

# BASW

The professional association for  
social work and social workers

## The BASW State of Social Work Survey: 2025

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# Foreword

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Welcome to our State of Social Work summary report. I want to start by thanking everyone who generously gave their time to share their views and experiences with us. We highly value your insights which have provided us with a richly diverse picture of what it's like to be a social worker across all four UK nations in 2025.

This is BASW's fourth major social work survey since the pandemic. The data we capture enables us to identify patterns emerging in the profession, thereby determining where we focus our priorities for the forthcoming year, to ensure we campaign and influence on key issues highlighted through our survey and importantly work with key stakeholders across the Nations to represent and bring about change for social work and social workers. This is complemented by the invaluable firsthand accounts and examples we gather, and importantly, forms a clear direction for supporting our members in their day to day work and in their development as social workers.

Whilst our findings on one hand highlight the outstanding social work practice happening in our communities, they also uncover stark problems that social workers are facing, and which are having a profoundly damaging impact on their wellbeing. At times, this makes for uncomfortable reading, but it is of critical importance that we are made aware of these challenges if, as the professional association for all social workers, we are to tackle them effectively.

Poor working conditions and resourcing constraints have long been a serious concern for our profession, and it is extremely worrying that, despite widespread awareness of it, improvements continue to be few and far between. I know how disheartening and frustrating that is for social workers.

Our report lays bare the unsustainable pressure cooker that professionals are operating in, with many telling us that they're routinely working over and above their contracted hours and struggling to manage excessive workloads. Years of under-funding of social care across all nations is taking a heavy toll on services, and accessing resources for the people we support is becoming even tougher, with more social workers using their own money to support vulnerable people. Most importantly, an increasing lack of resources for people is the main concern for social workers and has the biggest impact on their day to day practice. We will demand an urgent response from our national governments on these issues.

What also stood out was the striking number of respondents reporting instances of harassment, bullying or discrimination, either to themselves or colleagues. This is deeply alarming and unacceptable, having remained disturbingly high since the survey was introduced. Nobody should experience these types of behaviours at work. Rest assured that BASW will pick this matter up with employers on your behalf.

Despite these difficult revelations, I remain confident and determined that we can strengthen our profession together. Woven throughout our findings are illustrations of positivity, change and unity that fill me with optimism and confidence for our future. Peer support continues to be undeniably strong, showing the unshakable resilience and camaraderie that exists in workplaces around the country. It was also pleasing to hear many examples of positive management and supervision being recognised and higher numbers of respondents telling us that they feel happy at work. This is welcome progress and makes me hopeful of what more we can still achieve.

Indeed, the collective and individual pride that social workers have of their profession shines through in the report. This is greatly encouraging and gives us a strong platform on which to grow social work's reach, influence and visibility across all aspects of society – which is another area you've told us BASW needs to focus on.

**That said, despite these high points, the fact that more social workers are still considering leaving the profession, serves as a loud wake-up call. The long term sustainability of social work is under threat.**

The next steps for us at BASW is to make the representations that can change this trend. The message from our profession is clear and non-negotiable – we expect and need better working conditions. I hear you, and my personal commitment to you is to use your words and our standing to press politicians and employers for long overdue improvements. Thanks to your feedback, we have lots of work to do.

**Professor Samantha Baron**  
**Interim Chief Executive of BASW**

# Key findings

In our State of Social Work report, the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) presents the findings of its 2025 survey. The survey examined issues of the reality of the workload faced by respondents, how social workers feel the public view our profession, the positives of the role, the challenges faced in the workplace and finally, the challenges faced more broadly by the social work profession.

Our findings established:

**1. Social workers are struggling to access resources for the people with whom they work**

55.21% of respondents identified access to resources for the people they work with as one of the biggest challenges they face in the workplace.

**2. The funding of social care is a major challenge faced by the profession**

Funding of social care was selected by 73.64% of respondents as one of the biggest challenges facing the profession, up from 62.22% in 2023.

**3. The majority of social workers are still struggling to complete their work within contracted hours**

57.79% of respondents report not being able to complete all their work during their contracted hours, slightly down from 64.61% in 2023.

**4. And, Managing workload remains a challenge**

42.21% reported not feeling able to manage their current workload

**5. Too many people are still reporting experiencing or witnessing bullying, harassment and discrimination**

36.69% reported having experienced bullying, harassment and/or discrimination in the past 12 months, or were aware of someone that had.

**6. Having a positive impact on people's lives matters**

61.8% of respondents reported that having a positive impact on people's lives was one of the most rewarding parts of their role.

**7. Yet people are still considering leaving the profession**

8.28% of respondents reported that they planned to leave the profession for alternative employment in the next three years, with a further 9.97% reporting that they had either already planned to retire or were taking early retirement.

**8. Peer support is a crucial work place positive and enabler**

47.55% of respondents say peer support has a positive impact on their workplace; 40.69% say training and learning opportunities have a positive impact – an increase from 26.58% in 2023.

**9. Space for reflection, research and developing new learning is essential**

40% of respondents identified training and learning opportunities as one of the three most important factors having a positive impact on their current or most recent workplace, with 26.65% choosing

space and time for reflective practice. However, 17.72% chose inadequate space and time for reflective practice as one of the three biggest challenges in their workplace, with a further 12% identifying challenges in keeping up with professional development and/or mandatory training.

**10. Positive management and supervision continue to be highlighted**

36% chose positive management and supervision as having a positive impact on their current or most recent workplace.

**11. Increase in social workers feeling happy in their work**

67% of social workers agreed or strongly agreed that they felt happy in their current role, up from 55.56% in 2023.

