

**BOOT OUT
AUSTERITY
MARCHES ON!**

**BATTLING
THE COST-OF-
LIVING CRISIS**

CAMPAIGN ACTION PACK



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FOREWORD

EMMA LEWELL-BUCK MP



People never know the value of the work you do, until they need you. As a former social worker, I know how every single day you are supporting people to help them improve their lives and keep them safe.

I also know that, in this current climate thanks to deliberate policy decisions that favour profit over people, your work has become much harder.

Nowhere more than in social work has austerity had such a devastating impact. Rising levels of poverty, hollowing out of local government, decimation of public services, low wage insecure work, erosion of the welfare state, increasing privatisation

of the NHS and never-ending cuts to children and adults' social services have all led to unprecedented levels of need.

As many wider support services continue to crumble you are the only ones left battling on for those who need you. Making your work more vital, but also more demanding. I know how increased workload and pressure can leave you feeling numb and exhausted, I have been there.

But I also know how rewarding making positive changes to the lives of those you work with can feel and how that drives you to keep going.

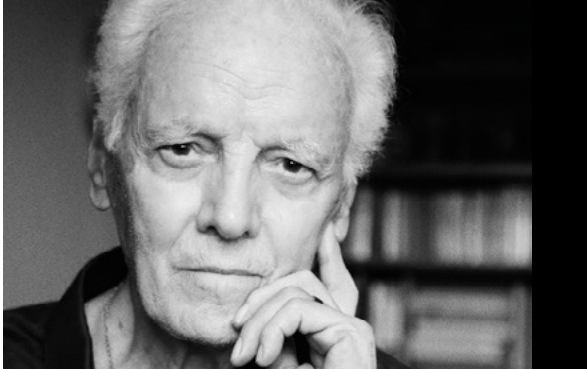
Social work is a job like no other, the lows are low, and the highs are high.

You are the ones, despite the relentless challenges you're faced with, who are making a difference every single day. You are the ones who are a voice for those who often can't speak up.

So please keep shouting for them and for all social workers.

You are their voice, so make sure it's loud!

A MESSAGE FROM SWU HONORARY PRESIDENT MALCOLM JORDAN



I have a clear memory of the morning the 100 mile walkers arrived in the conference hall of BASWs 2017 AGM, followed by a brilliant speech from Guy Shennan. The excitement was palpable and I knew at once that amongst our membership there was a mood to get active and make change happen.

Such an approach was, of course, not new and had always been a key element of social work. In 1920 Clement Attlee's book *The Social Worker* was seen as:

'as a pioneer discovering new social groupings and needs, a social investigator to build the present low level of knowledge results to form well meaning legislation, and certainly an agitator, exercising full rights as a citizen to concentrate attention on a particular aspect of a social problem.'

Since then BASW increased their work on poverty by publishing the *Anti-Poverty Practice Guide*. The Social Workers Union continues to fund the Austerity Action Group and SWU launched a Campaign

Fund, partnering with Campaign Collective to help our members engage in activism and campaigning.

Now we have an updated version of our campaign pack from the Austerity Action Group and I want to thank all who gave their time working on this project.

The pack continues to capture the essence of the walk and the hope they brought to many. It's an inspiring read with songs, music, poetry, speeches and photos alongside all the tools and templates you'd expect.

The Austerity Action Group works closely with organisations across the country, in their constant fight against the devastating and mistaken policy of austerity imposed by this government since 2010. Instead of an end to austerity we've experienced the crushing impact of a pandemic and now the cost-of-living crisis created through failed Tory economic policies.

Our own values are at risk, our rights and those of the most vulnerable are being discarded. Constant action is required. Please take a look through the pack, get inspired and get involved in our work – we need you now more than ever.

Malcolm Jordan
Honorary President 2022-2023,
Social Workers Union.
Author of *Social Work and Proud*.

WHY WE NEED THE CAMPAIGN ACTION PACK

As one of the 7 day walkers in 2017 - marching to shed a light on the devastation caused by austerity measures imposed on citizens from 2010 onwards - and having been so involved in the development of the BASW/SWU Campaign Action Pack, it's always been an imperative that we ensure social workers and social work students know about the Campaign Action Pack and feel confident in using it.

It's important that social workers know about and use the Campaign Action Pack because they bear witness to the hardship and suffering caused by austerity policies and its relationship with poverty and the widening of inequality experienced by citizens who need social work support. Local authorities also continue to see resources and funding slashed, making the role of social workers in strengthening families and communities, ever more difficult. Poverty has been described as the 'wallpaper of practice', the subtext

being that it is so normalized it goes by un-noticed, un-remarked upon. I don't subscribe to this belief for one moment; social workers see it, they hear it, they feel it and they suffer moral distress as a profession committed to social justice and equality for all but feeling a lack of agency or know how, to effect meaningful change. These were the stories and experiences social workers and social work students related to us during the 'Boot out Austerity' walk in 2017, they've continued to relate to us and why the Campaign Action Pack was developed.

The Campaign Action Pack is all about hope. Hope that social workers can practice in a way which is consistent with our international codes of ethics, that they feel a tangible sense of agency and that they can take practical steps to make a difference in standing in solidarity alongside those they support.

Before the 'Boot out Austerity' march in 2017 I was a guest lecturer on a social work qualifying programme in Wales, a role I continued long after the walk. Because I'm a social work activist and because of my connection to the walk, I was asked by the social work department

in Swansea University to develop a lecture on social work activism as part of their ethics and values module. This offered an important opportunity to locate an understanding of austerity and poverty firmly within social work ethics and values. It also offered the opportunity to begin having conversations and reflecting on systemic and structural causes of poverty with student social workers, and a perfect chance to introduce the Campaign Action Pack to them.

Some of the many ways I used the resources within the Campaign Action Pack was to develop exercises which supported critical thinking, based on some of the real-life stories in the pack. We explored the role of song, film and poetry as acts of resistance, the power of collective action and not feeling isolated as part of an international profession. We also explored the practical steps students could take to either start or be part of a wider campaign. At the end of the session students were able to recognize that social work activism takes many forms and within those many forms can be found a sense of agency and autonomy, they are not alone - they can join a march, or they can

undertake many other (and as effective) forms of resistance.

Right from the very start of their training and education, social work students in Swansea University were given practical tools to develop as ethical practitioners with a sense of agency. They could actively demonstrate empathy and solidarity, using the tool, with those they will support. Social work is a difficult profession, there's no getting away from this, so from the outset we must give social workers ethical tools to do the job. The best hope is that offering the right tools will reduce the risk of experiencing moral distress, which leads to burnout and leaving the profession. Social workers need to experience hope if they are to engender a sense of hope in those they support, and the Campaign Action Pack is an ethical tool for hope.

Allison Hulmes

**Senior lecturer in social work/
programme director, Swansea
University**

**Co-founding member of the Romani &
Traveller Social Work Association**

INTRODUCTION

The Social Workers Union (SWU) and the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) are committed to campaigning to bring an end to austerity and the cost-of-living crisis, to be replaced by investment in public services required for a socially just society.

We need to build a mass movement to highlight the differing impact of cuts and welfare reform across the UK.

The purpose of this pack is to facilitate and support local, regional and national actions by members of BASW and SWU and other social workers.

The Austerity Action Group (AAG) was created to tackle the issues of poverty and inequality that continue to negatively affect people who use social services. Austerity is a political choice, not a necessity, and we challenge these types of policies that are contributing to poverty. Supporters are always welcome.

AAG is a key vehicle in the ongoing campaign by SWU and the BASW for a more socially just society. AAG was born out of the [Boot Out Austerity \(BOA\) campaign in 2017](#) and is committed to continuing the march for social justice.

We want to give you the tools to work with other social work organisations, service users, disabled people, concerned citizens, professions, services and campaigns in the UK and internationally.

We acknowledge that there are multiple ways used within the social work profession to refer to people with lived experience of social work services. For the purposes of consistency within this document, we will use the term 'service users.'

PART 1: ACTION –

Step-by-step guides to organising events, getting into the media and using lived experience to illustrate the impact of austerity.

PART 2: INVOLVING PEOPLE –

Takes you through mapping out your stakeholders, building alliances, using high profile support and lobbying.

PART 3: STAYING LEGAL –

A few things to bear in mind when you start campaigning.

PART 4: TOOLS AND TEMPLATES –

Handy checklists, model materials and campaigning tools to save you starting from scratch.

PART 5: INSPIRATION -

A showcase of stories, articles, music, songs and poetry for you to use in your own campaigns.

We have tried to include everything you need to get campaigning, but would welcome your feedback about what works and what doesn't. You can get in touch with us at aag@swu-union.org.uk.

SWU AND BASW WORKING TOGETHER TO TACKLE AUSTERITY 2.0

The Social Workers Union (SWU) works together with the British Association of Social Workers (BASW). We believe it enables us to be strong for professional development and voice, strong for ethics and human rights, strong for representation of social workers when needed and strong in influencing government and employer policies in the long term. We are building a social work-led movement in cooperation. A movement where we can campaign together to tackle austerity 2.0.

‘Austerity’ and the ‘cost-of-living crisis’ describe economic and social policies in the UK that result in reduced public and welfare spending, lower taxes, a smaller state and an unequal distribution of wealth.

The banking crisis of 2008, the bank bailout and the consequent increase in the national debt and deficit, were used as the rationale for introducing austerity policies in the UK under Cameron’s government of 2010.

Austerity caused unnecessary harm and has continued to date, with Covid adding pressures to the NHS and the economy and the war in Ukraine creating volatile energy and food prices. Subsequent inflation has placed additional stress on many.

A House of Commons report on the [Rising cost of living in the UK](#) published in June 2023 gives an overview of rising prices, particularly food, energy and fuel prices, including the effect of the conflict in Ukraine. It outlines how rising prices, interest rates and other policies are affecting household budgets and the Government support offered. This is factual information that you can call on for use in social media posts, blogs and articles.

In January 2024, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation published [an essential guide to understanding poverty in the UK](#). It found that it has been almost 20 years, and 6 Prime Ministers, since the last prolonged period of falling poverty.

Below is an article published by [Sarah Marie Hall](#) Professor in Human Geography, University of Manchester which we are including with her permission, describing how austerity lives on..

AUSTERITY HAS ITS OWN LIFE – HERE'S HOW IT LIVES ON IN FUTURE GENERATIONS



Austerity in the UK is here to stay. The Bank of England has warned that the country is facing the longest recession since records began, predicting that the economic slump will extend well into 2024. At the same time, the most recent budget has been called austerity 2.0 by companies, unions, political figures and policy experts. This suggests the era of public spending cuts seen since 2010 has reached the next phase: austerity as the “new normal”.

Austerity policies implemented since 2010 have not been substantially reversed or retracted in recent years. In fact, they have often been levelled at the most marginalised social groups.

In 2019, cuts in total expenditure on welfare and benefit payments alone were expected to total £37 billion a year by 2020. And now, growing numbers of people in the UK are struggling with everyday costs of living, while a further £28 billion of cuts to public funding were announced in the government's November 2022 budget.

All of this shows how keenly economic policies are felt in everyday life, in the mundane: eating, heating, caring, shopping and travelling. And perpetual and cumulative cuts like those we have seen made in recent years to welfare, education, social and healthcare services shape daily lives and social relationships. The effects continue, across time and generations. They also worsen existing inequalities relating to gender, race, class, age and disability.

My previous research during the 2008-09 UK economic recession revealed how memories and intergenerational relationships are key to understanding what it means to get by in times of recession and crisis. For instance, upbringing, living through previous recessions, debt and hardship are central to how people respond to economic downturns. These experiences, family histories and memories are often shared across generations in a way that influences younger people about financial issues.

Policies that aim to tackle poverty and economic inequality need to go beyond a focus on “the household” because this is not the only (or even the predominant) framework for how social relationships are built. Instead, people live within and across households that intersect based on kinship, friendship, intimacy and more. These are the main mechanisms that people use to get by during difficult times.

Further research shows how austerity can be experienced as a “personal crisis”, affecting the things people can do, afford and dream about, including having security at home and work. It even extends to

whether or not people are able to make decisions about [having children](#). Suffice it to say, economic policies have more than momentary effects, they ripple across people's lives – and that of their children – even if their circumstances improve.

A LIFE OF ITS OWN

Taking this further, [my latest research](#) shows how austerity policies also have their own life. In the UK, this started with the early dismantling of the welfare state alongside diminished investment in deprived and post-industrial areas from the 1980s onwards. [These programmes](#) have [entrenched inequality in certain regions](#) of the UK. So, while the current era of austerity arose from the recession following the global financial crisis 14 years ago, it is more deeply embedded in certain parts of the country.

