

### General Secretary's Update

This has been another busy period for the union and our TU A&R Team. The advantages of having a dedicated and professional team of Social Workers providing advice/guidance and representation is why the majority of members join BASW and SWU. The growing membership has seen more and more demands put on the team, but fundamentally the support offered to members and the quality of the representation continues to be second to none. The Trade Union A&R Team continue to provide a quality service to members despite the increase in referrals and staffing challenges. The team are exceptionally dedicated and without them we would not have a union. They all work ceaselessly behind the scenes and have a huge impact on creating change for the members who seek their knowledge and assistance.

Last year's World Social Work Day Assignment Competition was a great success and I am happy that this will be continuing this year. The quality of entrants last year was excellent and hopefully interest will remain high once more. Please share with as many Social Work Students as possible. Once more the GFTU will be assessing the assignments, along with SWU Executive members and Shahid Naqvi, PSW Editor.

If you have not done so already, please get your friends and colleagues to sign up to SWU. We consider this to be a bargain at only £20 annually with BASW Membership, and £10 for students. Not only is employment representation guaranteed (which is not the case if you only have BASW membership)

but we have additional benefits for members.

We are still recruiting for two new Executive members covering Scotland and Wales. All candidates for election must be nominated by another Member of the union. SWU is encouraging applications from Students/ Newly Qualified Social Workers and black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) who are currently under-represented on the National Executive of SWU. Information about the Executive roles for each vacancy can be found at: <https://www.basw.co.uk/jobs/work-with-us>



It was delighted to have Paul Lavery the writer of *I, Daniel Blake* contact me last week to advise that SWU will be credited on the new Ken Loach movie *Sorry we missed you*. I really enjoyed consulting with Paul on the movie and providing the writer some additional opportunities to engage with social work services and supports.

Finally, the Annual Statement on the finances which is sent to members is now complete for another year. To download the Annual Statement for 2018 please follow this link: <https://www.basw.co.uk/social-workers-union/swu-governance/reports-and-statements>

**John McGowan**  
**General Secretary**  
[j.mcgowan@swu-union.org.uk](mailto:j.mcgowan@swu-union.org.uk)

# WORLD SOCIAL WORK DAY ASSIGNMENT

Four grants of £500 are to be presented to winning Social Work Students undertaking an Undergraduate or Post Graduate Social Work Degree.

The criteria: a 750 - 1000 word assignment with the following title:

***“How do working conditions need to change to create the most conducive environment for social workers to provide the best support for service users?”***

All completed assignments will be judged by a Panel including representation from the General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU), Shahid Naqvi, PSW Editor and SWU Exec Member. All winners will be invited to the SWU AGM and Conference 2019 (Fri 27<sup>th</sup> Sept, Manchester).

**The closing date for the competition is 10<sup>th</sup> June 2019.**

Please forward your completed assignment before that date with a covering letter giving your Name, Address, University, Year of Study and Academic Tutor (if appropriate) to: [kevin.viney@swu-union.org.uk](mailto:kevin.viney@swu-union.org.uk)

The assignment should be typed, have your full name, the assignment question as the title, and must follow an academic process; such as word count and Harvard Referencing System.

**Please note:** By taking part you are agreeing to SWU using the assignment for future purposes such as newsletters or other forums. Only the winning assignments will be used. Winning assignments will be displayed at the forthcoming SWU AGM Conference. All winners will also be offered a delegate place at the conference with a contribution towards transport if necessary.



