

Dear Social Work Employer,

This letter is to advise you of the purpose and benefits of the Social Work in Disasters Training your employee has expressed an interest in. The training is entirely free, and has been developed through the ongoing work of the British Association of Social Workers Disasters Working Group, working with The Open University, University of Stirling, Durham University and University of Greenwich. More information on the work of that group can be found [here](#).

The training is divided into 4 modules, each taking approximately 4 hours to complete, for a total of 16 hours. However, the training is asynchronous, meaning that it is worked through independently by the participant at their own pace. The training involves text, audio and video content, as well as regular exercises and tasks. The participants are provided with an electronic workbook to support in this.

Some of the benefits you can expect as an employer include:

- Having social work staff trained in the specific area of disasters response and recovery, who can be utilised in the event of a disaster.
- The flexibility of the asynchronous approach allows for the training to be engaged with when best suits the individual workplace context.
- The training is evidence based, building off of a systematic literature review of disaster social work encompassing 325 individual sources. That literature review can be viewed [here](#).
- Alongside this evidence focus, the views of social workers who have experience of working in disasters, and those they have supported, also shaped the training and are integrated into the content.
- The training has been subject to a rigorous pilot study by a highly experienced research team that found it had benefits for social workers including learning new knowledge, refreshing existing knowledge and increasing confidence in working in disasters. The pilot report can be accessed [here](#).
- The learning outcomes of the training have been mapped to the Knowledge and Skills Statements (KSS) for adults and children, and the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) in order to ensure relevance to practice. These outcomes and the mapping can be viewed [here](#).
- The training has been designed to develop social workers to prepare in the event of an unforeseen disaster, but it can also be utilised to rapidly upskills social workers in this area if your team are faced with responding to a current disasters being faced.
- The training is targeted at social workers working in England; however, it could also be engaged with by social work students, social workers outside of England or other professionals if they feel it is relevant to their learning and development.

What you are asked to contribute as an employer to get the most out of the training:

- Provide sufficient time off for the participant to engage with the materials (16 hours approximately). The pilot study found that this time and support were crucial for the training to be effectively engaged with.
- Consider integrating discussions around the training into supervision, or even team meetings. This type of collaboration was also found to be beneficial during the pilot study.
- There are some sections that ask the participant to engage with their wider team (for example there is a task to find out what the emergency response plans are in their workplace).
- Although the training has been designed to be undertaken by a single social worker on their own, there are also added benefits to two or more going through it at the same time. Therefore, please consider if there are others on your team who would benefit from this training.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. The materials can be accessed [here](#), and if you have any additional questions about them please do not hesitate to contact joe.hanley@open.ac.uk or maris.stratulis@basw.co.uk to discuss.

Thank you

BASW ENGLAND National Social Workers Disasters Group

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