We can get an idea of [how austerity affects people's daily lives](#) by listening to their stories. Yusuf, for example, spoke to me about the instabilities he currently faces at work and how that has affected his life choices. "There's no job security or stability," he says. "There's not enough trade [as a mechanic] anymore like there used to be years ago." As a result, Yusuf does not think he could afford to have children.

Employment opportunities and local industries across northern England (where my research was carried out), had already been hit hard by years of [local underinvestment](#). But adding austerity to the mix meant these factors culminated in multi-faceted forms of insecurity and uncertainty for Yusuf. His lack of job security is then linked to being unable to afford to have children – a [different life](#) to the one he had imagined.

Even if austerity cuts were reversed today, the long-term effects for Yusuf and countless others could continue for generations. Economic policies should be implemented alongside forecasts of what their effects will be for future generations. Researching these future outcomes, as well as past and current experiences, will highlight the unevenness of austerity measures. This will help to ensure that austerity policies and the devastation they cause do not become normalised, condemning many more generations to their long-term negative effects.

[Sarah Marie Hall is Professor in Human Geography at the University of Manchester, and a member of the Morgan Centre for Research into Everyday Lives.](#)

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Austerity is having a direct impact on citizens who use social work services, on the social work task and on social workers themselves. This includes:

- People with a disability experiencing reduced benefit levels, lower employment support allowance, higher thresholds of eligibility and lower personal support payments;
- Older people who have had hospital admission unable to get timely or sufficient support to re-establish independence in the community or move to other more suitable care settings;
- Mental health service users, who experience hospital and community services being withdrawn and more episodic and discontinuous support;
- Reduction in early help for families and children: For the small minority of families who face safeguarding issues, worsening income and often severe housing issues exacerbate stress and make state intervention more likely.

Austerity has a direct impact on social workers through:

- Reductions in preventative services increasing the statutory caseload and severity of citizen needs coming forward;
- Reductions in staffing relative to demand, increasing caseloads and risk;
- Increased stress and consequent ill-health;
- Increased ethical and professional dilemmas if citizens' needs cannot be met and austerity policies do not fit with best professional judgement.

An effect of austerity is often to isolate individuals – service users and staff – from their wider communities. It is hard to effect change as a social worker in isolation. Joining and being actively involved, in your professional association, trade union, community or faith group is key to challenging austerity and building alternatives.

SOCIAL WORK STANDS AGAINST POVERTY

In response to the escalating cost-of-living crisis, BASW launched a campaign calling for a greater focus from policy-makers on tackling poverty and inequality across the UK.

Findings from BASW's 2022 annual survey of social workers revealed that 79% of respondents felt that the cost-of-living crisis was causing more problems for people using social work services, while 75% reported that it was driving people into deeper poverty.

Social Work Stands Against Poverty seeks to:

- Support social workers in their work with people in poverty and amplify the profession's voice on this issue.
- Raise public awareness of social work's role in tackling poverty and build understanding of how poverty impacts on people who use social work services.
- Influence the UK Government to deliver policies that alleviate poverty.

The campaign has three main policy asks:

1. Extend the debt breathing space scheme to 180 days.

As poverty worsens, debt increases. The breathing space scheme is a 'pause' on action and contact from creditors that also prevents interest, fees, penalties, or charges being added for a 60-day period.

2. Freeze evictions during the cost-of-living crisis.

Reducing income and increasing demands from landlords will translate into more evictions and more families becoming homeless. This cannot be allowed to happen and would cause untold damage to adults and children, placing many at safeguarding risk and lead to even more demand on social care and other services.

3. Scrap the two-child cap on benefits.

At present, relevant benefits are only paid for the first two children. This impacts on many families but disproportionately impacts on those ethnic groups who have larger families. It also results in inhumane means testing, for example, the rape clause.

In 2023, the campaign reached parliamentarians across the political divide with an anti-poverty event in Westminster and published a range of resources to influence policy-makers and support social workers in practice, including a [position statement and recommendations](#) and spotlight on poverty series. View our campaign activity [here](#).

Social workers are encouraged to get involved too. Here's a few ways you can support:

- Share our [anti-poverty practice guide](#) and spotlight on poverty series (available on the [campaign page](#)) with colleagues.

- [Tell us how poverty is affecting your practice as a social worker and help inform our campaigning for change.](#)
- Write to your elected representatives highlighting our campaign to them – [contact BASW for more information.](#)

Support our campaign on your social media channels – search #SWAgainstPoverty to view and share our posts or [contact BASW](#) for shareable resources.

BASW ANTI-POVERTY GUIDE

Recent austerity policies have made the lives of many families and communities harsher and harder and social workers routinely observe the impact of reduced income, welfare and state support on people needing services

BASW, with support from the child Welfare Inequalities Project (cWIP) has published an Anti-Poverty Practice Guide. This is designed to support social workers to discuss, develop and reflect on the challenges and consequences of poverty. It provides knowledge acquired from researchers, professionals, families and communities to social workers, to inform strategic policies and guide practice. This is part of a wider campaign by BASW to challenge austerity and its consequences.

You can find it [here](#).

BLOG IN THE HUFFINGTON POST



A blog post is another way to get your message out. It can be quite informal and chatty in style. You can view the blog “Those Who can, Protest” that Hayley Meachin, former press officer with BASW, published on the Huffington Post website [here](#).

You can take key points from blogs like this to inform your own blog post.



PART 1: ACTION

HOW TO ORGANISE AN EVENT TO GENERATE SUPPORT

A film night or open mic night is a creative way to get like-minded people together and inspire them to join your campaign. Both types of evening are good fun and all the contacts and materials you need are included in this pack.

YOU WILL NEED:



A venue with seating, a PA system, a screen and projector if you are showing a film and somewhere for people to get refreshments. Part 4 has a rough guide to finding the right venue and a venue checklist.



A copy of the film if you are showing one, plus a license if necessary. Part 5 – Inspiration has a suggested list of films.



A ticketing system
- see part 4.



A compère -
see Part 2.



People who want to sing, play music or recite, for an open mic night -
see Part 2.



A list of people to invite – have a look at the stakeholder list -
see Part 2.



One or more speakers (optional) – see the guide on how to get high profile support -
see Part 2.

INVITING THE COMPÈRE AND GUESTS

Find a compère that can warm up the audience and is confident making introductions and keeping things moving. This could be a local activist, branch chair or other member or you could invite an influential supporter.



FOR AN OPEN MIC NIGHT

Set out guidelines for an open mic slot including the length of time and nature of contributions e.g. poetry, song, music, soapbox speeches that express how people feel about the cost-of-living crisis.

Approach directly people who you know might want to take part so you have some names to advertise – reach out to local poets or singers in the community who may be sympathetic to your cause.

Advertise the event on social media and via Branch newsletters and email blasts.

If open mic acts want the audience to participate, ask for lyrics in advance so you can have copies ready or project them onto a screen.

HOW TO MAKE THE EVENING WORK

- Write out a schedule that allows time for people to mingle on arrival and that keeps the evening moving at a reasonable pace. Schedule in a slot halfway through that allows you to explain how people can get involved in the campaign.

- The compère's role is to keep the audience informed and ensure the event runs to time. They open the evening, let the audience know about fire safety and refreshment breaks as well as how the evening will run, including any house rules.
- Organise an inspiring speaker. This will increase interest in the event and offers an opportunity for audience participation. It will help to galvanise people into signing up to your campaign and taking action.
- Q&A – the compère should invite questions on contributions – usually in rounds of three works best. Ask people to keep it brief so you can get lots in and keep an eye on the time.
- Offer food and drink or have a 'bring and share' table if the venue allows it. If you have secured a free venue, such as a local cinema, part of the deal may be that guests have to use their bar or café – so ensure you allow time at the start and a break for people to buy refreshments.
- At the end of the event thank people for coming and explain how they can get involved in your campaign. Hand out leaflets with your contact details.

STAYING LEGAL

- Licensing
- Public Liability Insurance
- [Data Protection \(GDPR\)](#) for attendees'

email addresses – storing and communicating with your email list

See Part 3.

PLANNING TOOLS

You can find planning tools in Part 4 that include a countdown project plan or timeline and a model schedule or running order.



HOSTING A LIVE MUSIC EVENT

A great way to raise the profile of people suffering under the cost-of living crisis whilst doing something practical like raising money for charity is to organise a live music event. It also brings people together to enjoy an evening out.

If you are looking to raise funds for a local cause such as a food bank or others suffering from austerity measures a good way is by holding an event in conjunction with We Shall Over Come (WSO).

Over the past few years WSO has built up an excellent reputation and by associating your event with them, it can help draw in an excellent collection of independent, unsigned artists and audiences to support your chosen cause.

MAKING IT PAY

As well as an entry free, you can hold a raffle or auction.

You can approach companies for raffle or auction prizes and a contribution towards hosting the event. It is essential to have a letter from the charity you are supporting when approaching potential donors. Most, if not all will insist on proof that the charity has agreed you will fundraise for them. If you want to hold a raffle, here's an [article](#) that explains how to stay within the rules.

DAY/TIME/LENGTH

Most successful events are held over the weekend. Friday evenings are best for short events and Saturdays or Sundays for longer ones.

VENUE

Finding the right venue is very important. Somewhere that is easily accessible by public transport, has a toilet, and is wheelchair accessible is best.

Try to get a venue that will allow you to host event for free but try negotiating the

cost if there is a charge. Most WSO events are well attended, so money is spent behind the bar.

A venue that offers food and drink and is licensed for live music already will save you a lot of work. They may have public liability insurance. It's also likely they will have a PA system, so artists only have to bring their instruments.

ENTERTAINMENT

If you know of artists who would be interested in taking part approach them first - make sure to inform all this is a charity event and you are requesting that they play for free. It makes sense to offer them a free drink or two and/or some food to say thank you.

Otherwise post on social media, WSO often have a local Facebook page as well as a national one.

Also put the word out on local live music/gig pages.

Put together a running order: give singers and bands 20-30 mins slots with 15 minutes 'hand over' - allowing time for artist to switch equipment.

Keep in mind when artists are offering to play for free they may want to fit in a 'paying gig' on the same day so try and work round this when organising running order - especially a full day event.

Something worth considering is creating a Facebook messenger or WhatsApp group,

this will allow you to communicate with all involved rather than going back and forth, especially if someone wants to change slot or has to back out.

Ensure all artists know to keep to their appointment time slot and not do encores - this can have a huge consequence on the running order, cutting times of other artists and even cancelling others completely.

Ensure you or co-host keeps an eye on times and let singer/band when approaching end of slot - time for one/two more songs.

Checklist:

- Build a small team to help you and divide up the tasks
- Decide on a charity/cause - food banks are always grateful for support.
- Decide on a time/date/length of event.

- Work out a fundraising plan
- Secure the artists
- Get an MC to ensure things go smoothly on the night
- Generate publicity

STAYING LEGAL

- Organising a raffle
- Public Liability Insurance
- [Data Protection \(GDPR\)](#) for attendees' email addresses – creating, storing and communicating with your email list

See Part 3



COLLECTING REAL LIFE STORIES

AAG is collecting and using people's stories to illustrate the devastating impact of austerity on people's lives. You will no doubt have come across many similar lived experiences to those included in this pack.

Quotes and lived experience add a powerful dimension to events and media work. Journalists will always ask for case studies and we would value them.

We recognise and understand that social workers may be concerned about sharing examples of cases they have been involved in. We do not want you to break confidentiality but instead ask you to share with us your experiences in a way that protects the people you have worked with and your professional ethics, and also allows us to illustrate issues with real examples.

When sharing examples with the AAG, ensure that you:

- Remove or change names and locations.
- Reflect on your submission and make sure that it cannot identify anyone.

We also recommend that you contact us using a personal email address and not the email address provided to you by an employer.

No personal information, including the name and contact details of the person

submitting the case study, will be shared by the AAG. Please contact us if you have any concerns about personal or identifiable information.

Below is an example of a case study:

Mary* has been in a relationship for 3 years and is living with her partner and their three children. Mary is on Universal Credit. Mary was also overpaid benefits and now pays back the DWP from her Universal Credit which means that she has less money than she is entitled to. Recently, Mary's partner has become physically and mentally abusive. Her partner won't let Mary get a job as it would involve a life outside of the home. Mary says that she cannot afford to leave her partner as she doesn't have enough money to live on. She isn't entitled to any benefits for her third child, which makes it even harder to afford even the basics. A low income, and a fear that she would live in poverty if she left her abuser, is keeping Mary in an abusive relationship and her children in a violent home.