**SWU** Social Workers Union

PROMOTING THE IMPORTANCE OF  
*human relationships*



Designed by: Martha Rothblum

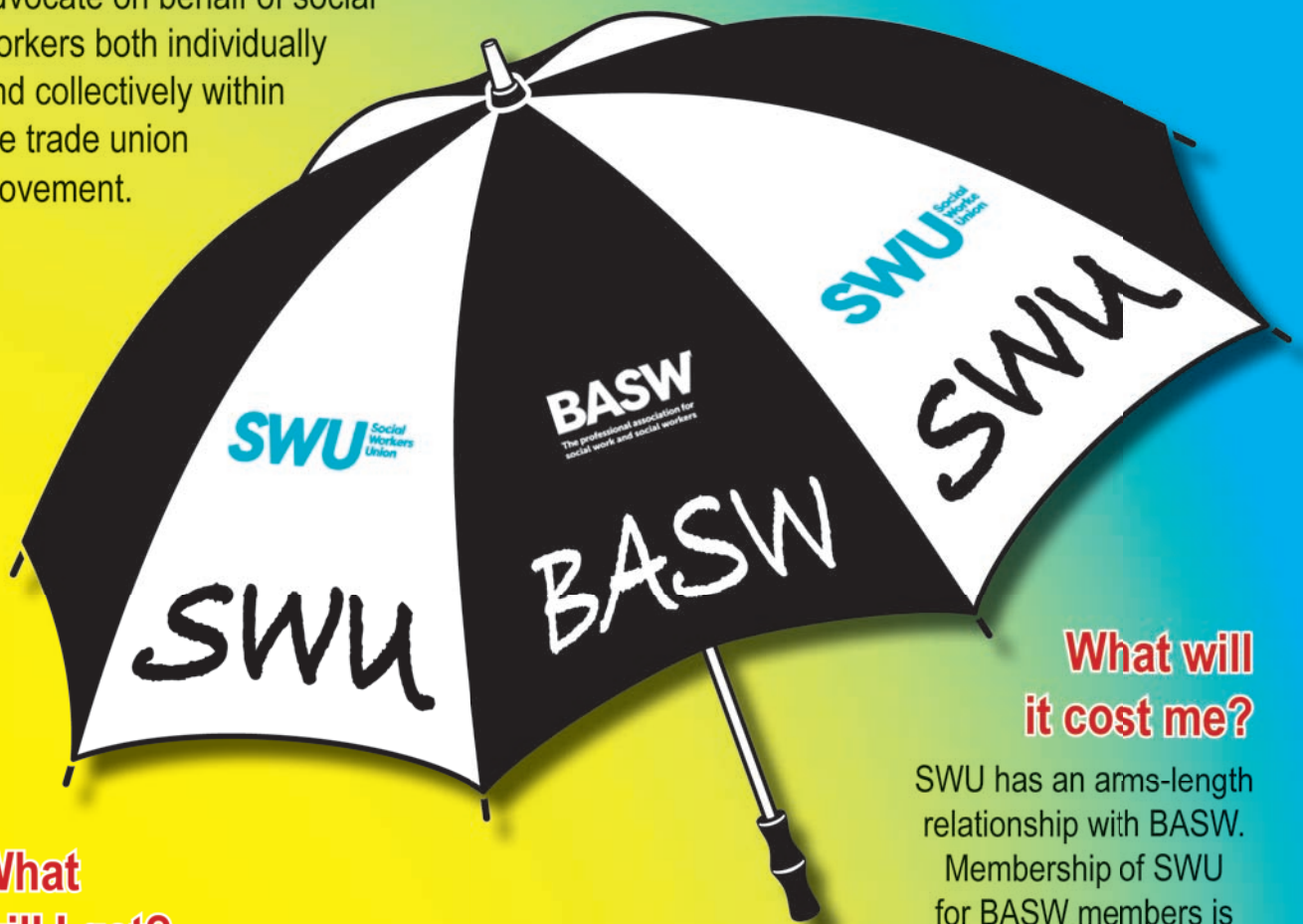
**WORLD SOCIAL WORK DAY  
19TH MARCH 2019**



# How the Social Workers Union can protect you

The Social Workers Union (SWU) is a trade union dedicated to social work professionals. Unlike other trade unions, SWU is able to offer you representation from a qualified social worker - someone who understands the code of conduct and what it is like to be a practising social worker. We grasp sometimes competing demands placed upon you by the employer and the code of conduct. We know how difficult it can be as a social worker, working under tremendous pressure sometimes subjected to wholly unreasonable criticism in the press, to deliver the services your clients deserve.

We are able to use this specialist knowledge to advocate on behalf of social workers both individually and collectively within the trade union movement.



## What will I get?

As a Trade Union, SWU, unlike a professional association can guarantee employment representation as this is a legal entitlement. SWU offers swift, practical representation and works effectively with BASW, the only Professional Association for Social Workers. In these challenging times, social workers need the best protection possible. We believe that working together, SWU and BASW provide the best protection and advice for social workers from social workers.

## What will it cost me?

SWU has an arms-length relationship with BASW. Membership of SWU for BASW members is available for a small sum,

*just*

**£1.66 per month**

(£20 per annum)

- waged

*or*

**£0.83 per month**

(£10 per annum)

- unwaged and students

# Working Conditions

The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and Bath Spa University Centre for Health and Cognition (in association with Ulster University Social Work Department) have agreed a Memorandum of Understanding which will form the basis of a new research partnership aiming to shine a spotlight on the everyday working environment of social workers around the world.

Working through IFSW member organisations and social media, it is planned to undertake a pilot global study of social workers during 2019 and to produce a first report in 2020, linked to the report of The Global Agenda for Social Work. The report will be launched at the global social work conference in Calgary, Canada in July 2020.

