

BASW

The professional association for
social work and social workers

ESTABLISHING A BASW BRANCH

SET UP GUIDANCE



REVIEW DATE: APRIL 2022

www.basw.co.uk

Dear Member,

Welcome! We are delighted that you are interested in developing a BASW branch in your local area. BASW is committed to supporting branch development across the UK and this guidance will help you get off to a flying start.

WHAT IS A BASW BRANCH?

A BASW branch is a group established and run by BASW members. It can run events and activities for members, contribute to campaigns and may bring motions to the BASW AGM. A Branch may also invite non-members, with a view to encouraging BASW membership for those eligible. Non-member attendance at branches may be restricted depending on topics of discussion, decisions and wider BASW policies.

Branches liaise, cooperate with and are accountable to National Standing Committees in accordance with terms of reference agreed by BASW Council.

WHAT DO BASW BRANCHES DO?

BASW branches are intended to promote local social work identity, connections, shared interests, opportunities for learning and activism on issues that matter to social workers locally and nationally. BASW wants to develop active branches across the UK and they are primarily member led and sustained. BASW staff are available to support members wanting to get one going and to keep it going.

WHAT IS IN THIS GUIDANCE?

This pack provides guidance for members interested in developing a new BASW branch (and may also be useful for members who have already formed a branch).

This information will hopefully support you to:

- Develop a branch
- Understand branch governance and how your local branch relates to your National Standing Committee and to BASW staff
- Run your branch successfully
- Recruit new members to BASW
- Inform your members about the workings of BASW nationally
- Enhance any local media coverage promoting the Association and the profession.



This pack cannot cover every situation and query, and there will be different geographical and other local considerations in branch development across the UK. But this should be a helpful guide for all the basics, and it will signpost you on how to get extra help and further advice.

DO BASW BRANCHES NEED TO BE 'APPROVED'?

Yes – Branches are considered fully established – and can access funding, staff support and other resources – when they have been approved by BASW Council. In this guidance there is a checklist of what you need to do to ensure your new branch receives Council approval.

We welcome your support and engagement in developing materials to support branches and we are always open to new ideas and suggestions. Do feedback on this pack through a BASW Professional Officer, National Director or relevant National Standing Committee member.

Getting started

If you are interested in developing a branch, please contact the BASW team for your nation (BASW England, BASW Cymru, BASW Northern Ireland or SASW) and ask for a link Professional Officer to speak to you to discuss what you hope to do:

England: england@basw.co.uk

Northern Ireland: n.ireland@basw.co.uk

Scotland: scotland@basw.co.uk

Wales: wales@basw.co.uk

You can start by having discussions with other BASW members in your area and non-members who may be interested to join BASW and get involved. Commitment and support from other BASW members is important in establishing a branch so we do recommend having one or more network meetings first to find out what local members are willing and able to do to get the branch off the ground. Please note that for data protection reasons, email addresses and other contact details of members in your area cannot be given to you without prior consent. The terms of BASW membership currently do not automatically provide such consent.

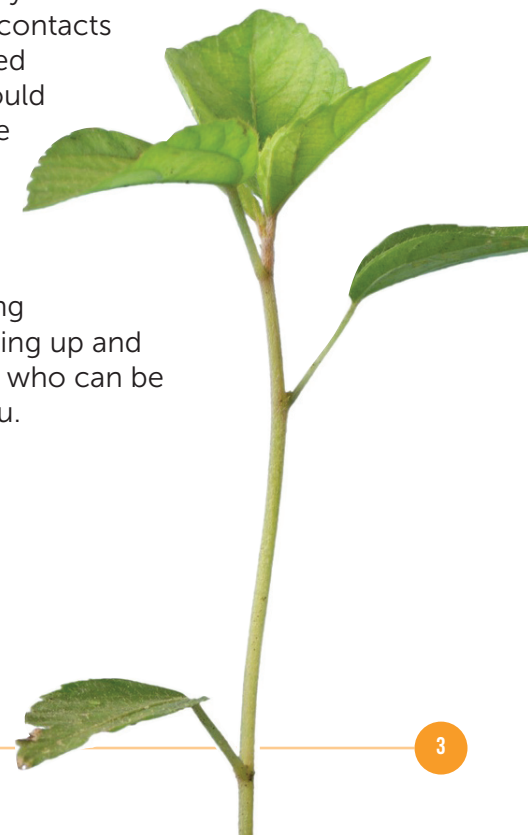
We can advise you on how to build your own local list of members who opt into branch activities. Building up your own list is very important to ensure you keep in touch with interested people. If people give you direct permission to contact them, you can do this freely without needing BASW to contact them on your behalf. You can start to collect contact details from your first exploratory meetings, and you should ask people to confirm they are content to be on the electronic distribution list for the local branch. Where there is no option on the event booking form, to gain consent for event attendees to have their email address added to the branch contact list, we recommend that consent is requested at virtual and face to face meetings. For virtual meetings this can be done by providing an email address in the chat, for people to contact to confirm their consent in writing

and for face to face a proforma a copy of which can be found in the branches resource kit.