**[Mary is not her real name]*

You can send your stories to us at aag@swu-union.org.uk

Once you have collected stories, you may want to make your own book of them to use for campaigning. We offer some tips on how to do this here.



GATHERING STORIES

- All case studies received must be held in line with GDPR and only used for the purposes of the campaign.
- You can also ask the professionals that refer people to you, to tell their story. They can offer examples of how vulnerable people are falling through the gaps due to the cuts. These may need to be anonymised to protect people. One way to gather these would be to hold a small, private meeting where people can share stories and you can make notes. You can follow up on the detail and to get quotes later.
- You may want to create a synthetic case study based on real life cases that you've been involved with. You can do this by merging several cases in one so that, while it is not one case, it is several rolled in one which reduces the chances of any single incidence being identified.

TO MAKE A BOOK OF YOUR OWN

YOU WILL NEED:



**A collection of
real-life stories/
case studies**



Writers



**Photos to
illustrate**



**An editor
or editorial
panel**



**An online
publishing
tool**



**Someone who
can do the techie
side**

THE POWER OF REAL LIFE STORIES

- People like reading about other people. This is why journalists always ask for case studies when writing articles about public services. They are interested in the impact on real lives. It is a powerful way to illustrate a story because it adds weight and credibility.
- It is always better if a case study is willing to use their real name and their photo. Some case studies have gone on to do media interviews and for the audience to hear from the person affected, brings home the human impact like no other.
- It is understandable that sometimes people won't want to go public – but they can still take part and remain anonymous. Names can be changed to protect people and a region or age given so that the reader has a sense of where things are happening.

WRITING UP

Once you have the content, the easiest way to write up is to decide on a format and word count. This will also help with layout because all the stories will be a similar size. 200-500 words is fine, anything longer and people are less likely to read to the end. Shorter stories might be better used as a pull-out quote.



SUGGESTED STRUCTURE:

Ask yourself the same questions a journalist would ask - who, why, what, where and when?

Introduce the case study - include demographic information – name, age, gender, where they live, children etc.

Say a bit about the background to their circumstances - what has happened to them, what is their life like now?

Introduce the voice of the case study – allowing the case study to speak for

themselves authenticates the story and gives you a quote that can be pulled out in design stage.

Add the value of social work - how has a social worker helped them or how are they at risk because of the cuts?

Say what needs to change – to help this person and others like them.

PHOTOS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

- Pictures of the case study are best – portraits, action shots of them in a

playpark with their kids, at home drinking a cup of tea, cooking, playing with their dog. Making them different for each case study will bring the publication to life.

- If you are interviewing people near to where they live, then get some background shots of the area – particularly anything that illustrates the impact of the cuts.
- Finding photos – if you download photos from the internet, they may have a copyright attached. You can buy stock photos online or use a royalty free site such as Pexels, Pixabay or Unsplash. Always check the conditions of use.
- Charts, graphs, tables and infographics are always good. Include the source of your stats and information – journalists will ask for it. There is lots of material available at swu-union.org.uk/austerity-action-group

BRING IN THE EDITOR OR EDITORIAL PANEL

- Once all the content has been collected, someone needs to decide how to put it together – what's included and what isn't.
- There needs to be an introduction or foreword – both are opportunities to bring in an endorsement from someone high profile – this will help to get media coverage.
- There also needs to be a narrative – a few words to link from one story to the next and a summary or conclusion – what do

the stories tell us; what needs to change and how do people get involved in your campaign?

- Include a feedback form or contact details if you want people to get in touch to grow your base of case studies or be part of your campaign.
- Acknowledgements to thank everyone who has contributed.
- The back cover is a good place for website address, date etc or an advertisement from a sponsor.

PUBLISHING

- Start with a Word document to get all the written content completed.
- The simplest and most low cost format is to PDF a Word document.
- Or you can use a programme like Microsoft Publisher for design and layout.
- There are also lots of online tools available to self-publish.

STAYING LEGAL

- Copyright.
- Permission forms.
- [Data Protection \(GDPR\)](#)

See Part 3.

TOP TIPS FOR GETTING INTO LOCAL MEDIA

People trust local media more than national media, so this is a good space for your stories. If you are lucky enough to still have a hard copy local paper, then the letters page is still widely read. Keep your letters short (100-400 words) and punchy.

People who drive to work may have the radio tuned to a local station listening out for traffic news. Huge numbers are now part of community Facebook groups; follow bloggers and influencers on social media as well as local journalists, including Local Democracy Reporters.

Start by building a contact list of the above and try to make personal contact with them.

You can get facts and figures from the [Austerity Action Group](#) website to inform your media work.

THE LETTERS PAGE

The quickest option is to write in as an individual. Joint letters can be powerful but do the best draft you can before circulating and set a clear deadline for response if people want to be included.



- Act quickly – your letter needs to be topical and respond to very recent events; or an article or another letter in that publication.
 - 100 to 400 words; any longer and it is less likely to be read and more likely to be cut.
 - Start with a catchy sentence; keep it clear and factual; use short easy-to-read sentences; reference an article or previous letter with the headline and date - if you are writing in response to it.
 - Include your name, address and phone number.
-

BLOGS AND OPINION PIECES

Blogs and opinion pieces offer an opportunity to explain an issue in more depth.



- Contact the editor to run your idea past them. Check their word count (usually 750-800 words) and get a deadline.
- Ask if they want a photo – usually a headshot.
- You can find advice on writing an opinion piece [here](#)
- And there is a great example of a blog post in Part 5.

PRESS RELEASES, STATEMENTS AND QUOTES

You can find the traditional layout for a press release in Part 4, but only use this if you are contacting a journalist proactively about a forthcoming event.

- If you want to respond to a published news story or event – say budget cuts, then it is fine simply to pick up the phone or email a statement over. Now we operate in a 24-hour news cycle, you want to get your comments in first. If you pick up the phone, assume all of your comments are ‘on the record’.
- Any statement should answer the ‘who, why, what, when and where’ questions that a journalist is likely to ask.
- Keep the sentences short, punchy and quotable. The journalist may not be able to include everything you want to say, so make it easy for them to find a useable quote.

TV AND RADIO

Your local TV and radio will always be on the lookout for interesting news. Once your name is on their database, you may well get invited back to comment on related stories. Local and community radio is often overlooked and you might be surprised at your success rate if you get in touch with them.

- Email an outline of your story and be prepared to be available whenever needed.
- Prepare – think about the questions you are likely to be asked and how you will answer them or how you will turn the question around to your key messages.

- Get your most important message in early – interview time goes quickly and is often cut short.
 - When you talk, try to create a picture in the mind of the listener and talk about people, rather than in facts and figures.
 - Always stay calm and reasonable. Smile if you can remember – it even sounds better on radio!
-

NEXT STEPS – ADDING VALUE

- If you get time or space on local media, share it as widely as you can on social media.
-

PHOTOS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

- Most local press and blogs will now accept your photos taken on smart phones. Take pictures in the highest resolution possible.
 - Action shots – even if posed – are better than a group of people standing by a banner etc.
-

STAYING LEGAL

- Defamation.
- Copyright.

See Part 3.

HOW TO ORGANISE A MARCH AND RALLY

WHY DO IT?

A march ending with a rally offers an opportunity to make a very visible demonstration of opposition that will raise public awareness of your campaign. If organising a march becomes too complicated, you can just have a rally or if the weather is too unpredictable, have a public meeting instead.

It galvanises supporters into action and gives them a chance to show they care. They meet and bond with other like-minded people and feel part of a bigger movement for progressive change.

You are able to add names and contact details to your supporter database for the future.

Having high profile supporters (p.50) speak at the rally will encourage people along and you can add to the atmosphere and feel-good factor by including music, songs, readings and poetry at the event.

HOW TO DO IT

There is lots of advice online and useful links are included here – below is a summary of the key points.



BEFORE THE MARCH

- Contact your local police early on and talk them through your plans as they will need to give permission for the route of the march and location of the rally. See [here](#) for more details
- By law, the organiser must tell the police in writing 6 days before a public march. The notice must include the date and time of the march; the route and the names and addresses of the organisers
- The police can limit or change the route and set conditions for your march. They can also change the location of your rally; limit how long it lasts and the amount of people that attend. They can stop a sit-down protest if it blocks road traffic or public walkways.
- Be aware the laws of protest have become stricter. Have a plan in case things go wrong. Consider circulating a 'bust card' with a QR code or information about what a protestor should do or not do, if arrested. You can find an example on the [Liberty](#) website.
- If you are organising a rally only, you don't have to tell the police.
- Ensure the rally point is safe, away from traffic and able to easily accommodate your supporters, a platform and PA system for speakers.
- Work out a publicity plan – [press release](#), flyers, posters and online, that includes the route of the march, time and location of the start and expected time of the rally at the end as well as who is speaking.

- Ask protestors to wear colourful clothing and to bring flags, banners, placards, whistles and vuvuzelas.
- Organise stewards, high visibility clothing and communications for them.
- Organise speakers – it is a good idea to get cross-party political support if possible as well as high profile speakers including local celebrities and people from the grass roots.
- Organise people to take lots of photos and film footage to share on social media – live stream if possible.

ON THE MARCH



- You will need organisers and stewards at the start of the march to take advantage of publicity and help get people in front of the cameras, get people lined up and started on the march and stewards to keep the marchers safe and away from traffic.
- If you have high profile supporters such as your MP or a local celebrity – they

should lead the march, holding a large banner about your cause.

- Other marchers should hold banners, placards, blow whistles, sing, chant or play music to attract the attention of the public. Have some marchers handing out leaflets with simple, key messages about why the march is happening and inviting them to join you at the rally point. Include contact details so they can sign up to your campaign.
- You will need a steward to keep the marchers at the right pace – slow enough to enable photographers to get good shots and keep the marchers together or to speed things up so that marchers can move at an easy pace.

AT THE RALLY

Starting the rally – a team should go straight to the rally point to set up the platform and PA systems and test everything works. It is important to be ready to receive the marchers and get the rally started so they stay for your speakers.

Key speakers - ensure your speakers have a clear and safe route to the stage – keep them at the front of the march and if they are not marching, get them to go to the rally point early.

The role of the compère - you will need a compère to tell everyone how the rally will work, who is speaking and keep the rally moving. They are responsible for ensuring the speakers keep to time.



Agreed speakers - the compère must have an agreed speaker list so they know who is speaking and in what order. Someone should be on hand to ensure the speakers are lined up ready to go on stage.

Impromptu speakers - people from the march may come up and ask if they can speak, sing or recite poetry. You need to make a decision about whether this is something you want to encourage because it adds to the atmosphere. This is likely to depend on whether or not you know them and how long your agreed speakers will take. Supporters will start to drift off after the key speakers. Some rallies will have a short time at the start for people to come forward and add their names to the list – if you do this, bear in mind any time limit imposed by the authorities.

Ending the rally – the compère should wrap up the event by thanking the crowd and telling people how to stay involved.

Clearing up – people are likely to leave placards and leaflets behind – you need to make arrangements for cleaning the area so you leave your rally point as you found it.

AFTER THE MARCH

- Write and thank speakers and supporters and tell them next steps to maintain your campaign's momentum.
- Write to people who signed up along the way or since, as a result of your leaflets and publicity – explain what the campaign is about and how to get involved.

STAYING LEGAL

- Protests and marches: letting the police know.
- Public Order Act.
- Permission to use land owned by the local authority.
- Public Liability Insurance.
- Data Protection (GDPR) regarding personal information, such as creating/maintaining a list of email addresses

See Part 3

HOW TO ORGANISE A PUBLIC MEETING



WHY DO IT?

A public meeting is a good way to explain your issues in more depth and allow people space to ask questions. It offers a chance to provide entertainment and generate a feel good factor around the campaign. Most important of all, you can sign up supporters and the event itself will generate publicity.

HOW TO DO IT

Organising the mechanics of a public meeting is fairly straight forward – but there are a few tips and tricks to ensuring a good turnout.

Planning – choose a date – Monday to Thursday evening is best. Allow two to three months lead in time to get organised, find speakers and publicise your event.

Teamwork – a team of three or four is ideal so that you can divide up responsibility for (a) booking and managing the venue including accessibility

and refreshments (b) finding a Chair, speakers and organising entertainment (c) publicity and materials to hand out on the day and (d) someone to lead a team of volunteers on the day.

Audience - you want the room to look full, so you need to make a realistic estimate of how many people may come along and check for clashes with school holidays and other events that might affect your audience. Use a free ticketing system like Eventbrite so that you can monitor numbers and take action accordingly.