Dr Jermaine M Ravalier of Bath Spa University has undertaken two major workforce surveys in association with the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) and the Social Workers Union (SWU) in the United Kingdom. The outcomes have been highly influential politically, professionally and managerially,

being the subject of a debate in the UK Parliament and wide publicity. In the first instance the global survey will draw heavily on those tested research instruments but will also include a few questions of global relevance.

IFSW World President Silvana Martinez has undertaken research on the wellbeing of social workers in Latin America. She commented: 'I am pleased and excited that IFSW is launching this significant global research project with Bath Spa University. Social workers cannot provide effective services for some of the most vulnerable people in the world unless they are respected by their employers and have a positive a working environment. This research will shine a spotlight on the reality of social work worldwide.'

IFSW Secretary General, Rory Truell, commented: 'Social workers are absolutely crucial to social development and social cohesion everywhere in the world. They also make a very significant contribution to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Yet it is shocking that



James, John and Jermaine at Parliament

there is no comparative data about the real working conditions of social workers around the world. Over the coming years, this partnership will provide reliable information about social workers and their working environments to inform national and international policy development.'

Dr Jermaine Ravalier is Reader in Work and Wellbeing (Psychology) and co-directs the Centre for Health and Cognition at Bath Spa University. He commented: 'Bath Spa University is very pleased to have formed this partnership with IFSW to look at the hugely important questions surrounding the working environment of social workers, building on our previous work with the British Association of Social Workers and the Social Workers Union. Research shows clearly that a poor working environment damages the health and wellbeing of social workers and is also bad for the people who use social services. We intend to build partnerships with universities and social work associations around the world as we develop this research into a truly global study of this long-neglected area, which is of such great importance to the world.'

Ruth Allen (Chief Executive, BASW) and John McGowan (General Secretary, SWU) commented: 'Our excellent partnership with Bath Spa University has generated research which provides the foundation for our national campaign for better working conditions for social workers. We anticipate that the global research will help us all understand the similarities and differences in contexts, achievements and struggles of social workers by publishing data and stories. It will undoubtedly strengthen global social work

solidarity and the International Federation.' McGowan highlighted that 'the research has come a long way since the early discussions between Bath Spa and SWU which led to the initial research and subsequent interventions.'

IFSW is the global body for the social work profession. The Federation and its national members in 126 countries strive for social justice, human rights and inclusive, sustainable social development through the promotion of social work best practice and engagement in international cooperation. IFSW has been granted Special Consultative Status by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). IFSW is working with the World Health Organization (WHO), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). IFSW has a close working relationship with the International Association of Schools of Social Work and the International Council for Social Welfare.

### Links

IFSW [www.ifsw.org](http://www.ifsw.org)

Dr Jermaine Ravalier <https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/our-people/jermaine-ravalier/>

BASW/SWU campaign for better working conditions <https://www.basw.co.uk/campaign-milestones/>

UK social workers: working conditions and wellbeing report (Ravalier)

## Social Media

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

### Monthly ebulletins

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

The ebulletins are also published on the web site.

### SWU can be found on the following:

Twitter: SWU\_UK

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/socialworkersunionuk/](http://www.facebook.com/socialworkersunionuk/)

Internet: [www.swu-union.org.uk](http://www.swu-union.org.uk)

# General Federation of Trade Unions



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

The GFTU has 30 affiliates with a membership of just over 250,000 and describes itself as the "federation for specialist unions." The GFTU offers a range of courses, from foundation to more advanced with the majority free for SWU members. The new training catalogue is available with even more courses covering a range of topics: [www.gftu.org.uk](http://www.gftu.org.uk)

John McGowan, SWU General Secretary sits on the GFTU National Executive Governing Body with a committee elected to meet regularly to manage the work of GFTU. SWU is a proud member of the General Federal of Trade Unions (GFTU). This section will provide an opportunity to meet some of the other unions affiliated to the GFTU.

Meet the Voice: The Union for Education Professionals with information provided by Deborah Lawson, Voice General Secretary:

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## The force of argument, not the argument of force



### **Voice: the Union for Education Professionals**

represents the whole of the education workforce plus early years and

childcare professionals across the UK, including teachers, headteachers and lecturers; teaching assistants, technicians, bursars, administrators and other support staff; nursery staff, early years teachers, nannies and students.

### **History of Voice**

Voice was founded in 1970 as the Professional Association of Teachers (PAT) by two teachers who, during an era of frequent strikes and industrial unrest, were greatly concerned by the effect of strikes on pupils and their education. They gathered together a group of teachers committed to the principle of seeking resolution without taking strike action. In 1982, a group of like-minded nursery nurses established the Professional Association of Nursery Nurses (PANN), which became a section of PAT in 1995.

Voice recognises and promotes the benefit of trade unions to employees and employers, fostering and promoting good working relationships.

