekindled partnership with Campaign Collective will help us be even more engaged in activism and continue to make a positive impact. This also builds on our present funding of the Austerity Action Group. With over 15,000 members, the SWU fund and partnership with Campaign Collective will be a platform for social workers to feel seen and heard, with social workers being at the root of every campaign."

WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

CLIMATE CHANGE CAN be overwhelming, it can be difficult to see how as an individual making different choices and small changes will make the difference that is needed to reverse the impact.

But if everyone collectively does something, that small difference soon mounts up.

Every year humankind dumps over 2 billion tons of waste. This either goes into landfill, is incinerated, or goes into oceans – doing untold damage to the environment, wildlife and to our own bodies.

That is why it is important, to eat what is in season and source it *locally*, make sure you aren't wasting food or other resources, remember the **5Rs** and look at what is going on in your workplace too.

Food waste

UK households waste 6.5 million tonnes of food every year, 4.5 million of which is edible. We're not talking eggshells or chicken bones... We mean the last few bites from your plate that you couldn't quite manage, or your bread crusts, or potato peelings – all stuff which could have been transformed into something delicious.

Those 4.5 million tonnes are enough to fill 38 million wheelie bins, or 90 Royal Albert Halls.

The average family of four can save just over £60 per month by reducing their food waste. Whether you're doing the food shop or ordering a meal at a restaurant, every decision is an opportunity to save food from the bin. If you don't want a side salad, ask for your meal without it. If you won't make good use of the extra portion, don't be tempted by it. And if you can't finish your main, ask for a doggy bag!

Be more energy conscious all round

- Run your dishwasher or washing machine only when they are full
- Unplug electronics when they are not in use so they don't drain power, or use an electric multipoint power strip, which you can turn off at night
- Put on an extra jumper before turning up the heating
- Turn your thermostat as low as you are comfortable with in the winter

Paper Principles

- The average UK family throws six trees of paper into their household bin a year, which makes mindful paper use a key area to reduce your waste.
- If you have a home printer, on print if absolutely necessary and fit as much content into as few pages as possible, pick sustainable paper made from 100% recycled materials
- Make digital notes and to do lists on your phone rather than on bits of paper
- Switch to paperless bills and receipts, this will save paper and keep your documents secure
- Say no to junk mail, cancel unneeded subscriptions and stopping unsolicited junk mail can cut up to 20% of the paper waste you indirectly create
- Reuse paper!

The 5 Rs



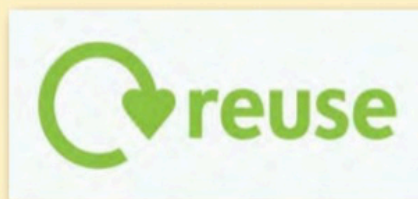
Refuse

Say no to plastic-wrapped fresh produce and learn to turn down freebies. Refuse to buy cheap, unsustainable products that cost more in the long run



Reduce

Do you really need another pair of jeans, a lipstick or that bottled drink? Free yourself from the trap of buying stuff to boost your mood



Reuse

Rather than throwing an item away, find a way to reuse, repair or upcycle it. This goes for everything from jars to clothes and furniture



Recycle

Recycle absolutely every scrap of packaging you can, when it comes to clothes, furniture or other items of value, donate them to charity



Rot

Compost all food scraps – they won't break down in landfill for decades because of the lack of light and oxygen

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:

