

# BASW England

The professional association for  
social work and social workers

## England Manifesto 2022/23

On 5th May 2022 elections will be taking place across 146 unitary, metropolitan, county, district and London councils in England.

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

The impact of the coronavirus pandemic, austerity and the ever-increasing social policy agenda including the Health and Care Bill, Independent Review of Children's Social Care and the future of adult social care will shape and influence services to the citizens and communities we support now and in the future.

Below are the key six issues that BASW England will continue to campaign on and we hope that elected representatives will use their leverage and influence to help make these demands a reality.



[www.basw.co.uk/england](http://www.basw.co.uk/england)

## 1 Equality and Social Justice at the forefront of everything you do

Social workers are committed to fighting oppression, but the system that social workers operate within is oppressive and unequal. From the inequalities that COVID-19 has highlighted, to the murder of George Floyd, Sarah Everard, Nicole Smallman and Biba Henry – we are far away from living in a society that is truly equal, just, and safe.

### Action

*We ask that politicians promote, support, and legislate for the embedding of anti-oppressive, anti-discriminatory and anti-racist values and ethics in all stages of education and learning.*

*It is important that education and learning curricula is decolonized, inclusive, represents the contribution of all cultures and embraces an honest and transparent reflection of domestic, UK and international history.*

*Pledge support for the proposed Hillsborough Law, including the four key pillars to help rebalance the scales of justice.*

## 2 Support social workers and prioritize their wellbeing

Social workers have been the ‘forgotten frontline’ during the COVID-19 pandemic and have had to navigate the complexities of lockdown and what this has meant for the people that social workers support and work with. The long-term effects of COVID-19 on the public, both mentally and physically, will be felt by social workers both on a personal level and professionally as their caseloads increase and potentially become more complex.

### Action

*We ask that politicians consider the impact that their decisions will make on social work professionals and ensure that wellbeing of staff is included in all aspects of social policy reform and policy development and the wellbeing of social workers and social care staff is prioritized.*

## 3 Public recognition of social work

Members of the public may not fully understand the role and important contributions that social workers make to individuals, local communities, and wider society.

The scope of a social worker can be far-reaching and as well as providing support directly to individuals, social workers provide professional judgements that contribute to decisions about the provision of resources to meet needs.

To understand that social workers play a crucial role in the gateway to services.

### Action

*We encourage politicians to better understand what it is that social workers do and to recognise their contribution. We will campaign for politicians to fund and support promotion of social work as a career pathway.*

*We want to see a political and financial commitment to invest in social work recruitment, education, professional development, and retention initiatives we need for the next decade.*

*We also believe there needs to be a national public awareness campaigns about the unique contribution and diverse role of social workers.*

## 4 Time for social work and putting people with lived experience at the heart of decision making

When making policies, it is essential that those it directly impacts are involved in the development. Commissioners and service providers should not be making decisions about people, without their input. Decision-makers should bring a broad range of voices to every table to prevent policies and approaches from excluding people.

### Action

*We ask that politicians use their executive and scrutiny powers to ensure procedures and policies are accessible and inclusive for all people, especially those most impacted by any decisions or approaches.*

*We also ask that social workers have 'time' to do direct work and fully engage with the people they work with by creating mandatory employer standards.*

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

*Support BASW England's 80/20 and Home not Hospitals Campaigns*

## 5 Tackle the causes of social work crisis intervention

Poverty can often be a root cause of needing social work intervention.

Poverty is also a root cause of homelessness, which can lead onto further mental and physical illnesses. Because social work intervention tends to take place at crisis point, there are many people whose lives may never have reached that point if there were fully funded preventative measures in place that everyone in need could access. Tackling food poverty should be a core ambition of local and national government. The increase in the number of people using foodbanks pre and during is a national scandal and addressing food poverty and the causes of it should be a policy priority. The pandemic has also highlighted stark inequalities including food scarcity, food and digital poverty and socio determinants of health inequalities.

### Action

*We challenge politicians to make efforts to alleviate poverty and the causes of poverty in their role as local politicians, but also through their political parties or by using their platform of campaign on these issues including an enhanced universal credit level.*

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

## 6 That any inquiry into Covid-19 ensures previous mistakes are avoided again

BASW England supports the public inquiry into the Government's response to the pandemic and back the efforts led by the Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice. Families and communities will feel the impact of the people we have lost for years to come. The inquiry must work to ensure mistakes are not made again and that as many lives as possible are saved in future.

Social workers have reported a lack of contingency planning in local authorities with regards to the pandemic, which resulted in staffing crises, a lack of digital infrastructure to support remote working, unclear public health guidance, lack of PPE amongst a myriad of other issues. We are likely to encounter new viruses again, and lessons must be learnt about what went wrong. It is through looking at what could have been done better that we can ensure the country is prepared for any future pandemic.

### Action

*We want to see local representatives support the work of the independent public inquiry to commence as soon as possible and to insist on local planning for dealing with future pandemics to be made a priority.*



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