Voice believes the core purpose of unions in a modern society is not only to protect their members and negotiate improvements in their pay and conditions, but also to promote professional standards and engage constructively with all stakeholders and employers for the benefit of pupils, colleagues and the profession.

Working relationships can falter and breakdown, but Voice believes that hostility toward management, employers and colleagues is counter-productive and is something which Voice does not tolerate or promote in pursuance of resolution. Voice prefers the force of argument rather than the argument of force. We believe in the power of negotiation, protest and legal action over industrial action.



**Deborah Lawson, Voice General Secretary**

While we recognise and reserve our legal right, and respect the right of others, to take part in lawful industrial action, we do not support strikes or other forms of industrial action that are damaging to education or to the interests or welfare of those children, pupils and students in our care. We believe this position provides professionals with the opportunity for reasoned discussion, negotiation and compromise.

Industrial action, the threat of it, or a hostile or intimidating approach to negotiation, is not only destructive, it sends the wrong message about the profession and education to pupils and the public. It does not promote the image of a professional education workforce and serves as a poor example to pupils. Avoiding such tactics promotes professionalism.

Teaching and childcare are great professions, although the erosion they have endured from external and political sources has taken a toll on their

position in society, at a time when education is seen as the silver bullet which will improve social mobility and a multitude of social welfare issues.

Public perception of education and the teaching and childcare professions is in the doldrums. It is therefore essential to make the case to regain the public's respect, and central to this is professional conduct, including in negotiation with employers and school leaders.

As we modernise, we aim to eliminate negative perceptions about trade unions and promote the benefits of positive engagement and the achievement of harmonious working relations. Voice enjoys positive relationships and recognition with schools across all phase of education, including private day nurseries, colleges, academies, or independent or local authority schools.

**Deborah Lawson  
General Secretary  
Voice**

As cities march across the world to mark UN anti-racism day, join them to say:

Wrth i ddinasoedd ledled y byd orymdeithio i ddathlu Diwrnod Gwrth-Hiliaeth y Cenhedloedd Unedig, ymunwch â nhw i ddatgan:

# No Racism! No Fascism! Dim Hiliaeth! Dim Ffasgiaeth!

Transport from / Cludiant o: Swansea / Abertawe: 07506362540 Pembrokeshire / Sir Benfro: 07973378394

## Protest: Saturday 16 March Gwrthdystiwn: Ddydd Sadwrn 16 Mawrth

**Cardiff:** Assemble for 11am,  
City Hall CF10 3ND

London, Glasgow and around the world

**Caerdydd:** Cwydd am  
11yb, City Hall, CF10 3ND

Llundian, Glasgow ac o amgylch y byd

Initiated by Stand Up To Racism Sponsored by Unite Against Fascism and Love Music Hate Racism

Cychwynwyd gan fudiad Safwn Yn Erbyn Hiliaeth Noddir gan Unwn Yn Erbyn Ffasgiaeth a Caru Cerddoriaeth, Casáu Hiliaeth



**f** 'UN Anti Racism Day March-Cardiff'

Racism and fascism is on the rise. The Trump presidency has inspired racists and the growth of the far right around the world.

In Britain, a new far-right street movement is attempting to scapegoat migrants, refugees and the Muslim community. Islamophobic hate crime is growing and there has been a major resurgence of antisemitism.

Together we can turn the tide. On UN anti-racism day we need the biggest, broadest international display of opposition to racism and fascism we have ever seen.

Join us on Saturday 16 March to show that the anti-racist anti-fascist majority will not stop until the rise of racism and the far right has been defeated. Check out our facebook event page for updates: <http://bit.ly/M16Cymru>

**Mae hiliaeth a ffasgiaeth yn ymledu. Mae arlywyddiaeth Trump wedi rhoi hwb i hilwyr a hyrwyddo twf yr asgell dde ledled y byd.**

Yng ngwledydd Prydain, mae mudiad stryd yr asgell dde eithafol yn ymdrechu i wneud bwch dihangol o ymfudwyr, ffoaduriaid a'r gymuned Fwslimadd. Mae troseddau casineb Islamoffbig yn cynyddu, a gwelwyd pla gwrth-semitiaeth yn ymledu'n aruthrol.

Gyda'n gilydd, gallwn ni wrthsefyll llanw casineb. Ar Ddiwrnod Gwrth-Hiliaeth y Cenhedloedd Unedig, mae angen inni arddangos y prawf rhyngwladol mwyaf torfol, ehangaf a welwyd erioed fod y byd am drechu hiliaeth a ffasgiaeth.

