

Update on UK & International Policy, Ethics & Human Rights General Meeting 2024

Council approved holding a UK & International Policy & Ethics General Meeting (Policy GM) at the Council meeting in September 2023.

The Policy GM was held on the 30th April 2024, formal notice had been provided to the membership on the 12th January 2024. It was originally intended to be held as a hybrid event at The Exchange in Birmingham from 1pm to 5pm. Unfortunately, membership registration for in person attendance was very low (4 at time of proposed change to online only).

Following Council agreement formal notice was provided to membership on the 15th April 2024 that the event would be held online only. Within 24 hours of formal notice being served registrations tripled.

Final numbers registered to attend the event exceeded **120** as of the 29th April, with **94** attendees on the day and of those 94, **70** were full voting members.

For the meeting to be declared quorate **50** full voting members (including registered proxies) needed to present at the start of the meeting, the meeting exceeded this and was declared quorate.

2 x motions were debated and voted on by members during the meeting and via proxy. Voting has been cross referenced with registered attendees and verified.

MOTION 1 - National Standing Committee – Northern Ireland:

That this General Meeting calls for urgent action by the Northern Ireland Executive to implement: a Northern Ireland anti-poverty strategy, the recommendations of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, and the Department of Health's safe staffing in social work policy guidance. This General Meeting also calls for the introduction of legislation for safe staffing for social work at the earliest opportunity.

Proposed by the Northern Ireland Committee

Motion Passed

MOTION 2 - Black Country Branch:

This General Meeting mandates BASW UK to campaign for improvements to children and adult social care, qualitatively and quantitatively, and for improved finances including for staffing salaries, training and structural developments. We are concerned that a recent Institute for Public Policy Research, a thinktank close to Labour, identifies a Ten-year programme needed to begin to reverse the post 2010 austerity cuts.

We note that, in many local authorities, children's and adult social care are now the main expenditures in local authorities. We note a recent Local Government Association survey identifying that a fifth of Councils may issue s114 ('Bankruptcy') notices by the end of 2024.

We call on BASW to focus, by itself or with other bodies, coming up to the 2024 General Election and beyond, on Social Care as a whole and particularly for the resources to be found in the first five-year



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term of the next government to properly resource social care. We also call upon BASW to engage members and be open and transparent in its decision making on how it progresses this mandated policy, with regular updates to the membership on the progress of this work.

Proposed by the Black Country Branch

Motion Passed

Emergency Motion:

An emergency motion was proposed and submitted during the course of the Policy GM to:

'This conference notes that as a human rights-based profession its members are appalled by the ongoing genocide perpetrated in Gaza. Recognising that over 35000 Palestinians have been slaughtered, predominantly women and children. Also noting that as continuing images of enforced starvation and discoveries of mass graves emerge this number is likely to grow.

We call upon chair and chief executive to make urgent presentations to the government to stop arming Israel, demand compliance with international law and the provision of aid and state our solidarity with the people of Palestine.

Note

On 200th day of genocide Israeli media is now widely reporting the expected issue of ICC arrest warrants for its senior members of government. It is now time for BASW to make clear it represents a human rights-based profession and deplores the gross violations of human rights in Palestine by Israel'.

Motion 'Not Put'

The Chief Executive provided options in line with BASW's constitutional governance, and the Chair took a decision to 'not put' the motion forward for a membership vote.

After careful consideration by the Chair the motion was 'not put' reasoning for this was based on the following:

- It would have been reasonable to expect that the motion could have been put forward for consideration before the meeting date and so could not be reasonably considered as an emergency motion.
- To allow the emergency motion to proceed to a membership vote would have deprived other members from casting a proxy vote as proxy voting closed 48 hours before the meeting.
- For the motion to be put at the meeting members would not have been provided with enough time to properly consider the asks of the motion.

However, it was agreed during the meeting, that the actions being asked for would be covered by further joint statements from BASW and SWU and that the Chair and Chief Executive will comply with the asks in the motion.