Branch committee members can access BASW training and guidance on data protection requirements for receiving and storing contact details. Speak to your link Professional Officer and see the branch resource kit.

The relevant national BASW team can advertise to members in your geographical area, to help you promote your meeting and widen your branch membership. BASW England provides regular e-bulletins where branch events can also be promoted. Ask your link Professional Officer about this. Allow a 6 week lead in period for events to ensure they can be sufficiently promoted. It is recommended that wider branch events, use an MS Teams link, set up by your Professional Officer, however smaller committee meetings which do not need to be advertised, can be set up directly by the branch committee. See the branch resource kit for a briefing form which should be completed for all new events and sent to your link Professional Officer.

Your BASW country team can provide you with contacts in other established branches who would be willing to guide and mentor you through the development of a branch. There are members with long experience in setting up and running branches who can be very helpful to you.



The Chair and committee

Before approval by Council – provisional Chair and committee

It will be important to identify from your network meetings who is interested in being involved in a branch committee and who is willing to take on specific roles.

Before seeking approval from Council, a provisional branch Chair must be in place. This can be achieved through an election (by show of hands if more than one person is standing for the same post) from those who attend a branch set up meeting, with notice of that meeting being given to BASW members in the relevant area.

The recommended notice period for a branch set up meeting is at least three weeks. Each candidate for provisional branch Chair must be nominated and seconded by BASW members.

The above process can also be used for other provisional committee members. These roles are described below, and they are all optional. The committee member roles needed locally can be defined according to local requirements.

The provisional Chair and other committee members should be elected into office until the first annual meeting of the branch (which can be held at any point within the first year of the branch's operation and annually thereafter).

Once in place, **the provisional Chair can apply for the branch to be recognised by Council**. Please find below the checklist that needs to be completed before the branch goes to Council for approval.



Gaining Council approval

To gain approval from BASW Council and be fully constituted as a BASW Branch, the following must be met:

- 1. The provisional branch Chair and any other elected committee member/s must receive an electronic copy of this branch set up pack and agree to adhere to all relevant sections of it including what BASW expects from branches.**

- 2. The provisional branch Chair must meet or speak on the telephone with a relevant Professional Officer from a country team and go through the Branch set up checklist below before applying to Council for approval and confirm the following have been completed:**
 - 2.1 All prospective provisional branch Chairs and any committee members must receive a copy (electronic or hard copy) of the branch set up pack.

 - 2.2 All prospective branches must meet with a country professional officer and go through the following set up checklist before applying to Council for approval:
 - a) advertise and hold at least one open meeting with local members and produce minutes from/a record of this meeting
 - b) elect a Chair (by show of hands if more than one Candidate), at an open meeting of members, in accordance with the articles
 - c) the Chair receives, reads and agrees to comply with the relevant part of the articles as reproduced above, and any other requirements stipulated by Council
 - d) the Chair and committee agree to maintain periodic contact with an allocated Professional Officer
 - e) the Chair and Committee agree to report any difficulties in running or development of the Branch to the link Professional Officer as soon as possible, escalating these concerns to the relevant Country Manager in writing if required
 - f) The Chair and committee agree to the specified wind down or transfer arrangements (e.g. transition of Chair role or re-establishment of a replacement committee or alternative Branch) if the Branch is not successful.

Confirmation that this check list has been completed will be provided in writing by the link Professional Officer to the National Director who will recommend the branch is formally approved. On this recommendation, the Chief Executive will propose approval to the next Council meeting.

After approval by Council

After the approval, the provisional Chair and committee transition to full Chair and Committee up to the time of the first Annual Meeting. This should be held in the 12 months of operation after date of approval.

The ongoing branch Chair and committee will then be elected for a period of two years at the Annual Meeting, subject to annual re-nomination at subsequent Annual Meetings.

- Elections can be by show of hands at the Annual Meeting or by electronic ballot in advance of the meeting (which may be suitable if there are several candidates).
- For all posts and types of election, there needs to be a nomination and seconder from the branch and the post-holder/s must be a current member of BASW.

The Chair and committee members should demonstrate:

- i)* Positive promotion and representation of BASW and the social work profession
- ii)* Willingness to 'get involved' and to be identified as BASW representative/spokesperson locally and nationally by agreement with the National Standing Committee
- iii)* Willingness to invest time in chairing and facilitating branch meetings and communicating with members as appropriate
- iv)* Participation in local and national events
- v)* Encouraging members to share skills, knowledge, and expertise and support members in CPD
- vi)* Developing local links (e.g. with local groups of social workers and with employers and educators) and knowledge
- vii)* Liaising and cooperating with the National Standing Committee and Country Team to promote strategic alignment of work and communications.