Ymunwch â ni ddydd Sadwrn 16 Mawrth i ddangos na fydd brwydr y mwyafrif gwrth-hiliol a gwrth-ffasgaidd yn dod i ben nes bod hiliaeth a gweithgareddau'r asgell dde eithafol wedi cael eu trechu.

Ewch at ein tudalen digwyddiadau ar Facebook i weld y newyddion diweddaraf: <http://bit.ly/M16Cymru>



Opposing the DFLA in London, October 2018 Photo: Guy Smallman Gwrthwynebu'r DFLA yn Llundain, Uun Mis Hydref 2018



Together we can beat the racists Photo: Geoff Dexter Gyda'n gilydd, gallwn guro'r hâwyr



The fascists are getting organised Mae'r ffasgwyr yn ymdrefnu

**f** Stand Up To Racism **t** @AntiRacismDay **w** [standuptoracism.org.uk](http://standuptoracism.org.uk)



# Union Contact Scheme

We are now just a few days away from our fourth SWU Union Contact Induction Day which is taking place in Manchester on 2nd March - more on this event will follow in our next Newsletter.

Induction Days are a great way to find out about our Union Contact Scheme and gives SWU members an opportunity to play a vital part in the growth and progress of our Union by being the face of SWU in your workplace, university or student placement.

Whilst we have a full-time team of Advice & Representation Officers who deal with complex employment issues, and who are all themselves social workers, we have less of a presence “on the ground”, and this is where the SWU Union Contact becomes an important member of our team. You will promote and encourage membership amongst colleagues and teams, and you’ll be provided with all the relevant resources to do so. You’ll receive regular updates and support, have opportunities to undertake further training and be involved in SWU activities, such as marches, rallies, branch meetings - as much or as little as your time will allow.

Activism takes shape in many forms and whilst the atmosphere of a large gathering is exhilarating, it’s equally important to provide information to colleagues, put posters on noticeboards and promote campaigns around working conditions and service-user support.

We value our Union Contact Team and if you like the sound of it please drop me a line at [carol.reid@swu-union.org.uk](mailto:carol.reid@swu-union.org.uk) for more details.

## **BASW/SWU Branch Meetings:**

For me, its difficult to remember a time when I wasn’t involved in a Union in some way or another, and one of the best starting points is your



local branch meeting. SWU is developing links with BASW who already have several branches throughout the UK, and we are keen to promote and develop them, and to encourage SWU & BASW members to attend.

Branch meetings are a great way to meet like-minded people, plan and develop activities and campaigns, hear inspirational speakers and advance your own skills and knowledge. Attendance at branch meetings and events also counts towards your CPD. Some branches are well established, and others are in their infancy, but all will welcome your input and support.

Again, please contact me if interested in getting involved.

**Carol Reid,  
National Organiser & Union Contact  
Scheme Manager**

## Update from SWU President

There have been some very interesting developments with the SWU Working Conditions Campaign. The International Federation of Social Workers, IFSW, is now involved with Dr. Jermaine Revalier of Bath Spa University, who is the author of the report into Working Conditions for Social Workers and conducted the research into this.

In fact his updated research showed that Working Conditions for Social Workers were worse than they were a year ago, when he produced his original report. This means that the issue of Working Conditions for Social Workers will now become a global issue as well as a UK issue.

Nancy Platts from Campaign Collective will be writing to selected Councillors about these issues. Further one to one meetings with interested MPs will be arranged. There will be a follow up on promises made by MPs we have previously met, most notably Clive Betts MP, Labour, who offered to arrange a backbench debate on Working Conditions in the House of Commons. You may remember that last year Lord Kennedy led a debate in the House of Lords on this.

The briefing papers for MPs and one for Councillors have been updated in line with the updated research by Jermaine. We are discussing the possibility of utilising SWU members as Parliamentary Ambassadors to meet MPs in their own constituencies to discuss the situation in their own work place along with the research findings. Nancy felt this could be particularly effective as MPs want to keep their own constituents happy. As you can see there is a lot going on with the Campaign. As always I will keep readers of the SWU Newsletter informed of further developments. It has to be said that some of our Parliamentary work is inevitably been overshadowed by Brexit. I would like to thank Jermaine Ravalier, who conducted the Research, Nancy Platts from Campaign Collective and our own General Secretary, John McGowan for their hard work in developing this very important Campaign into Working Conditions for Social Workers.

**James Birchall**  
President, SWU

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## Help us to create better working conditions

**Get involved with the union and ask a colleague to join BASW and SWU. Professional Association and Full Union Cover at a very reasonable cost.**

Remember to ask your MP to raise questions and issues. We continue to campaign and lobby government over funding - for several employment improvements. Rising demand and caseloads impact the effectiveness of social work; thus a greater workforce is clearly needed.