Speakers – a strong Chair and one high profile speaker if possible, plus others and if you can add a fun element such as music, song, poetry or a film, it makes the event more interesting.

Venue - use the Venue Checklist in Part 4 to help make sure everything is covered.

Publicity - Publicise, publicise, publicise – there is no such thing as too much publicity – people will need to see or hear about your event several times before the message sticks. Create a catchy title, allow plenty of time and use as many channels as you can, as often as you can. Use the Publicity Checklist in Part 4 to help.

Materials for the event – brand the event with your campaign using banners, flags, pop up stands and leaflets. Offer branding opportunities to sponsors, key supporters and endorsers so that people can see who is involved. Make signs so

that people can find the venue and room if it's not clear.

The day before – if you have used Eventbrite, the system will automatically send out reminders – otherwise, draft a very short email and bcc all your guests in. Contact speakers with an outline of the event and to see if they need a lift or anything else.

On the day – have a timed running order so the compère can keep the meeting to time, brief volunteers (see Part 4).

Closing the meeting – the Chair should thank the speakers and the audience for coming, explain next steps and how people can get involved in the campaign. If you think people want to stay and carry on the discussion, then it might be worth suggesting a venue nearby so everyone feels included.

Clear the room - of all your materials. Venue staff are likely to appreciate volunteers helping stack chairs, take glasses back to the bar etc.

USING SOCIAL MEDIA

In 2023 it is estimated that about 84% of the UK population uses social media. Social media is a good platform for activists to share information, connect with others, and grow campaign networks. Creating engaging social media content can increase your campaign's reach, raise awareness of the issues being identified,



strengthen solidarity, and increase chances of achieving a positive outcome.

CHOOSING WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNEL(S) TO USE



At the time of writing (2023), YouGov released a poll with information on the most popular social networks that can be filtered by gender and generation. It's worth a look when deciding which social media to use to promote your campaign or event to the right audience.

[The most popular social networks in the UK | Technology | YouGov Ratings](#)

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (renamed "X" in July 2023), LinkedIn, WhatsApp, TikTok and Snapchat are well-known and popular. During the coronavirus

pandemic, many communities set up Facebook pages or WhatsApp Groups which are now embedded in culture as viable sources of local information.

Which channel you decide to use really depends on who you want to reach, what you want to do, and your local knowledge.

BUILDING AND ENGAGING AUDIENCES

Bear in mind that it takes time to build an audience. If you're organising a one-off event, rather than building an ongoing campaign, it's a lot easier to go into the established space of your audience rather than try to pull them into a new space you've just set up.

WHAT TO POST

Vary your content – keep messages short and focused. Mix things up by linking to other material including newspaper articles, videos and blogs; post film, pictures and infographics. This is known as 'rich content' and is more attractive to the reader than plain text.

Examples of campaign activity that regularly gets highlighted on social media include petitions (which you can sign and share), public events, letters to governments calling for changes in policy or studies, research findings and reports revealing a specific issue that needs addressed.

On the whole, pictures and film are popular across all social media with short form content working on most and long form better suited to YouTube.

You can live stream events and directly engage with your audience on Facebook and Instagram.

If you want to build a campaign group where you can have more private discussions and discuss campaign actions, try WhatsApp.

Whichever social media platforms you choose, remember that genuine and authentic engagement is highly valued on all platforms, broadcast less so.

Follow the main SWU and BASW social media channels and tag them in your posts, so that they can help boost the impact of your content by liking and sharing it. You can find links to their channels on their websites.

Keep up to date with the [BASW Social Media policy](#) which covers areas including what is professionally appropriate and responsibility, confidentiality, and privacy.

FIVE TOP TIPS

- Define your audience
- Go into their online spaces
- Link with organisations
- Develop rich content with a clear, consistent message
- Engage people with enthusiasm and compassion.



HOW TO MAKE A SHORT FILM

Mobile phones and tablets make it easier to make a short film that you can post to your Facebook group, YouTube and other social media feeds.

PLAN AHEAD

Plan what you want to record – say for example, you are hosting an open mic event, make a list of all the things that you think might work. Get interviewees to sign a disclaimer form allowing you to use them on film. Email aag@swu-union.org.uk for blank copies. If you bring in another volunteer to do the recording then a list of film footage will help them plan their filming so you get what you want.

You only need one minute of film – two at the maximum, but get plenty because you only want to use the best bits of footage.

When you do interviews and voice-overs, be aware how much sound is around you. It might help to do one or two interviews in a quiet room and you can use them as voice-over material for a different shot in the film.

If you are filming on a smart phone, always hold it landscape.

You can edit the film on your phone or download software. Try Windows Live Movie Maker, iMovie, Adobe Premier Clip, CapCut, Vimeo or Canva.

HOW TO SET UP A STREET STALL

Street stalls are good for:

- Raising awareness of your campaign locally
- Generating a supporter database
- Sign up to petitions
- Conducting straw polls and surveys

You can set up a street stall on any public land providing that it does not cause an obstruction. Be aware that land owned privately or under a PFI scheme means that security staff can legally ask you to move.

A Saturday morning in a busy shopping area or outside a supermarket is a premium location. Near to railway stations (but not on their land) is great for catching commuters in the early morning and evening.

It helps to have something on the stall that makes it look fun and to entice people over – colourful balloons, sweets or cakes for example.

Make sure you get people talking and signing up before they get their cake!

A couple of hours is usually as much as you can expect volunteers to stay for, so organise people in shifts if you plan to be there for the whole day. Be clear about who will set up and pack away.

You will need:

- A fold up trestle table, like a decorating table
- A tablecloth and clips or weights to hold it in place
- Signage
- Materials – leaflets, petitions and folders to put them in
- Clipboards
- Stationery box with scissors, Sellotape, pens and stapler
- Balloons, sweets, cakes

HOW TO DESIGN SURVEYS AND POLLS

Surveys and polls are a good way of engaging people with your campaign and getting feedback. You can design surveys and polls for use on street stalls as well as doing them online.

If you are thinking about press releasing the results, be aware that survey responses of less than 100 are not newsworthy but anything over 100 can be considered ‘indicative’ of how people feel.

Journalists will want to know how many people were interviewed, demographics (if you are using them as part of your story) and background information to the survey. If you surveyed a random group of people, it is fine to say that.

Survey Monkey is a handy tool that will do a lot of the hard work for you. It can be set up for open or a range of multiple-choice questions. For example, you can write



questions that give a 'yes/no/don't know' option, grade answers from 1 to 5, agree or disagree etc. This tool will also compile the data for you to analyse. It is free up to a point.

- Capture data – an email so that you can stay in touch, but comply with [Data Protection](#) by allowing an 'opt out' and telling people how the data will be used on the petition form.

TOP TIPS

- Ask for demographic information – anything you consider relevant.
- Keep questions short and to the point.
- Ask one question at a time.
- Do not ask leading questions.
- Use language in common use.
- Don't use jargon.
- Keep to a maximum of ten questions per survey.
- A poll works best with just one or two options as the number of responses is likely to be quite small.

HOW TO ORGANISE A PETITION

Petitions are a good way of generating support and capturing data. You can design your own, like the one below or use an online site like [change.org](#) or [38degrees](#). The online sites are worth a look as they have lots of useful tips.

If you want to influence Parliament, devolved authorities or your Council, you can also set up a petition on their sites.

Here is an example of the petition site for [Brighton and Hove City Council](#). This is where you can [Petition Parliament](#) – this site has links for the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly.

TOP TIPS

- Be original.
- Have a catchy heading.
- Keep it short and simple with only one request.
- Use common language - no jargon.
- Aim for broad appeal and share - the success of petitions is all about the numbers.

PETITION TEMPLATE

For a petition template see the following page at the end of Part 1.

HOW TO MAKE INFOGRAPHICS

An infographic can transform complex information into something that is interesting and fun to share on social media.

If well-designed, they are a good way to get messages across to your audience quickly on social media.

You can find ready-made infographics or you can design your own.

[Canva](#) has lots of free design elements and fonts and only a small charge (less than £1) for premium elements.

[Easel.ly](#) has a dozen free templates with a library of arrows and shapes. You can customise the text and upload your own graphics.

CRAFTIVISM – THE ART OF GENTLE PROTEST

Craftivism is a non-threatening way of engaging with others through craft activities. It is a gentler way of campaigning but can be very effective, and you can do it alone or as a group.

You can use craftivist activities to generate awareness of issues by organising small creative sessions in a public place such as outside the Town Hall or your local MP's office. When people stop and ask you what you are doing, it offers the opportunity to have a conversation in a quiet and non-threatening way.

You can find out more about craftivism and the [Craftivist Collective](#) on their website, which also offers a range of ideas, kits and books.

SUPPORTING ANTI-POVERTY CAMPAIGNS

There are high-profile nationwide anti-poverty campaigns coordinated by other organisations that are worth following and getting involved with if you can. Here are some of them:

[All Kids Count: Lift the Two-Child Limit](#)

[Challenge Poverty Week \(Scotland\)](#)

[Children at the Table](#)

[End Child Poverty Coalition](#)

[End the Housing Emergency](#)

[Feed the Future](#)

[Guarantee Our Essentials](#)

[It Doesn't Add Up](#)

[No Child Left Behind](#)

[Scrap the Cap](#)

[Social Work Stands Against Poverty](#)

[Together Through This Crisis](#)

[Warm this Winter](#)

BRIEF BACKGROUND		
PETITION TEXT: WE THE UNDERSIGNED PETITION [INSERT NAME] TO [INSERT WHAT YOU WANT THEM TO DO]		
NAME	EMAIL	DATE
BY SIGNING THIS PETITION, I AGREE THAT SWU AND THE AAG CAN STAY IN TOUCH WITH ME.		

PART 2: INVOLVING PEOPLE

STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

If you are going to organise at a local level, it is a good idea to map out your potential supporters as in the diagram below.

Your stakeholder map is the start of your supporter database. It can become

your mailing list when you are organising events and you can identify key people who will come out on your side when you write letters to the press or need speakers at a public meeting for example.

Our directory on the next page offers links to various stakeholder groups and the Austerity Action Group can offer advice if you need it:
email aag@swu-union.org.uk.



STAKEHOLDER DIRECTORY

ACADEMICS AND EXPERTS

Search local university and college websites and online to find people who have written papers and spoken in public on austerity or the cost-of-living crisis.

[Joint University Council Social Work Education Committee](#)

[Association of Professors of Social Work](#)

CAMPAIGN GROUPS

[Child Poverty Action Group](#)
Join the network of campaigners.

[CPAG in Scotland](#)
Contact directly for local campaigns.

[Disabled People Against the Cuts](#)
Local groups.

[Social Work Action Network](#)

[The People's Assembly Against Austerity](#)

CHARITIES, FAITH ORGANISATIONS, COMMUNITY GROUPS AND LEADERS

Search online and check your local authority website.

ELECTED POLITICIANS

[MPs](#)
Parliament website

[Local Councillors](#)
Local authority website.

[Metro Mayors](#)
LGA website has links and useful information.

[MSPs](#)
The Scottish Parliament.

[Welsh Parliaments](#)
National Assembly for Wales.

[London Mayor and Assembly Members](#)
Greater London Authority.

[Northern Ireland Assembly](#)

LOCAL CELEBRITIES

Via their agent unless you have a personal contact - search online for 'agent for [INSERT CELEBRITY NAME]'

MEDIA

[BBC TV and radio](#)

[ITV](#)

Click on your area.

Other independent local TV and radio:

[Newslink](#)

[Heart](#)

[Community radio](#)

Search online.

[Local press](#)

Find contact details online or in the inside cover of the paper.

POLITICAL PARTIES

The best way to find local political party activists is through an elected politician or by searching online.

[Conservatives](#)

[DUP](#)

[Green Party](#)

[Labour](#)

[Liberal Democrats](#)

[Plaid Cymru](#)

[SDLP](#)

[Sinn Fein](#)

[SNP](#)

[Ulster Unionist Party](#)

SERVICE USERS AND CARERS

[Shaping Our Lives](#)

[National Survivor and User Network](#)

[Family Rights Group](#)

Via your own networks.

Any university in your area which delivers social work education will have an associated service user and carer group. Their purpose is primarily to ensure that their voice is heard alongside those of practitioners and academics and that lived experience is valued in professional education. However, many of their members are interested in wider political issues such as austerity and will have links to local service user and carer groups.

STUDENT BODIES

Student social work societies – check with local colleges and universities through UCU or NUS or look on social media.