Qualities desirable for the Chair:

- i)* Ability to coordinate and lead large and small meetings and events (Citrine's "ABC of Chairmanship" is a useful reference, see the branch resource kit for other tools)
- ii)* Experience of speaking publicly, or a willingness and ability to do so
- iii)* Willingness to engage in public relations (e.g. press, radio, TV). Training can be provided by BASW
- iv)* Ability to work within the governance, communications and ethics policies of BASW.

The Chair is responsible for guiding the work of the branch and the committee for their period of office and for ensuring the terms of the Articles of Association are followed.

The Chair is responsible for

- i)* Communication within the branch, with other members and with BASW officers
- ii)* Devising and implementing the branch's activity plan
- iii)* Liaison between the branch and country National Standing Committee
- iv)* Communications with external organisations
- v)* Holding, using and submitting returns for use of the branch credit card
- vi)* Leading on submission of additional branch funding bid requests over and above normal funding
- vii)* Acting as contact and/or branch secretary for establishing BASW branch e-mail in collaboration with BASW
- viii)* Ensuring that any formal statements issued on behalf of the branch are done so with the agreement of the branch committee and clearly reference that it is a branch statement which may not necessarily be endorsed by BASW.

Other committee members:

In addition to the Chair, branches must elect at least one other committee member.

The titles and number of committee roles can be decided according to branch needs. These may include:

Branch secretary

Typical responsibilities of branch secretary

- i)* Set up a local list of branch members (with help and communication from BASW membership department). This list is 'owned' by the branch and responsibility for updating and communication with members (with full informed consent) is the responsibility of the branch
- ii)* Receive and send branch emails and other communications in line with BASW Code of Ethics, Social Media Policy and members Code of Conduct
- iii)* Minute Committee meetings/Branch meetings
- iv)* Prepare an annual report on the work of the Branch for country and UK annual meetings
- v)* Promote an annual plan of activities.

Treasurer

Typical responsibilities of Treasurer (old set-up with bank account)

- i)* Dealing with claims on branch funds and being responsible for the branch bank account
- ii)* Monitoring financial circumstances and advising committee of branch funds
- iii)* Liaising with BASW UK on branch financial matters
- iv)* Preparing the annual branch accounts for audit.

Typical responsibilities of Treasurer (new set up with Barclaycard)

- i)* Dealing with claims on branch funds by way of regular correspondence with the Chair that holds the Branch Barclaycard (Chair or Treasurer may hold the Branch Barclaycard)
- ii)* Monitoring financial circumstances and advising committee of branch funds
- iii)* Liaising with BASW UK on branch financial matters
- iv)* Obtaining annual accounts for branch reporting.

Membership secretary

Typical responsibilities of Membership Secretary

- i)* Receiving information from the membership section at BASW
- ii)* Initiating 'welcome' procedure to new members (by letter/telephone call)
- iii)* Allocating all members to workplace/ area representative (according to Branch organisation)
- iv)* Promoting membership in the Branch area
- v)* Acting as a focus for members' enquiries, and liaising with BASW country teams to pass on/resolve enquiry
- vi)* Providing information to PSW, e-bulletins, BASW social media feeds to promote and publicise the branch and its activities.

Appendix one

Background information – Extract from BASW’s Articles of Association (Constitution)

Branches are part of BASW’s formal constitution. It is important to read this extract from the current Articles of Association to understand your rights and responsibilities as a Branch under the current constitution.

Extract from BASW Articles of Association

COMMITTEES

Branches

- 45.1 The Council may create Branches of Members with appropriate terms of reference which are designed to represent Members in a locality (within a National Standing Committee region) and provide opportunities for meeting and sharing of knowledge, promoting the values and purpose of the Association, organising Member activities (which may be open to non-members) educating and informing Members and non-members, addressing and promoting any issues relevant to the Association’s objects by any relevant and suitable means, and recruiting new members.
- 45.2 Each Branch shall have a management committee which will liaise and co-operate with Council and with the relevant National Standing Committee in accordance with terms of reference set by Council.
- 45.3 The Regulations and Procedures shall make further provision about the Branches including the ability of a Branch, through its committee, to raise motions at GMs.

Regulations

13. Branches

- 13.1 Branches are designed to represent Members in a locality (within a National Standing Committee region) and provide opportunities for meeting and the sharing of knowledge, promoting the values and purpose of the Association, organising Member activities (which may be open to non-members) educating and informing Members and non-members, addressing and promoting any issues relevant to the Association’s objects by any relevant and suitable means, and recruiting new members.
- 13.2 Each Branch shall have a management committee which will liaise with Council and with the relevant National Standing Committee in accordance with terms of reference set by Council.