Social workers also need a reduction in time consuming administrative tasks, greater IT support and better support from employers. Reflective supervision should be ingrained in social work practice and education. Find out how you can get involved further with SWU and email: [kevin.viney@swu-union.org.uk](mailto:kevin.viney@swu-union.org.uk)

**Some examples of recent Social Work-related questions in parliament.**



[Nadhim Zahawi The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education](#)

The department publishes information on looked after children, child protection plans and children in need in local authorities, including those within the Greater Manchester area, in the Local Authority Interactive Tool. This can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-interactive-tool-lait>.

There are a range of factors that contribute to trends in demand for children's social care including deprivation in different local authorities. The most deprived local authorities have more looked after children (per 10,000 0-17 year olds), and these rates have grown faster, than the least deprived local authorities. The most common factors that present themselves in children's social care assessments are domestic abuse and mental health. Data on this is available in Table C3 of statistical release 'Characteristics of children in need 2017-18' at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/characteristics-of-children-in-need-2017-to-2018>.

In preparation for the Spending Review, to help ensure decisions are based on the best available evidence, the government is working with the sector to develop a sharper and more granular picture of demand for children's services.



#### [Edward Argar The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice](#)

I can offer my hon. Friend the reassurance that we are working extremely closely with colleagues across Government to do that. We often see that some of the young people who end up in the criminal justice system have come from homes or families where they have witnessed domestic abuse. It is incumbent on us all to do all we can to tackle that.



#### [Geoffrey Clifton-Brown Conservative, The Cotswolds](#)

The Public Accounts Committee held an inquiry into children's social services yesterday. Does my hon. Friend agree that domestic violence is one of the key causes of the growth in the number of children being taken into care in local authorities? Will the Department work closely with the Department for Education to ensure that children's social services have the information and finances that they need to deal with that growing problem?



#### [Rebecca Long-Bailey Shadow Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Member, Labour Party National Executive Committee](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the reasons for the increase in the number of looked after children, child protection plans and children in need throughout (a) Salford and (b) Greater Manchester in the last five year.



#### [Caroline Dinenage Minister of State \(Department of Health and Social Care\)](#)

The Government is working alongside stakeholders in the adult social care sector to ensure there is the right number of people, with the right skills, knowledge and values to meet increasing demand, and deliver high quality, person-centred care and support.

In recognition of this, on 12 February the Government launched a new national adult social care recruitment campaign. The campaign, 'Every Day is Different', showcases how rewarding and varied social care careers can be, with opportunities for progression and professional development. The campaign will run across February and March and raise the image and profile of the sector and encourage people with the right values to apply for current vacancies. The Government also continues to work with its delivery partner Skills for Care to provide a range of resources and practical toolkits for providers to help attract, train and retain staff.

The upcoming Social Care Green Paper will set out the Department's proposals for reform of the sector to put it on a more sustainable future footing. This will include a vision for workforce and proposals to boost recruitment and retention in the longer term.



[Caroline Dinenage Minister of State \(Department of Health and Social Care\)](#)

Skills for Care estimated that, in 2017/18, there were up to 82,500 jobs held by workers with a European Union nationality who would be eligible to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme or for pre-settled status.

Skills for Care's published these estimates in September 2018, in their report, 'The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England'. This can be found at the following link: <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/NMDS-SC-intelligence/Workforce-intelligence/publications/The-state-of-the-adult-social-care-sector-and-workforce-in-England.aspx>

The Prime Minister announced on 21 January 2019 that, as of 30 March 2019, all applications to the settlement scheme will be free. Additionally, where individuals have applied, or do apply, before that date, and are charged an application fee, then this fee will be refunded to them.

The Department has undertaken a targeted communications campaign with stakeholders, employers, charities and representative bodies in the care sector. This is to ensure that as many of our EU workforce are aware of the straight forward and user-friendly scheme that allows them to secure their long-term rights to stay and work in the United Kingdom after we leave the EU.



[Paul Farrelly Labour, Newcastle-under-Lyme](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he is making to increase the recruitment and retention of staff in the social care sector.



[Jo Stevens Labour, Cardiff Central](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of EU citizens in social care who will need to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme.



[Mike Amesbury Shadow Minister \(Work and Pensions\) \(Employment\)](#)

Does the Secretary of State recognise that children's services are now at crisis point and that there will be a £2 billion - £2 billion! - shortfall by 2020?



[James Brokenshire The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government](#)

We are spending around £1 billion more than at the start of this Parliament. Some £84 million is added into the settlement to ensure that we drive quality and support in the knowledge that, yes, there are pressures. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will recognise the additional £410 million that has been committed to children's and adult social care in response to the good work that is going on and some of the pressures.

