



The professional association for
social work and social workers

AGM 2019

OUTCOME OF ORDINARY MOTIONS

Amended Motion 1

This AGM recognises the growing impact of changing and inadequate economic and social policies and practices resulting in an increased prevalence of people who are homeless or living in situations of acute housing stress. It also recognises that these circumstances not only have extreme debilitating effects across age and needs groups, but may also arise as a symptom of other issues including mental health, substance misuse, domestic abuse, social exclusion and poverty.

This AGM is deeply concerned by the extreme housing and homelessness crisis across the UK, and commends the work that BASW has been developing in this area. Given the extent of the crisis, this AGM agrees that BASW will intensify work in this area, in particular by:

- reaffirming that social workers should never be required to undertake practice contrary to the BASW Code of Ethics or their registration requirements or that contravenes disability and equality legislation
- developing a clear policy and position statement in relation to homelessness
- providing practice guidance for social work practitioners, managers and commissioners on how to respond to issues arising from homelessness
- working with employers to address policies that are contrary to the developed code of ethics and guidance; and to provide practical support, training and encouragement to social workers to challenge policies, practice and decisions which adversely impact upon people and increase homelessness and housing stress
- working, alone and in partnership with others, to support research and other initiatives that promote and develop social, economic and legislative practice and procedures which will reduce the prevalence of people who are homeless or living in conditions of acute housing stress
- building alliances with Shelter, Crisis and other relevant housing and homelessness organisations across the UK and internationally, and with service user, disabled people's and tenants' organisations
- lobbying national and local government for a housing policy that ensures people can be housed or accommodated within their own communities
- Sustain and develop existing alliances with European Networks, such as the

European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA) and the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) and actively support members engaged in such work.

Housing is a social work issue.

On the authority of the London Branch, and seconded by the Black Country Branch, Worcestershire Branch, Birmingham and Solihull Branch, Suffolk and Ipswich Branch, Greater Manchester Branch, North East Branch, and Lincolnshire and Newcastle networks

Amendment proposed by Ian Johnston and seconded by Nushra Mansuri

Amended Motion Carried

Motion 2

The UK Home Office 'hostile environment policy' is a set of administrative measures designed to make staying in the UK as difficult as possible for people without leave to remain. This is intended to encourage people in this situation to leave voluntarily. The policy was first announced in 2012, when Theresa May was the Home Secretary. It was designed to help fulfil the election manifesto proposal that immigration levels should be reduced. In the words of the Home Secretary "The aim is to create, here in Britain, a really hostile environment for illegal immigrants".

This AGM notes the government's inhumane hostile environment immigration policy runs in direct conflict with social work principles and values and is contrary to the BASW Code of Ethics.

We condemn the discrimination and oppression of people who are experts through experience through their immigration status. This affects, in particular, but not exclusively, people who have NRPF (No Recourse to Public Funds).

Accordingly, this AGM instructs BASW to challenge and actively campaign to remove this 'hostile environment policy' from government policy, in pursuit of BASW's ethical principles and values to uphold human rights and social justice.

This AGM instructs BASW to:

- Condemn the use of the NRPF condition as an anti-immigration tool
- Campaign in the areas of the UK where local authority policy and practice fails to support those with NRPF
- Work with NHS colleagues to abolish discriminatory healthcare charging for people (adults and children)
- Advocate for free school meals and pupil premium support for children whose carers have NRPF where this is not current practice
- Oppose the use of embedded Home Office staff in local authorities.

BASW will proactively support social workers to advocate for the human rights of NRPF clients and to challenge decision-making and practices that are counter to the BASW Code of Ethics.

On the authority of the Immigration, Asylum & Trafficking (IAT) Special Interest Group

Motion Carried

Motion 3

The Worcestershire Branch notes that New Zealand has recently (July 2018) passed a bill that those experiencing domestic abuse can take up to ten-days paid leave to find safety and a place to live. In addition, the Branch notes that trials of this policy are underway in Ayrshire in Scotland (Feb 2019) and on the Wirral (March 2019) in England, as well as there being a company initiative by Vodafone UK (March 2019). Moreover, the adoption of this policy has been pledged (Sept 2018) by Dawn Butler MP on behalf of the Shadow Cabinet and will be implemented in the UK in the event of a Labour Government coming to power. This AGM agrees that this is a progressive legislative initiative which BASW should press for at Government level in each country of the UK as a matter of urgency.

On the authority of the Worcestershire Branch

Motion Carried

Motion 4

This AGM notes that social workers like other professionals are nominated and receive Queen's Honours, some of whom are or have been BASW members and some not. The Queen's Honours may be controversial to some members. Nomination for and receiving a Queen's Honour is recognition of our profession and the valuable services social workers are providing.

Whilst recognising this complexity, this AGM agrees that, in principle, BASW committees (with the support of Council) can nominate social workers for a Queen's Honour.

On the authority of the Wales National Standing Committee

Motion Carried

Motion 5

There are a significant number of Social Work qualified Heads of Service and Directors, educators, regulators and researchers who choose not to be registered with the Welsh Registration Body - Social Care Wales. This situation exists due to a gap in the regulations and governance arrangements when the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 was enacted.

Heads of Services and Directors are appointed because of their experience and skills within the Social Work profession they belong to, as are educators, researchers and regulators. Their role requires drawing on professional skills and/or knowledge in the course of their work. For example, if they are working in education, management or research, they are still considered to be practising their profession. This is particularly pertinent whenever circumstances arise in respect of referrals under 'fitness to practice' responsibilities as the current omission could be described as incongruent.

BASW Cymru works to promote the registration of these groups in order to support and strengthen the role and reach of the profession in Wales. We ask this AGM to support this work, and to support promotion of similar work where relevant in the other nations of the UK.

On the authority of the Wales National Standing Committee

Motion withdrawn

Motion 6

Birmingham and Solihull Branch and Worcestershire branch commend the "All Birmingham's Children" initiative to promote the best interests of all Birmingham's children and young people. This AGM calls upon the Association to encourage and support similar initiatives across the four countries that will encourage the promotion of the best interests of all groups supported by social work and social care services.

On the authority of the Birmingham & Solihull Branch and seconded by Worcestershire Branch

Motion Carried

Emergency Motion 1

This AGM welcomes the UK Government's declaration of an environment and climate change emergency and affirms BASW's commitment to the UN 2030 Global Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Proposed by Ian Johnston

Seconded by Janet Foulds

Motion Carried

Emergency Motion 2

Whilst this AGM warmly welcomes BASW'S response to the recent shocking and horrific Panorama expose of violent and abusive practices carried out by staff upon adults with learning difficulties and autistic adults at Whorlton Hall, it believes that ongoing abusive care is still being delivered to people with learning disability and/or autism in a range of institutional settings.

The AGM fully endorses the Association's view that relationship-based and rights-based social work practice is fundamental in preventing harm and crisis situations, and to move away from institutions to the return of person centred, inter-agency and community-based provision.

The AGM calls on BASW executive and Council to collectively advocate for political, policy and practice reforms in this area and to make further representation to Government to:

- Urgently end such institutionalised placements across the UK, through the development of replacement social care models of service delivery with social workers integral to their provision.

The AGM also requests that BASW builds on current work across the UK to ensure and promote clear practice for social workers working with people who remain in these placements.

Proposed and seconded by Black Country Branch

Motion Carried