

BASW

The professional association for
social work and social workers

BASW UK – A Social Work Manifesto

The British Association of Social Workers (BASW)
calls on parliamentary candidates from all parties to pledge their support
for social workers and the children, adults and families who use their services.



[#SWManifesto19](#)

[#SocialWorkPledge19](#)

Supporting social work and social workers

1 Invest in the social work recruitment, education, professional development and retention initiatives we need for the next decade

According to research conducted by BASW and the Social Worker's Union with Bath Spa University, in 2018 60% of social workers were looking to leave their current job within the next 15 months. Of those respondents nearly 40% are looking to leave the profession entirely.

Staff turnover in children's services in England according to the Department for Education is going up year on year and currently stands at 16%, further official figures show that in Wales 15% of the 2017/18 social work workforce left the profession.

A thriving health and social care workforce also requires a flexible immigration policy which includes ensuring that the rights and dignity of foreign health and social care workers are protected.

2 Promote the role of social workers in multi-professional, integrated health and care

Properly delivered integration and multi-disciplinary teams can provide the best possible outcomes for all. Social workers are crucial to bringing different sources of support together to best effect, working closely with families and carers and protecting rights and dignity.

However, too often the social work contribution in integrated settings lacks investment and leadership.

BASW expects the next Government to amplify the role of social workers in all integrated settings where our expertise can transform the lives of our most vulnerable citizens and tackle some of our biggest quality and value challenges.

3 Tackle poor working conditions and unfeasibly high workloads of social workers

Compared to the UK average, working conditions for social workers were worse than 90%-95% of other employees in both public and private sector occupations, according to research by the Social Worker's Union and Bath Spa University.

Social workers worked an average of 64 days per year more than they are contracted to, an average of 11 hours a week. High case and administrative loads are a major source of stress and the quality of support to children and adults depends on providing social workers with the right conditions.

Recent Community Care research has shown that almost 73% of social workers don't have a clear career development plan. BASW and our partners know how to turn this around through better working practices – but it also takes investment.

4 Support and invest in social work practice that promotes rights, dignity, self-determination and the potential of all children, adults and communities

BASW's 80/20 campaign research showed that one of the main stressors for frontline social workers is the lack of resources for services users and the lack of time spent working with them face to face.

Relationship based practice is fundamental to social work but too often administrative work that is easier to measure has to take precedence to the detriment of children and families.

Social workers play a key role in helping people with mental health needs or learning disabilities live independent lives outside of institutional care.

Empowering community social work, focusing on people's strengths and assets, is crucial to supporting families to accessing the right support at the right time.

A Fairer Society

5 End austerity in public services: invest in social care and reform Universal Credit

14 million people in the UK are living in poverty and all citizens have inadequate access to public services, any real end to austerity must tackle this injustice as a priority.

Social workers are on the frontline of cuts to Local Authority budgets which have hit vital services for older people, children, families, individuals and carers so hard in the last decade, alongside cruel and counterproductive reforms to the Welfare system.

Social workers encounter every day the negative financial, health and behavioural outcomes of service users who have experienced benefits sanctions, such as disabled people being unfairly penalised as the 75% rate of successful appeals against PIP¹ and ESA² assessments makes clear. Others are forced out of the system altogether.

Among other measures, BASW asks that the next Government immediately removes the two-child cap on child tax credit and ends the waiting period for claimants of Universal Credit.

6 Roll back wasteful privatisation and profit driven models in health and social care

The privatisation and fragmentation of health and social care is increasing. There are serious concerns that too little is known about how these models affect people using services and the wider community.

BASW is also concerned by the resources being taken out of the public sector and distorting the obligations of the state, as well as by a lack of democratic oversight and accountability, for patients, service users, families, carers and taxpayers.

The failing adult social care sector as well as private prisons and probation experiments have been badly affected by profit-driven companies entering the market, this must not be replicated in other areas.

7 Resolve the UK-wide homelessness emergency

The roots of scandalous, widespread homelessness lie in a lack of affordable homes and years of failed housing policies. However, homelessness is also often a complex and entrenched problem for individuals linked to other issues such as mental health, in-work poverty, substance misuse, the "hostile environment" approach to immigration including no recourse to public funds, domestic violence and family breakdown. These have all been hugely under-resourced.

The solution can only be a concerted joined-up approach across Government with more affordable housing and more resources aimed at prevention. There must be urgency in fixing the supply deficit of help and of housing.

8 Whatever the outcome of Brexit, protect the peace in Northern Ireland and the human rights legislation that protects all citizens

Social work is a profession anchored by human rights. Global multi-lateral agreements such as human rights treaties as well as cornerstones of peace such as the Good Friday Agreement are fundamental to protecting those most vulnerable in society not just in the UK but around the world. A Brexit that would threaten any such agreement would be most painful for those least able to cope; furthermore, any Brexit that would herald an escalation in hostile attitudes to immigrants poses a very real risk to social cohesion.

**Please pledge your support by
tweeting using the hashtags
#SWManifesto19 and
SocialWorkPledge19**

¹ Personal Independence Payments

² Employment Support Allowance

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