**SWU is delighted to support Article 39 and be active promoting the changes they are seeking. We have already pledged our support with SWU General Secretary active in the campaign:**

<https://article39.org.uk/2018/09/04/article-39-and-others-urge-withdrawal-of-myth-busting-guidance-on-care-system/>

## Article 39

## FIGHTING FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS

A document published by the Department for Education threatens to dilute or remove altogether a number of significant protections for children in care, care leavers, children who have run away or gone missing from care and remanded children. It wrongly claims to clarify statutory guidance in children's social care – by framing as 'myths' common understandings and interpretations. That is why my charity has applied to the High Court to launch judicial review proceedings to have the document quashed.

One part of the guide risks radically changing social worker roles in fostering. It states children in a stable, long-term foster placement (the legal definition of this is not given) and their foster carers do not each have to have their own social worker. This is despite separate regulations (secondary legislation) and separate statutory guidance setting out the respective roles of supervising social workers and the child's social worker. The guide acknowledges "the potential risks to children and young people" and states the DfE will work with a "small number of local authorities" to "explore creative approaches" but this doesn't mitigate the fact that the advice it gives doesn't follow the existing statutory framework.

A freedom of information request we made to Ofsted shows the regulator shares our concerns. An email from a senior Ofsted official to the DfE's innovation programme said that merging the two social worker roles would be "removing a significant safeguard for children in foster care". Ofsted also told the DfE that "The interpretation of all local authorities to date of the statutory guidance is to have two

social workers - one supporting the child and the other the foster carers".

SWU members may recall that piloting the merger of the two social worker roles was one of the planned uses for the exemption clauses in the Children and Social Work Bill. The clauses would have allowed councils to opt-out of their statutory duties in children's social care. Peers voted the clauses out of the Bill, but they were reinstated in a revised form in the House of Commons. Unable to quell the huge opposition, the then Education Secretary Justine Greening finally abandoned the clauses by adding her name to deletion amendments tabled by Shadow Ministers. That was in March 2017. Ofsted told us the meeting that led to the 'myth busting' guide took place in 2017. It was convened by the innovation programme and was attended by 'Partners in Practice' local authorities and Ofsted. We don't yet know whether this was linked to the soon-to-be scrapped exemption clauses, or a new initiative.

As with the exemption clauses, large numbers of social work organisations - including BASW, SWU and the Association of Professors of Social Work - perceive the 'myth busting' guide as a serious threat to children's rights. Fifty organisations and social work experts wrote to the Children's Minister, Nadhim Zahawi, asking him to withdraw parts of the guide which are inconsistent with current statutory obligations. The Minister refused.

The guide contains 10 questions overall. Each answer gives advice on what existing statutory guidance says and what the guidance allows. It's the second part which cash-strapped councils will focus on, because it constitutes

official guidance on minimum statutory obligations. The guide's introductory text states DfE lawyers have approved its contents.

As well as defending the statutory basis of separate social workers for children and their foster carers, our judicial review claim challenges the DfE's assertions that:

- Social workers do not have to lead assessments of children who automatically gain 'looked after' status and protections when remanded to custody;
- Councils do not have to offer a return home interview to children who have run away or gone missing;
- Personal advisers appointed to advise and support young people leaving care can take on the local authority's duties in respect of 'Staying Put' arrangements - where 18 to 21-year-olds can continue living with their foster carers;
- Social workers only have to make one visit a year to foster carers looking after a child for more than a year;
- Social workers can decide to visit children in long-term foster placements as little as twice a year.

England's five largest children's charities have reported local authority children's services suffering a 29% cut in central government funding over the past eight years. In the best of times, statutory duties can be the difference between a child getting the help they need, and not. When councils are so tightly stretched, as they are now, the obvious danger is that they will grasp this advice from central government as another means of trying to balance their books. It is illuminating that none of the 'myth busting' questions seeks clarification on whether councils can offer more support to children, young people and their families. We take no pleasure in bringing this case, and there is an inevitable financial risk, but we don't believe it should be left to individual children and young people to shoulder such a challenge. This year is the thirtieth anniversary of both the Children Act and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Could we have imagined three decades ago that state support to vulnerable children and young people would be so precarious today, in a country which continues to boast the world's fifth richest economy?

**Carolyn Willow**  
**Director of Article 39**  
**[www.article39.org.uk](http://www.article39.org.uk)**

## Come and join the SWU Executive

We have two seats to fill at our table - would you like to join us? Read our adverts on the following page.



## Call for Nominations SWU Executive Committee

(1 x Scotland representative)

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

There is currently a vacancy for a Scotland Representative. All candidates for election must be nominated by another member of the union. The National Representative from Scotland nomination must be by a member within the relevant nation.