[National Union of Students](#)

TRADE UNIONS

[GFTU](#)

[TUC directory](#)

Contact your regional TUC to find your local trades council(s).

POVERTY IN THE FOUR UK NATIONS

Whilst poverty is a UK-wide challenge, the political responsibilities for tackling it at a national level varies between the nations.

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland all have devolved parliaments and governments, with differing levels of legislative powers in policy areas that can impact poverty.

This is important to consider in the context of influencing policy-makers. For example, if you live in Scotland, it would be more sensible for you to direct campaigning on tackling homelessness to the Scottish Government rather than the UK Government, since housing matters are devolved to the Scottish Parliament.

There have also been examples in recent years of devolved administrations passing legislation to tackle poverty and inequality.

The Scottish Child Payment is a weekly payment of £25 for parents and carers in Scotland on low incomes for each child under-16 in their care.

Wales piloted a universal basic income scheme for all young people leaving the care system at 18.

Northern Ireland provided additional support to households who would otherwise have had their benefits reduced due to the Bedroom Tax and Benefit Cap.

These examples show why it's important for people living in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to engage with representatives in the devolved parliaments, as well as the UK Parliament.

The tables below explain which areas that can impact on poverty are within the remit of which parliament for each nation. For those living in England, all areas are the responsibility of the UK Parliament.

SCOTLAND

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT (DEVOLVED MATTERS)	UK PARLIAMENT (RESERVED MATTERS)
Social Security (some aspects)*	Social Security (some aspects)*
Taxation (some aspects)**	Taxation (some aspects)**
Education	Energy (most aspects)***
Housing	Immigration & Asylum
Health & Social Services	
Local Government	
Justice & Policing	

**Social Security Scotland, an agency of the Scottish Government, is responsible for some benefits including Best Start Grant, Carer's Allowance Supplement, Child Disability Payment, Child Winter Heating Assistance and Funeral Support Payment. The UK Government is responsible for Universal Credit, Child Benefit, State Pension and Pension Credit.*

***Income tax is not a devolved tax, but the Scottish Parliament has powers to set tax bands (with the exception of the personal allowance).*

****The generation and supply of electricity and gas is reserved to the UK Parliament, however promoting energy efficiency is the responsibility of the Scottish Parliament.*

WALES

WELSH PARLIAMENT (DEVOLVED MATTERS)	UK PARLIAMENT (RESERVED MATTERS)
Education	Social Security, Child Support & Pensions
Housing	Taxation
Health & Social Services	Energy
Local Government	Immigration & Asylum
Health & Social Services	Justice & Policing

NORTHERN IRELAND

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY (DEVOLVED MATTERS)	UK PARLIAMENT (RESERVED MATTERS)
Education	Taxation
Housing	Energy
Health & Social Services	Immigration & Asylum
Local Government	
Pensions & Child Support	
Justice & Policing	
Social Security	

CONTACT THE POLITICIANS WHO REPRESENT YOU

Politicians want to hear from you. It is their job to represent you and take action on your behalf.

You have elected representatives both locally and nationally. You can ask them to campaign on poverty related issues, raising matters with local and national governments and calling for change.

You can either write to them or meet them at their local advice surgeries.

Your elected representatives will usually hold advice surgeries in your local area when they're not in parliament. This is the best opportunity to meet them if you would prefer to speak to them face-to-face.

Most will advertise their surgery times on their website or their social media channels. However, you can also email them or call their office to enquire and make an appointment.

You might prefer to engage with them in writing only. When emailing them, make sure to include your address so they know that you are their constituent. Personalised emails are more effective but below is a template you can use.

WHO REPRESENTS YOU?

The table below shows you how to search for the contact details of your local representatives.

	UK PARLIAMENT	DEVOLVED PARLIAMENT	LOCAL PARLIAMENT
ENGLAND	Find your MP	N/A	Find your councillors
SCOTLAND	Find your MP	Find your MSP	Find your councillors
WALES	Find your MP	Find your MSs	Find your councillors
NORTHERN IRELAND	Find your MP	Find your MLAs	Find your councillors

Dear [Insert name],

As my elected representative, I'm writing to ask you to campaign for an end to poverty and social injustice.

As a social worker, I know first-hand the devastating impact of poverty on people's lives. It is a violation of people's dignity. It causes shame, social exclusion and affects people's self-worth. It denies them, and their family, the resources required to live their life to its full potential.

Social workers work to uphold, protect and advance human dignity, rights and wellbeing. These are the ethical principles that underpin our practice. Our profession therefore advocates for a fairer and more socially just society where everyone has a good quality of life.

Unfortunately, as cost-of-living pressures worsen, more and more people are at risk of falling into poverty. This is having a major human cost and intensifying problems in other areas. For example, more people are at risk of becoming severely unwell and needing social care support.

In response to these challenges, we need governments at local and national levels to work to reduce the cost-of-living crisis, lift people out of poverty for good and create a fair and compassionate society where nobody is left behind.

Solutions that focus on prevention are more effective and less costly than delivering services at crisis point. Policies that invest in people and families reduce risk of long-term problems developing and putting more strain on already stretched public services.

As my elected representative, I urge you to take this on board and use your platform and influence to help end poverty. What actions will you take locally and nationally to make this a reality?

I would also welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this issue further. Could I make an appointment with you at your next advice surgery please?

Thank you for your time on this hugely important issue and I look forward to your reply.

Kind regards,

[Your name and address]

USING HIGH PROFILE SUPPORT

- High profile supporters, such as leading academics, politicians and local celebrities can help raise awareness of your campaign and create news stories.
- Ways to involve them include speaking at an event, writing or endorsing a letter or article, social media activity, media interviews, meeting service users and social workers or perhaps a visit to a facility.
- It can take time to track down contact details and get a response so allow at least a couple of months and have a reserve list.
- If you don't know your speaker personally, make the approach formally and privately, not via social media or by 'doorstepping'.
- Keep your 'ask' small and specific – it is worth offering a range of ways someone can help your campaign.
- Accept if the answer is no - no may not mean never, sometimes people are just really busy or the timing doesn't work.
- If you can't get someone you consider to be high profile enough to carry your event, then invite two or three people and have a panel.
- If the answer is yes, make life as easy as you can for them by offering a lift, providing a private space/green room and refreshments on arrival. Start

and finish on time and limit the number of selfies and questions from people as they try to leave.

- Get lots of action photos and ask if they will sign copies of programmes, books, bottles of wine – things that you can auction or raffle to raise money at a later date.
- Write and thank them and ask if they will continue to support the campaign but be mindful not to 'over-use' them.

BUILDING ALLIANCES

- Using the stakeholder map as a guide, make a list of names and contact details of your likely supporters.

Two good ways to get started are:

- Make 1:1 personal contact by phone or email to tell them about your campaign and ask if they will support you.
- Hold a roundtable event or meeting to bring everyone together.
- Clearly set out your proposals before the group, including what it is you want them to do.
- Invite discussion and be prepared to negotiate, know what your own red lines are and understand other organisations' red lines.
- Appreciate that some representatives will need time to get clearance from their internal democracies.

- The Lobbying Act has made some organisations very nervous about campaigning – work with them to find ways they can help.
- Offer to come back with a plan of action by an agreed date so that people leave the room feeling like they have become part of something that is really going to happen.
- Don't get drawn into taking action you are not comfortable with or joining forces with organisations that you feel don't have your best interests at heart.
- Keep ownership of your campaign; lead and communicate.

MEET THE POLITICIANS WHO REPRESENT YOU

Before going to meet a local politician, you need to be able to answer three questions:

- (1) what do you want?
- (2) who has the power to give you what you want?
- (3) how can you get them on board?

Being clear about your 'asks' and talking to the right people from the start saves a lot of time, but sometimes you have to go through others to reach the person who has the power to give you what you want.

Winning around all those along the route can help fast track your issue to the person with the power to make change happen. It goes without saying that you should always be polite, be prepared to

explain your issue (they might be unaware of it) and ask them what they can do to help. Be open to them pointing you to another person who is better placed to give you what you want.

It's always best to engage in person if you can. Emailing your local MP, MSP, Assembly Member or Ward Councillors asking for a meeting is a good idea. Some local politicians will have surgeries you can attend – check out their websites for details.

Keep the email brief and to the point. In the first line, state that you are a constituent and outline the issue in a few lines or one short paragraph.

At the meeting – take a brief of no more than 2 sides of A4 that sets out your case. Include a short background, links to useful information, a couple of ideas about how they can help and your contact details. The meeting will usually last around 45 minutes at the most and time can disappear very quickly. Write a list of points to cover and ensure you get to the 'ask' so the politician understands what action is expected of them – although they may suggest alternative and more effective routes. If you are going as a group, agree who will say what before you go into the room.

MAKING THE 'ASK'

Once you have made your case, you need to gauge from the politician's response, the extent to which they can and will support you. Have a list of up to three things they can do to help – they may

offer advice including alternative ways to make an approach or they might help to smooth the way and facilitate a meeting with a higher authority. Here are a few things you can ask them to do:

- Write a letter to the politician responsible for social care asking for the budget to be increased.
- Amplify your message by speaking at a meeting, sharing your messages on social media etc.
- Come to meet a group of social workers or a group of people that you work with who are at risk.

At the end of your meeting you can offer to draft letters and materials for them – this helps to keep you in control of the message and will speed up the action to be taken.

Keep in touch with them.

RAISING ISSUES YOURSELF AT MEETINGS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

How you can raise issues at meetings can vary from one institution to another.

Look at their constitution and/or email the Democratic Services Team to check how to go about making your voice heard.

The main rule is that it has to be a topic that the organisation has power to act on. There are many layers of government, more in some areas than others, so check who has the power to give you what you want before you get in touch with them.



Once you've mapped out your route to the person with the power, it's worth going along to a meeting in person or watching online to help you to understand how things work.

There are three ways you can raise an issue yourself at most authorities:

- Ask a question.
- Present a petition.
- Make a speech (deputation).

One top tip is that once you have decided on how to raise your issue, see if you can get a local politician on side to follow up with a question or to call for a report. This ensures that your issue moves onto the next stage. Be aware that if the meeting simply agrees to 'note' a petition or deputation, often nothing further is likely to happen.

If you get stuck, email aag@swu-union.org.uk for advice.

PART 3: STAYING LEGAL

AS A CITIZEN AND AS A SOCIAL WORKER

A caveat about campaigning in work time.

This pack is about the sort of campaigning against austerity which you can do outside of the workplace and outside of work time. As a citizen, you are free to campaign in this way. It is your right and you should not be anxious about doing this.

We believe that adhering to our Code of Ethics obliges social workers to work in all possible ways to combat poverty and minimise its effects in the lives of service users. [The Anti-Poverty Practice Guide](#) provides guidance and ideas on this.

With regard to the campaign ideas contained with this pack, do note that if you are employed as a social worker or other human services professional, you are bound by employment law and should not use work resources to organise campaigning events (e.g. work email, your work laptop or work phone), nor use work time to plan and deliver such events.

You should also be careful not to be accused of trying to persuade service users and carers toward a particular political view. Be careful of any activities or conversations that might be perceived (rightly or wrongly) as an abuse of your position. While you will also become aware of many of the ways that austerity and the cost-of-living crisis impacts on service users and carers, you should not use individuals as examples in such a way as to breach client confidentiality. Take



advice about how to raise injustices in other ways, whilst ensuring anonymity.

PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE

This may be needed to cover the potential for accidents at your event – check with the venue or email:

aag@swu-union.org.uk.

PERMISSION TO TAKE PEOPLE'S PHOTOGRAPHS

If you want to use people's photographs, you can get a permission form from:

aag@swu-union.org.uk.

PERMISSION TO USE LAND OWNED BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

If you want to hold a rally or other event on land owned by the Council, you may need to get permission, complete a form and pay a fee. Check with a friendly local Councillor or get advice directly from your local authority. You are likely to be asked to send them a copy of your Public Liability Insurance.

COPYRIGHT

Copyright protects people's work and stops others from using it without their permission. It covers dramatic, musical and artistic work, including illustration and photography, web content, sound and music recordings, film and television recordings.

If you want to use pictures or photographs in campaign material, check the copyright first. The owner may charge a fee to use it or simply ask for a credit. If you use it without asking, they can demand a license fee or require you to destroy your material.

Royalty free images and stock photos are available online.

FILM LICENSING

Showing a film to a group of people may require two types of license. A Premises License and a Film Copyright License, but there are exceptions. Check the [Independent Cinema Office \(ICO\)](#) website for the latest information.