Articles adopted at the additional general meeting held on 20/3/18.

Articles amended at Annual General Meeting on 15/9/20

www.basw.co.uk/resources/basw-articles-association

Appendix two

Managing Branch finances

SET UP FUNDING

BASW understands that even before the formal establishment of a Branch you may need assistance with costs for a venue or refreshments. You can access up to £300 to arrange BASW meetings/events in the lead up to formally establishing your Branch. This can be accessed through your country team.

ANNUAL FUNDING

Annual funding in each financial year will be provided for each branch. The maximum amount will be allotted during the annual budget process, approved by Council and confirmed to each branch prior to the start of the next financial year.

The BASW finance department will co-ordinate the annual branch funding. It will be the responsibility of the Branch Chair or Treasurer to be accountable for use of the funds and report all branch income and expenditure on the Branch Annual Return Form, this can be obtained from the BASW Finance Team.

ADDITIONAL INCOME

Any profit made on an event must be absorbed in the financial year it is made, it cannot be carried forward to the next financial year. Any surplus at the end of the financial year (end of September) will be returned to BASW central budget.

IN-KIND SUPPORT

Resourcing 'in-kind' may be provided by BASW through offering free rooms, publicity and art and design, according to the capacity and availability of central BASW resources.

BARCLAYCARD

Once established, new Branches will receive a BASW Barclaycard assigned to the Chair or another nominated committee member. The credit limit on the card will be maintained at £500.

All new branches issued with a business Barclaycard must report expenditure for each month using the quarterly return form. Advice and training on the use of relevant forms and financial reporting will be offered by the BASW Finance team. The procedure for use of the credit card and monthly return form will be sent with the credit card.



REASONABLE BRANCH EXPENDITURE

BASW expects all expenditure to be reasonable and essential, to facilitate branch meetings and events aimed at recruiting and retaining members which could incur the following costs:

- Branch Representation - Travel expenses for a representative from the branch to attend a BASW event e.g. Parliamentary, Assembly event, BASW UK Annual Meeting as approved by the branch committee
- Branch Representation - Subsistence and Accommodation expenses in accordance with the members' expense policy (copy available on request)
- Room Hire for branch meetings/events
- Catering – light refreshments
- Speaker Fees
- Postage
- Stationery
- Printing

ACCOUNTABILITY

BASW has the right to withdraw branch funding or Barclaycard at any time and receipts for expenditure must always be provided and reported each month. If you have any queries regarding financial accountability in this guidance please contact the BASW Finance Manager.

BASW will not tolerate any impropriety or misuse of funding and will take appropriate action should any matter be raised which necessitates investigation.

OWNERSHIP

BASW reserves the right to ownership of materials bought or financed through branch expenditure. Intellectual copyright of specific presentations and/or products should be agreed prior to commissioning or purchase.

ESTABLISHED BRANCHES WITH THEIR OWN BANK ACCOUNT AND FUNDS FROM PREVIOUS GRANTS

Established branches that have a bank account and funds from previous grants must use the funds in the bank accounts and report on annual income and expenditure as normal. Branches will maintain their separate bank accounts, but this arrangement is currently under review. Grants will not be paid as per the previous formula. Council now set the annual branch funding, this change came into effect with the change in articles in 2018. Branches can contact their link Professional Officer for further information.

BASW will write to existing branches with their own bank accounts regarding the changes to their banking arrangements and ongoing funding.

COMMUNICATIONS

Each branch should set up their own BASW branch email address.

On occasion your designated Professional Officer can arrange for alerts to be sent out to potential members (by geographical location).

A BASW induction session for committee members, including data protection and the relationship between branches and the rest of the organisation will be available. A branch resource kit will also be available containing helpful tips, resources and template documents.

Appendix three

Gathering member email addresses – proforma

I hereby give consent for my email address to be used by BASW and the branch for communication purposes.

NAME _____

EMAIL _____ TEL _____

NAME _____

EMAIL _____ TEL _____

NAME _____

EMAIL _____ TEL _____

NAME _____

EMAIL _____ TEL _____

NAME _____

EMAIL _____ TEL _____

NAME _____

EMAIL _____ TEL _____

NAME _____

EMAIL _____ TEL _____

NAME _____

EMAIL _____ TEL _____

NAME _____

EMAIL _____ TEL _____

NAME _____

EMAIL _____ TEL _____

BASW

The professional association for
social work and social workers

Establishing a BASW Branch: Set Up Guidance

Published by BASW: 2022



www.basw.co.uk