To stand for election a candidate must meet the conditions set out in Bye Laws 1.4 and 1.5, a copy of the SWU rules can be found at [www.swu-union.org.uk](http://www.swu-union.org.uk)

The Executive Committee is made up of nine members (at least one member each from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) and up to five others (UK representatives). The President of the union is elected by the executive from the UK representatives.

**SWU encourages applications from Students/Newly Qualified Social Workers and black and minority ethnic (BME) who are currently under-represented on the National Executive of SWU.**

Information regarding terms of office for this vacancy can be found at [www.swu-union.org.uk](http://www.swu-union.org.uk)

Candidates must complete a nomination form. **The closing date for receipt of nominations is Friday 29th March 2019.** The full timetable for elections can be found at [www.swu-union.org.uk](http://www.swu-union.org.uk)

Completed nomination forms must be accompanied by an election statement of no more than 500 words together with a head and shoulders colour photograph in a TIFF or JPEG format. These should be sent via email to: [swu-admin@swu-union.org.uk](mailto:swu-admin@swu-union.org.uk). Please note that nominees need to provide full contact details including a telephone number and email address.

Nomination forms and role descriptions are available from the SWU website at [www.swu-union.org.uk](http://www.swu-union.org.uk) or via email from [swu-admin@swu-union.org.uk](mailto:swu-admin@swu-union.org.uk) (0121 389 9248).

If you have any general queries about this process please contact the SWU Administration Manager on 0121 389 9248.

**SWU** Social Workers Union

## Call for Nominations SWU Executive Committee

(1 x Wales representative)

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**SWU** Social Workers Union

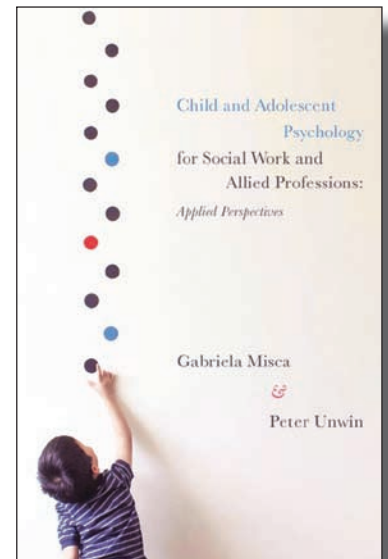
## Book Review

### **Child and Adolescent Psychology for Social Workers and Allied Professionals: Applied Perspectives**

*Gabriela Misca and Peter Unwin*

*Reviewed by John McGowan, General Secretary, SWU*

Have you ever received something surprising which you were not expecting? Something that you didn't think would make an impact on you, but totally did? This is what happened with the book that I received from SWU Member and activist Peter Unwin. I have not met Gabriela yet, but I know Peter very well; a supporter of a Professional Association (BASW) and Trade Union (SWU) working together. Peter is a registered Social Worker and remains active with a variety of campaigns and worthy interventions. Peter and Gabriela both Lecturer at the University of Worcester.



Having studied Psychology in my first degree, and as a long serving Children and Families Social Worker, the content of the book and reflective points ticked all the right boxes as I worked my way through the eight chapters and further suggested readings to complement the clear structure of the content. Who would like this book? Anyone who is interested in broadening their perspective on Social Work. Although specifically tailored in relation to working with children and adolescents; Misca and Unwin reflect on the need for “research mindedness” in Social Work education. They offer an invaluable critical analysis of the current knowledge of child and adolescent psychology theory and research to help inform best Social Work practice. Whether a student on a qualifying course or an experienced practitioner, this is essential reading for Social Workers and Psychologists working with children and adolescents.

Misca and Unwin clearly work well together with shared values and this comes across strongly; particularly in the emotional development and attachment sections. As suggested by the authors “Contemporary social work with children and young people is in turmoil and this book will suggest that one of the reasons for this turmoil is a lack of psychological understanding about the issues behind the behaviours of children and families in today's fast-changing world.”

## SWE Social Work England - Diary Dates

Social Work England have scheduled a series of events over the coming weeks to consult on reshaping social work standards. This will include the rules that will govern the way the new regulator will work and the standards they will expect from social workers and education and training providers. The rules will include registration, education and training, and fitness to practice. Social Work England are proposing new professional standards for social workers and a phased change to education and training standards. This consultation is due to go live in the coming weeks.

Social Work England will be holding events on the following dates:

London - 6th March 2019 • Plymouth - 13th March 2019 • Salford - 20th March 2019  
Newcastle- 21st March 2019 • Birmingham - 3rd April 2019

Here is a weblink with booking information:  
<https://socialworkengland.org.uk/consultation-events/>



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