PREMISES LICENSING

Information on the ICO website states that: *"If you are charging for tickets but only to cover your costs, and assuming your screening is to be held between 8am and 11pm, your venue does not need a premises licence. The Licensing Act 2003 defines screenings of this type as not-for-profit."*

You can charge for additional activities (such as refreshments or film talks) with a view to making a profit, as long as these are kept distinct from admission to the film itself."

If you need a license, the venue may already have one so check with them before doing anything else.

FILM COPYRIGHT LICENSE

To screen a film to the public, you need permission from the film's copyright owner. Usually this is its UK distributor. Permission may be granted in the form of a licence or a film booking. Check the ICO website for up-to-date information.

DEFAMATION

A defamatory statement is one which injures the reputation of another person, it “tends to lower him in the estimation of right-thinking members of society generally”.

There are two ways this can happen:

Libel – where a defamatory statement is put in writing – in hard copy or online.

Slander – where a defamatory statement is spoken or published as an accurate quote.

Broadly speaking, to protect yourself from being accused of defamation:

- Only attack a policy, not a person.
- Unless you have evidence your statement is true, don't make it.
- Get someone else to check copy on campaign materials – if in doubt – take it out.
- If you make speeches or participate in media interviews, prepare so that you are not caught out – talk about the policy or the political party, not a person.

You can find more information on the [HSE website](#).

DATA PROTECTION (GDPR)

The United Kingdom follows both European Union General Data Protection

Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018. The DPA incorporates GDPR into UK law and adds further provisions for specific purposes.

The DPA controls how personal data can be used in the UK. It is important to ensure that your campaign is in compliance with the DPA. Be sure to appoint someone in the campaign to be the “data controller” who ensures compliance with data protection legislation, including why and how personal data collected by the campaign is processed and stored.

If you plan to share someone's story as a case study you will need their explicit consent to do this. Get this consent in writing and be clear about how the information they share with you will be used and by whom – the information must only be used in this way. Unless you have been given explicit consent by the person to share personal information that identifies them (such as their name, location, and/or photo) in a case study, all personal information in their story must be completely redacted or anonymised.

If you are going to collect names, addresses and emails of people who support your campaign:

- Add a statement to the petition or whatever supporters are signing to say how you will use the information.
- State that the information will not be used for another purpose.

- You must store the information securely in either paper or electronic form. Electronic information must be adequately protected (for example, with a password) and not share it with others.
- Always blind copy people in group emails or use mailing software like MailChimp.
- Ensure it is clear how people can 'unsubscribe' on every communication.

Once the information collected by a campaign is no longer required, it must be securely destroyed.

You can find further information at the Information Commissioner's Office - ico.org.uk.

THE LOBBYING ACT

The Lobbying Act places restrictions on how organisations can campaign in the run up to elections.

It covers spending on a wide range of campaign activities including media events, transport, public rallies and events.

If you campaign in the run up to an election and your activities are intended to influence how people will vote or a reasonable person might think that was your intention, then you may need to track and report on your spending as there are strict spending limits.

BASW and/or SWU will issue advice about campaigning activity if an election is called.

THE PUBLIC ORDER ACT

The Public Order Act came into force in 2023. It introduced measures that significantly increase the police's power to respond to protests and put restrictions in place for those taking part in them. It introduces the following new criminal offences:

- Locking-on & being equipped for locking-on
- Causing serious disruption, obstructing major transport works and
- Interfering with key national infrastructure amongst others

For more information and a link to a printable 'bust card' in a variety of languages, visit Liberty's website at libertyhumanrights.org.uk and search 'Public Order Act'.

PROTESTS AND MARCHES: LETTING THE POLICE KNOW

By law you must tell the police in writing 6 days before a public march if you're the organiser. [Check here](#) for the details you need to give them and for police powers to set conditions.

If there's no march organised as part of your protest, you do not have to tell the police, but bear in mind the new provisions of the Public Order Act 2023.

PART 4: TOOLS AND TEMPLATES

A ROUGH GUIDE TO FINDING THE RIGHT VENUE

It makes life easier if you can find a venue that already delivers the kind of event that you want to run, rather than try to adapt an empty space. Nowadays, there can be an expectation that the event will also be available online. This may be either as a hybrid event where people can view and possibly participate live or to watch back.

Work out what you need and find the closest match – if you can save having to find and cart about PA systems, portable screens and projectors it will give you more time to focus on the content of your event.

Budget - some venues, such as pub function rooms, will be free although may require a minimum spend across the bar - try negotiating it down. Others will be low cost if you use the venue on a quiet night. Many community spaces charge by the hour which can make your event cheaper.

VENUES FOR PUBLIC MEETINGS, FILM NIGHTS, OPEN MIC EVENTS AND ROUND TABLES

VENUE	FILM NIGHT	OPEN MIC NIGHT	PUBLIC MEETING	ROUND TABLE	COST
CHURCH HALL			✓	✓	£
COMMUNITY CINEMA	✓	✓			££
COLLEGE UNIVERSITY OR TRAINING CENTRE	✓	✓			£
COMEDY CLUB		✓			££
COMMUNITY CENTRES			✓	✓	£
CONCERT HALL	✓	✓	✓		£££
CONFERENCE AND ARTS CENTRES	✓	✓	✓		£££
NIGHTCLUB		✓			££
PUB FUNCTION ROOM		✓		✓	£
THEATRE	✓	✓			££

VENUE CHECKLIST

Never book a venue without visiting it first. It helps to visualise how your event will work and understand the layout, spot any potential problems, decide what support you will need on the day and build trusted relationships with the people who run the venue.

LOCATION

- Public transport
- Car parking

BOOKING

- Room capacity
- Available dates and times
- Cost
- Deposit
- Cancellation policy
- Licensing arrangements

ROOM SET UP AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Layout
- Set up and break down time
- PA system
- Roving mic for Q&A
- Screen and projector
- Technical operatives
- Potential for hybrid event

REFRESHMENTS

- Café
- Bar
- Bring your own refreshments

DISABILITY

- Hearing loop
- BSL interpreter*
- Wheelchair access
- Other access need

*Ask in advance, if any guests will need a BSL interpreter and if so, whether they have an interpreter they prefer to use. You may need to book about a month ahead. You will need to allow an interpreter a break about every 20 minutes, so book more than one interpreter for a meeting that will take a couple of hours.

PUBLICITY CHECKLIST

Publicity is so important and you can't get too much when you're running a campaign. Give your campaign and your events a catchy title and push out to your target audience.

BUILD A LIST OF LOCAL MEDIA AND JOURNALISTS

- TV
- Radio
- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Online publications
- Bloggers
- Social media influencers

SOCIAL MEDIA – WHAT DOES YOUR AUDIENCE USE?

- Facebook
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- Snapchat
- TikTok
- WhatsApp
- X (Twitter)

WAYS TO USE LOCAL MEDIA AND WORK WITH JOURNALISTS

- Press release
- Statement or quote
- Letter
- Article/opinion piece
- Paid for advertising
- Phone-in

ADVERTISING

- Flyers/postcards/business cards
- Posters
- Social media infographics

TO INCLUDE ON ALL MEDIA

- Hashtag
- Website address
- Contact details
- Social media feeds
- QR Code

COUNTDOWN PROJECT PLAN/TIMELINE

THREE MONTHS BEFORE

AGREE OVERALL PLAN,
RESEARCH POSSIBLE SPEAKERS
AND/OR FILMS, MUSICIANS ETC.
VISIT VENUES,
CHECK LICENSING,
PERMISSIONS, LEGALITIES

TWO MONTHS BEFORE

FINALISE EVENT PLAN, BOOK
VENUE AND BOOK SPEAKERS.
SET UP TICKETING SYSTEM.
START TO PUBLICISE
THE EVENT

ONE MONTH BEFORE

FOCUS ON PUBLICITY AND
AUDIENCE BUILD.
PERSONALLY INVITE
KEY STAKEHOLDERS

2-3 WEEKS BEFORE

PREPARE MATERIALS TO HAND
OUT ON THE NIGHT.
PREPARE FINAL PRESS
RELEASES. DRAFT SCHEDULE
FOR THE EVENING AND AGREE
WITH PARTICIPANTS
AND ARTISTS

1 WEEK BEFORE

BRIEF TO
CHAIR/COMPÈRE
AND SPEAKERS

DAY/NIGHT BEFORE

VISIT VENUE TO MAKE FINAL
CHECKS, SEND A REMINDER TO
ALL GUESTS. PRINT 3 COPIES OF
GUEST LIST, RUNNING ORDER,
SPEECHES AND
CHAIR'S BRIEF

ON THE DAY

ARRIVE EARLY TO
SET UP IF NOT POSSIBLE
THE NIGHT BEFORE.
HAND OUT FLYERS
AS PEOPLE ARRIVE

MODEL SCHEDULE/RUNNING ORDER



MODEL PRESS RELEASE

DATE

HEADLINE – WHAT IS THE STORY?

The opening paragraph is the most important – it should contain the media ‘hook’ to capture the journalist’s interest. It should be a summary of the story. News is current, significant, of interest to the public and can be controversial, fun or quirky.

WHO, WHY, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE?

ESSENTIAL BACKGROUND,

Key facts and figures, impact, why it is important...keep it short and to the point, use every day, non-technical language – think pub conversation!

QUOTES – SENIOR FIGURE, NAMED SPOKESPERSON, CASE STUDY – 2 MAXIMUM

The quotes should help to tell the story – this is the human interest element. The quote should express a particular point of view, be lively, possibly controversial and never bland.

FURTHER BACKGROUND

If this is a follow-up from a previous story, include a summary or if you are releasing a report, more key facts.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. Your contact details, phone number and email
2. What else is on offer - photo opportunities, interviews with case studies, event details
3. Website and social media
4. Links to sources, reports quoted.

MODEL INVITATION

DEAR

Please join the [INSERT NAME] BASW Branch at a film night’.

BASW is committed to campaigning to bring an end to austerity, to be replaced by the investment in public services required for a socially just society.

You will hear from speakers about their own personal experiences and from [INSERT HIGH PROFILE SPEAKER] who has been a great supporter of our campaign. There will be music, songs and poetry throughout the evening plus a ‘bring and share’ buffet and a cash bar.

Tickets are free, but it would help us if you could book a place so that we can manage numbers.

DATE:

TIME: Doors open xpm for x.xxpm start.

VENUE: Name, address and postcode.

BOOK TICKETS: eventbrite.co.uk

REFRESHMENTS: Bring and share buffet with cash bar.

TRANSPORT: Car parking nearby. The Number x bus stops opposite the venue.

Please do feel free to contact me on [INSERT MOBILE] or [INSERT EMAIL] if you need any further information.

I hope you can join us on the night.

Best wishes,

[INSERT NAME] Website and social media details

TICKETING PLATFORMS

There are various online ticketing platforms available that make life a lot easier when organising events.

Things to look out for:

- **Charges** – all charge differently - some are free to the person setting up the event, but charge the ticket holder.
- **Data** – ideally you want to be able to download a list of people attending and their email addresses so that you can stay in touch.
- **Ease of use** – try these and find what works for you.

[Brown Paper Tickets](#)

[Eventbrite](#)

[Tickets for Good](#)

MAILING SYSTEMS

[Mailchimp](#)



MUSIC, LYRICS AND POETRY FOR OPEN MIC NIGHTS

THE SOCIAL WORKERS CHANT - TO THE TUNE OF STAR OF COUNTY DOWN (TRAD)

ANGI NAYLOR

Em G D

Rise up, Rise up and follow me,

Em D

We'll march in solidarity

Em G D

Social Workers one and all

Em D

Listen to my rallying call.

CHORUS

G D

From Birmingham to Liverpool

Em D

In twenty seventeen,

Em G D

We'll march for the Rights of those who cannot fight

Em D Em

To Boot Out Austerity.

One hundred years, and some more,

The Guardians of the workhouse poor,

Asked whether those in welfare receipt

The eligibility criteria did meet?

To deter those perceived as lazy shirkers,

They employed Lady Almoners our first social workers,

Charged to find only the `deserving poor`

They soon made it clear the role was much, much, more.

CHORUS

Same old words, same old stories

Problem solving but not for the glory

Championing the rights of those who find it tough

Like Cathy Come Home, n' the Boys from the Blackstuff,

Stand up Stand Up for the Daniel Blakes

On who the DWP closed the gates.

This is the Social Workers chant

Boot Out Austerity



AUSTERITY IN THE UK
AFTER PASTOR NIEMOLLER
WRITTEN BY A SOCIAL WORKER FOR BOOT OUT AUSTERITY

First they came for the Socialists,

and I did not speak out –

Because I was not a Socialist.

Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out –

Because I was not a Trade Unionist.

Then they halved the tax paid by the rich, and I did not speak out–

Because they said wealth trickles down.

Then they doubled the rate of VAT, and I did not speak out–

Because they said they were the party of low taxation.

*Then they came for our health service, as they could pay to skip the queues, and I did not
speak out–*

Because they said the market is better.

Then they came for our schools as theirs were private, and I did not speak out –

Because they said we all had choice.

Then they came for our social services, to pay for their tax cuts, and I did not speak out –

Because they said we are all in this together.

Then I got ill and old, and there was no one left to care and speak out for me.

More short films with poetry, songs and presentations can be found at the following links:

[The Power of Poetry, Song and Protest in Social Work](#)

[Boot Out Austerity 3rd Anniversary - When I Needed a Neighbour by Angi Naylor](#)

[Whatever Hat Your Wearing Boot Out Austerity Angi Naylor](#)

[Doorway by Iris Rhodes read & animated by Angi Naylor](#)

[A Soulin 2019 by Angi Naylor](#)

[She's The Woman Who Died In The Park - Angi Naylor](#)

[Red Yellow Green & White A Song For Imam Sis 120 + days on Hunger Strike. by Angi Naylor](#)

[Hat Tracks Live We Shall Overcome 2022](#)

[The Revolution Starts Now – Steve Earle](#)

[Freeborn Man Of The Travelling People Angi Naylor](#)

[The Austerity Papers](#)

[Deadly Suck Of Austerity Dr. Peter Unwin Boot Out Austerity](#)

WE SHALL OVERCOME

On the 8th May 2015 (under the stewardship of Jo Solo) a group of musicians and activists started a grassroots community fightback against the impacts of austerity and `We Shall Overcome` was born.

The idea was to use events as collection points for food, cash, clothing and toiletries - whatever was needed on the front line and to use these gatherings to stand up to oppressions in defiance of a government we believe is waging ideological warfare on the poorest and most vulnerable in our society.

Writing in 2019, it was estimated that more than a 1,000 such events had taken place across the country, raising an estimated £450,000 worth of help for those hardest hit.

Bradford based `DAZ IN THE HAT` saw the local need and used his Radio Presenter skills to create platforms where likeminded campaigners and activists stood and sung together to call out the government. They held three 12-hour events - WSO2019 Live, WSO2020 on line and WSO2022 Live. Those events and his radio programme HAT TRACKS form the basis for the ongoing collaboration with BOOT OUT AUSTERITY, the Austerity Action Group and a showcase for the songs and poems of Pete Unwin and Angi Naylor and of course the driver for updating this campaign pack.



PART 5: INSPIRATION

WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT US

Equality for all... We have a responsibility to distribute resources to those who need it most.

*If not us then who? If not now then when?
SOCIAL WORKERS
FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE!*

I want you to know how proud I am to belong to a profession that stands up to oppression and injustice.

Danny Dorling Professor of Human Geography at the University of Oxford

“Social workers are the glue to stops society becoming unstuck, the people who work on the front line of injustice and see the results of discrimination first hand. It is social workers that keep families together when they are close to falling apart and care for those without family. It is social workers who have to pick up the pieces when funding mental health services fails and our politicians pursue policies that damage our mental health. Social workers are the face of kindness, of public good.”

*Be Proud of Yourselves
and Keep up the Good
Works God Bless You All*

*Let the world know
how austerity policy
hurts people's lives.*

*Keep doing what you're doing!
People like you are the reason
change for the better happens!*

Preet Kaur Gill MP for Birmingham Edgbaston

Social workers play a very important and valuable role in our society; tackling poverty, injustice, and discrimination, safeguarding and supporting families and individuals at risk or in need of support. This task has become even more challenging given social workers are weathering the storm that is the cost-of-living crisis, and after a decade of austerity, resources have been stripped back more than ever. Today, social workers are being asked to do more for less; with fewer children’s centres and lack of youth provision, workers are having to take on multiple roles without any recognition.

Having had a career in social work prior to entering politics, I understand how demanding the job can be, but also how rewarding. We must strive for social work to be a more valued profession, now more than ever as even greater numbers rely on the vital work that the sector does.

THE 100-MILE WALK

WHAT SOCIAL WORKERS WANTED US TO HIGHLIGHT



In 2017, during the Boot out Austerity walk, we asked social workers about the issues they wanted us to highlight. Overleaf, you can find a summary of the responses we received. Sadly, nearly seven years later, austerity has been swapped for the cost-of-living crisis and if anything, things have got worse.

The majority of comments are associated with the human cost of economic policies, the cause and effect of cuts on some of the most vulnerable people in society. No-one, except the wealthiest escape unharmed.

ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

Cuts have been made in the name of ‘independence’.

CARE LEAVERS

The lack of transition time for children moving between or leaving care services and connections between children and workers being broken down immediately regardless of the young person or their family’s needs. Privatisation of local authority care has stolen money from those who need the services. The cuts have meant there are now even fewer preventative and early intervention projects for children and families. This is very short sighted, as children coming into care not only disrupts their family relationships but costs a far greater amount of money in the long term.

CHILDREN

The numbers being taken into care is rising and there is a strong association with poverty and inequality. Children’s mental health services have been decimated by the cuts.

CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

There is a reduction in support and therapeutic services for our learning disabled children.

FAMILIES

Left with little or no support because of the loss of children’s centres across the country and the reduction in family support services.

FAMILIES WHO ADOPT

The Department for Education reduced the Adoption Support Fund dramatically, plunging many adoptive families into despair and denying children who have experienced significant trauma and loss, the therapeutic treatment that they need to develop into happy, emotionally sound young people.

OLDER PEOPLE

Ignorance of the needs of older people who do not have friends or family and are reliant on social care, but it is no longer available. People spend longer in hospital and are becoming frailer. Our job is becoming impossible since there is little out there to offer.

“ The impacts of austerity on disabled people have led to poverty, greater health inequalities, despair, depression and in some instances, suicide. It is a grave and systemic human rights violation, which is a sentiment echoed in UN reports. Governments have painted people who cannot work or have health and social care needs as parasites and ‘takers’ or as a waste of resources.”



OVER 25's

A lack of mental health services for people over 25 with mental health and substance misuse problems resulting in unemployment.

PEOPLE IN POVERTY

People are increasingly reliant on food banks due to benefit cuts and sanctions; cuts to services. The impact on children and young people whose parents are struggling with the pressures of unemployment, poverty and high stress – benefits sanctions have caused suffering, despair and sometimes suicide. Impact of poverty on children - destitution does not equate to neglect. Escalating poverty increasing risk for children and families meaning more children's services involvement. Families are being punished for being forced into poverty.

PEOPLE WHO ARE SICK OR DISABLED

We are in the worst cost of living crisis for decades, and disabled people are being hit hardest. Having to make choices between eating and heating, and the limited support from the government during the energy cost explosion has only met a fraction of the additional costs of living for a Disabled person. The average disabled household faces £975 a month in extra costs.

REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

Fear generated about refugees and asylum seekers who are blamed for a lack of services, at a time when we need community cohesion.

WIDOWS AND WIDOWERS

Cuts in bereavement benefits for widows and widowers with dependent children.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Increasing hidden homelessness amongst young people.

AND FOR SOCIAL WORKERS THIS MEANS...

- › Unmanageable caseloads
- › Little or no resources to help people
- › A vicious circle with cuts creating more urgent needs
- › A lack of investment now, stores up problems for the future
- › Witnessing the breakdown of children, adults and families
- › Anger at having to rely on volunteers and goodwill to cover the gaps
- › Feeling powerless and fearing for the future of their clients

REAL LIFE STORIES

These are true stories as told to social workers involved in the Boot Out Austerity campaign but all names have been changed. You can find more examples on the [Daily Mirror's Road to Wigan Pier anniversary website](#) which also featured our Boot Out Austerity walkers.



DON

“A specialist service for male DV victims pretty much saved my life but it was closed down in 2016 because their funding was removed. I hate to think of the consequences this would have meant for me and the lack of support now available locally to other men in desperate abusive situations. Some will see only one way out.....”



MAGGIE

“The lack of adequate provision resulted in a severe deterioration in my health and I ended up being detained under the Mental Health Act in a hospital 120 miles from home. Ironically this was then costing almost three times the amount of money than if my needs had been met in the community initially.

This affected me greatly and resulted in me losing contact with my family, becoming institutionalised, depressed and suicidal.”



ANDREA

“One area that has greatly blighted my life is having to take on the burden of direct payment/ personal budget for my disabled adult son, with ever-decreasing help from Adult Social Care services. I have had to cope with safeguarding issues and have struggled to get justice for him when having no choice about the nature and quality of respite care provision.”

**CATHY**

“I’ve been coming to the community day centre for years, it’s my lifeline, my bolt hole, my family. I take part in as many of the activities as possible, it gets me out of the house, out of looking at the same 4 walls day after day. The staff are caring but also very tenacious- they spend most of their time taking on the DWP on our behalf. I’m sure I would have been sanctioned or lost my disability benefits altogether without their help.”

**ELLEN**

CHILD PROTECTION SOCIAL WORKER

“Cutbacks have led to the loss of additional support services such as early help family support services, family contact teams, and charity working such as domestic abuse support, perpetrator courses and disabilities support. We have to deliver these additional support services ourselves on top of the statutory child protection procedures we are following, which adds to our ever increasing workload.”

**MICK**

LEARNING DISABILITIES SOCIAL WORKER

“Local authorities are under pressure to save money and are having their budgets cut, and this filters down to individual services and teams, meaning that funding panels are increasingly focused on saving as much money as possible – often, some would argue, without thinking about whether or not their proposals are reasonable.”

DAZ

A BENEFIT CLAIMANTS ONGOING EXPERIENCE

“I was on Disability Living Allowance and forced to apply for PIP. My application was turned down. I emphasised my care needs and the ‘Medical Professional’ appeared to take all I said on board, yet I was still not awarded anything for care. I had to take my claim to a tribunal. The consequences of my care needs being ignored and having to go through the appeals process has had a huge impact. My seizures have increased, it has also affected my mental health.”

A SPEECH BY A SERVICE USER

David Gowar is a service user and representative of IMPACT. He addressed the BASW Boot Out Austerity Rally in Wolverhampton on 20th April 2017 - day 2 of the 100-mile walk. Here is an extract from his speech. David changed the names of the people he mentions. You can see David speaking at the rally [here](#).

“I want to talk about some of the people I am proud to call friends and colleagues from IMPACT. We are a Service Users and Carers organisation based within the Institute of Health and Society at the University of Worcester. We have a comprehensive range of lived experience in our membership – carers of learning disabled relatives, mental health survivors, people with long-term physical disabilities, care leavers, survivors of domestic violence and people with dementia. Just within the confines of our small group the effects of austerity are very real and very damaging. .

Let me tell you about Simon, living with paraplegia and then cancer, who died still battling his local council for his independence in the face of cutbacks;

and Lorna, in her twenties, whose mental health recovery plummeted because her support package was cut as soon as she showed any signs of improvement;

Eric and Carla, who are housebound when their carers don't turn up;

John, ex-businessman, who has to live apart from his wife due to his complex

care needs, and now dependent on unqualified staff;

Jill, who is having to battle the system to get some kind of justice for her disabled son for the abuse he suffered in an unregulated private care setting;

Sophie, whose ESA tribunal I went to with her – no problem getting a PIP, but when it comes to ESA “of course you're fit for work”. The ATOS assessor's report said that a “full physical examination had been carried out”. It's a good thing that I'd gone with her, because that was a lie: there was no physical examination at all. It took nearly a year to get to Tribunal, a year of stress and tears, and that happens to so many people.

Yet this government continues to throw obscene amounts of money - £700 million one year - at these ridiculous private companies like Atos and Capita, run for the benefit of their shareholders, who pay their ‘not very well qualified’ assessors bonuses for how many people they fail. We know that they are given targets. What's wrong with your GP deciding if you're fit for work?

POETRY, SONG, MUSIC AND FILM

The 100-mile walk inspired people to write songs, music and poetry as well as recall their favourites to share with other walkers.

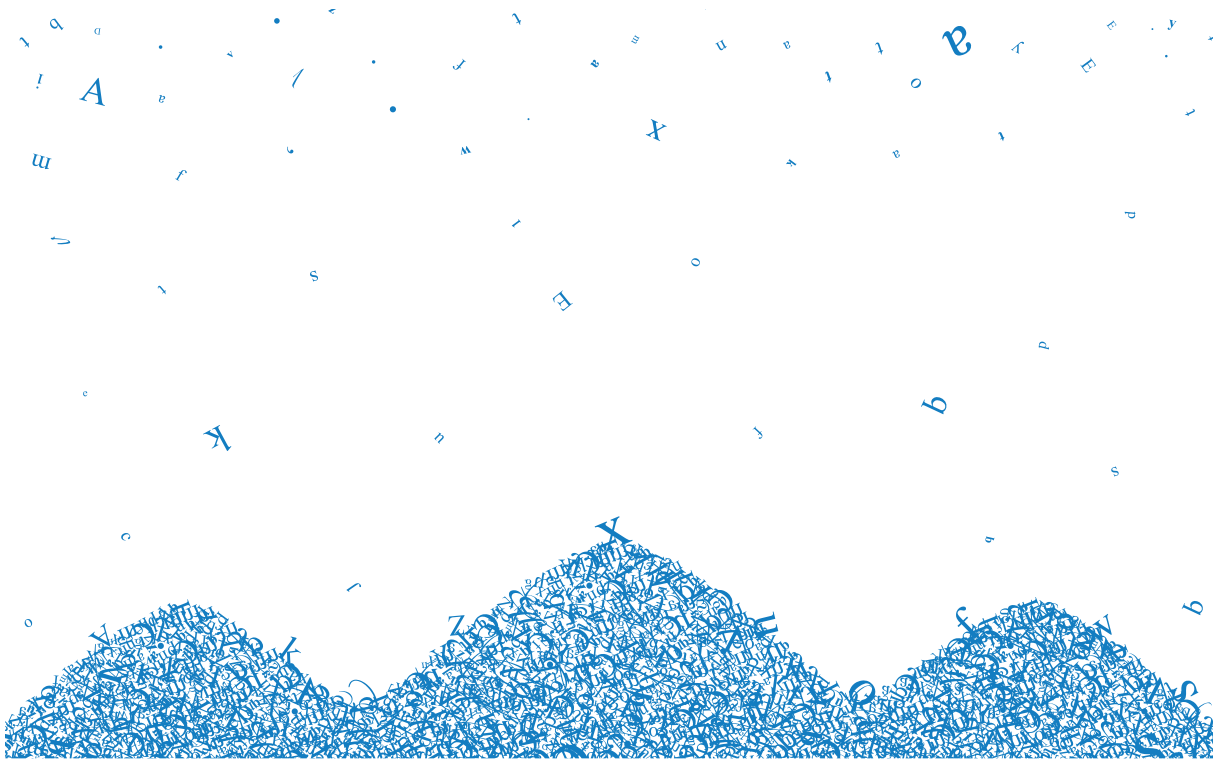


You can use these to put together an event to generate support (see Part 2 for more information). This can lift people's spirits and bring them together in solidarity.

Peter Unwin, Boot Out Austerity's self-styled 'Poet Austeriate', wrote a poem about the events of each day's walking,

which was read out at the daily rally the next morning. The poem below sums up the whole walk.

See Parts 4 & 5 for more poetry and songs that you can use – all you need to find is a venue and the people to sing, play and recite.



POETRY

100 miles in the steps of Orwell

100 miles in the steps of Orwell
 Where they found out all was not well
 Food banks, red tape, privatisation
 What's become of this once proud nation?

We used to take a pride in welfare
 Now the top folk they just don't care
 They pay less tax than their cleaners
 An obscene boast that demeans us

Our walkers found that poverty ruled
 From Birmingham to Liverpool
 Of a different ilk from Orwell's day
 But just as crushing in its own way

We fought for years for pride in welfare
 Setting standards cross the world
 But when bankers lost Prosperity
 The poor folk got Austerity

A policy that's cruel and heartless
 Divisive and unjust
 We spoke to families cross the land
 They don't vote, they've lost trust

Same old story in every town
 Public services torn down
 Line after line of dejected workers
 Disabled people labelled shirkers

"You can't touch me I'm part of the Union"
 Our walkers bravely sang
 Except they have and pressed us down
 We saw it in these desperate towns

But together we can rise again
 No more food banks, cuts or pain
 A social movement, care for all
 "Boot Out Austerity" is our call

Peter Unwin
 Poet Austeriate
 08.05.2017

SONG



You can view songs written by the marchers, on [YouTube](#).

You can find the music and lyrics in Part 4 – Tools and Templates. If you would like to use them to make your open mic night or rally, go with a swing.

'[Boot Out Austerity Blues](#)' was especially written for the Boot Out Austerity walk by Peter Unwin.

'[The Social Workers Chant – Boot Out Austerity](#)' was written by Angi Naylor whilst she walked along the Grand Union Canal as part of her training for the Boot Out Austerity walk. The song references *Cathy Come Home* and *I, Daniel Blake* by Ken Loach as well as *Boys from the Blackstuff* by Alan Bleasdale.

FILM

A film night is a great way to bring people together and gives you an opportunity to get potential supporters in the room to ask them to sign up.

The format offers an opportunity to make a short speech at the start and hold a Q&A at the end. You can invite social workers and the people they work with to tell their own stories.

We have included some suggestions of films you might like to show, but you can of course choose your own. This guide tells you how to organise a film night, including getting hold of the film and dealing with any licensing issues.

You can view the full 30-minute film on YouTube [here](#) and a 10-minute version [here](#).

No copyright license is required, but check whether with your venue whether you will need a Premises License (see Part 3: Staying Legal).

BOOT OUT AUSTERITY: THE 100 MILE MARCH



Between 19th and 25th April 2017, a group of social workers and supporters walked the 100 miles from Birmingham to Liverpool, arriving the day before the British Association of Social Workers' Annual General Meeting and Conference there.

The aim was to highlight the devastating effects of austerity measures and call for their end. The walk had a big impact, including on the walkers themselves, who remain determined to continue campaigning against austerity and for social justice.

SORRY WE MISSED YOU



From director Ken Loach and the award-winning team behind, *I, Daniel Blake* comes *Sorry We Missed You* – a powerful exploration of the contemporary world of work, the gig economy and the challenges faced by one family trying to hold it all together.

You can view the trailer free [here](#) and rent or buy the full film on YouTube [here](#).

No copyright license is required, but check whether with your venue whether you will need a Premises License (see Part 3: Staying Legal).



AUSTERITY FIGHT – RUNNING TIME 93 MINS

“The austerity policies of the Tories have targeted young and old. The NHS is chronically under funded and is being privatised. Students are leaving college with huge debts. Children, pensioners and the disabled are living in poverty and millions live precarious lives on ‘zero hour contracts’. Austerity Fight challenges the notion that we have to live in a world where public services are cut, worker’s rights removed and poverty is a daily reality for millions. Austerity Fight champions equality, practical alternatives to austerity and a vision of a world based on co-operation rather than the greed of a global super elite.”

Austerity Fight features the ‘Boot Out Austerity’ walkers on their journey from Birmingham to Liverpool.

You can view the trailer [here](#) or watch the full film on YouTube [here](#).

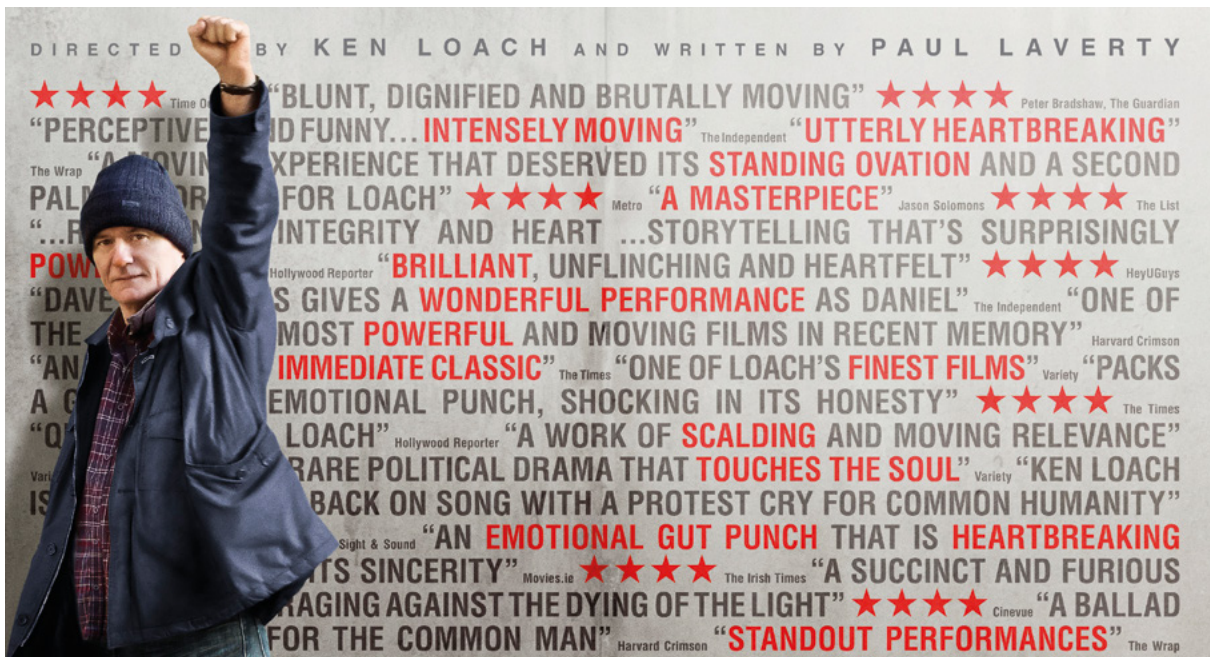
No film copyright license is required, but check whether you will need a Premises License in Part 3: Staying Legal.

I, DANIEL BLAKE – RUNNING TIME 100 MINS

Told by his NHS consultant that he’s unfit for work, Daniel Blake applies for disability benefit. However, after a ‘healthcare professional’ appointed by the Department for Work and Pensions interviews him over the phone for just ten minutes, it’s decided that he’s ineligible.

Humiliatingly labelled a scrounger when he is anything but, Daniel is forced to apply instead for jobseeker’s allowance and comes up against further absurdities of the welfare state.

A film copyright license is required. Click [here](#) for [film distributor information](#). Check with your venue whether you will need a Premises License (see Part 3: Staying Legal).



IN THE MEDIA

The letters page is one of the most widely read pages of a newspaper. Writing to your local paper is an effective way of raising the profile of your campaign – see our [top tips for getting in the local media](#) in Part 1: Action.

Media coverage about the Boot Out Austerity walk included the brilliant '[Wigan Pier Project](#)' from The Daily Mirror.

ARTICLES FROM PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORK MAGAZINE

Articles and opinion pieces offer a chance to explain your issues in more depth and help people understand the background to the cuts and alternative economic policies.

The article "Social Workers, Service Users and Austerity – A Common Cause" by Guy Shennan and Dr Peter Unwin was published in *Professional Social Work* magazine ahead of the 100-mile walk. The full article can be downloaded as a PDF [here](#).

Another article by Guy Shennan and Dr Peter Unwin was published after the 100-mile walk in the October 2017 issue of *Professional Social Work* magazine. You can view the full article as a PDF [here](#).

HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

We have tried to make this pack as comprehensive and easy to use as possible. We wanted it to be accessible for people who have never campaigned before as well as those who are ‘old hands’.

There is always more that can be added – let us know what would be most useful to you so that we can update the pack to meet your needs.

If you get stuck or need advice, please get in touch.

Email us at: aag@swu-union.org.uk



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SWU and BASW would like to express our collective thanks and gratitude to Angi Naylor who has been a driving force behind this campaign pack and a leading light in the action against austerity movement. Your hard work championing the voice of social work in the fight against austerity and your unwavering commitment, passion and hard work towards achieving a fairer, more compassionate society continues to inspire us all.

With thanks to everyone who took part in or supported the original Boot Out Austerity walk in 2017, to members of the SWU funded Austerity Action Group, in particular to Angi Naylor, Dr Peter Unwin and Daz Hull for their commitment and attention to detail, to SWU Ambassador Emma Lewell-Buck MP for the Foreword and SWU Honorary President Malcolm Jordan for his message, to Preet Kaur Gill MP and Prof. Danny Dorling for their endorsements of our work, to Prof. Sarah-Marie Hall for allowing us to include her article, to Allison Hulmes, Jodie-Rose and Becki Meakin for their contributions and to the Social Workers Union and Nancy Platts with Campaign Collective for producing this campaign pack.

And to everyone who has shared their expertise and their stories, we will continue to fight with you.

swu-union.org.uk



This pack has been produced by Campaign Collective
for the BASW/SWU Austerity Action Group.

**campaign
collective**