**12. Public perception – is increasing but remains overall negative**

Respondents' views on how the public perceive social work and social workers improved somewhat on previous years.

A number of the questions contained in the survey are repeated regularly in BASW surveys with the intention of enabling changes in views and feelings to be tracked over time. This allows trends in the data to be identified. These questions will continue to be repeated in coming years to build up this data further. Where questions have been run before, findings are compared with those from previous years to highlight consistency and change.

BASW uses the data collected from this and other surveys in its work promoting and representing the social work profession, including efforts to improve working conditions and also the circumstances of those with whom social workers work. The survey therefore contains questions about the challenges and pressures faced by the profession. However, it also seeks to recognise some of the positives of social work. Both positives and challenges are reflected in the qualitative comments that respondents can choose to submit. Some of these are included in this report.

The survey was conducted across the four nations of the UK. It was hosted on the BASW website between 8 December 2025 and 13 January 2026 and was open to both members and non-members of BASW. 1123 social workers, educators and students completed the survey. We are grateful to all the respondents who willingly gave their time to complete the survey and contribute to BASW's work.

# A note on structure

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The summary report contains the main findings of the BASW Survey 2025. These findings take the form of descriptive statistics calculated based on the responses of all those who responded to the survey (n = 1123), unless otherwise specified.

**48%** of respondents reported that they were experienced social workers, and almost **one-quarter** reported they were managers.

**50%** of respondents reported working with children and families and **70%** of respondents identified themselves as employees.

A full breakdown of the professional profile of respondents is available in Appendix A. A discussion of the way in which the survey was conducted, including the limitations of the method used, can be found in Appendix B – How we conducted this survey.



# Being a social worker

► **Figure 1: Which of the following most closely reflects your reason for entering the social work profession?**

	Number of respondents	Percentage ( <i>n</i> = 1123)
Interest in social justice and welfare	361	32.15%
To improve lives and community	343	30.54%
Personal experience	74	6.59%
Enjoy working with and supporting people	294	26.18%
Other	13	1.16%

This question was asked for the first time since the 2021 BASW survey, when the most-chosen option of 2025, interest in social justice and welfare, had been the second most chosen option. However, the percentages remain broadly similar (2025: 32.15%; 2021: 29.29%). The most chosen option in 2021, 'enjoy working with and supporting people', dropped slightly from 29.51% to 26.18%. Changes in sample size since the 2021 survey must be taken into consideration given the relatively slight degree of change.

► **Figure 2: Of the following options, please choose three that you find most rewarding about the role:**

	Number of respondents	Percentage ( <i>n</i> = 1123)
Positive impact on people's lives	694	61.8%
Empowering individuals	656	58.41%
Varied nature of the role	447	39.80%
Opportunity to protect, defend human rights	378	33.66%
Promotion of social justice	362	32.24%
Continuous learning/professional development	296	26.36%
Working with the local community	212	18.88%
Co-production of solutions to challenges	203	18.08%
Other	16	1.42%

This was another question that had not been asked since 2021. The most selected option, 'positive impact on people's lives', was the same in both 2021 and 2025. However, the percentage of respondents choosing this option had increased from 50.4% in 2021 to 61.8% in 2025.

► **Figure 3: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I feel secure in my current job.**

	Number of respondents	Percentage (n = 1123)	Combined
Strongly agree	238	21.19%	65.62%
Agree	499	44.43%	
Disagree	218	19.41 %	24.31%
Strongly disagree	55	4.9%	
Not applicable	81	7.21%	

This question about job security was first asked in 2022. In the 2025 survey, almost two-thirds (65.62%) of total respondents reported that they agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, which is comparable to the proportion in previous years (2023: 65.84%; 2022: 64.17%). The percentage of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing increased to 24.31% from 20.33% in 2023. This indicates that a growing number of social workers may not be feeling secure in their current jobs. Those studying for a social work qualification (n = 32) were not asked these questions.

► **Figure 4: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I am happy in my current job.**

	Number of respondents	Percentage (n = 1123)	Combined
Strongly agree	200	17.81%	67.05%
Agree	553	49.24%	
Disagree	205	18.25%	25.2%
Strongly disagree	78	6.95%	
Not applicable	55	4.9 %	

The proportion of respondents reporting that they agreed or strongly agreed with this statement increased to 67.05% from 55.56% in 2023 (61.8% in 2022). The proportion of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this statement decreased from 32.35% in 2023 to 25.2%. This may suggest a small shift towards respondents being happy in their current jobs although changes in sample size must also be taken into consideration. It correlates to both Figures 3 and 5 in terms of the proportion of respondents who feel both secure in their current job and happy in the social work profession as a whole.

► **Figure 5: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I am happy in the social work profession.**

	Number of respondents	Percentage (n = 1123)	Combined
Strongly agree	223	19.86%	68.75%
Agree	549	48.89%	
Disagree	214	19.06%	25.47%
Strongly disagree	72	6.41%	
Not applicable	33	2.94 %	

The proportion of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement was over two-thirds at 68.75%, up from three-fifths (60.49%) in 2023. This represents an increase from both 2023 and the 2022 findings (59.17%). The percentage of those disagreeing or strongly disagreeing decreased again to 25.47% in 2025 from 28.48% in 2023 and 31.21% in 2022.

► **Figure 6: What, if any, career changes do you plan to make in the next three years?**

	Number of respondents	Percentage (n = 1123)
I intend to continue in my current role	360	32.06%
Apply for promotion	126	11.22%
Work fewer hours (e.g. change to part time working)	108	9.62%
Change area of practice	101	8.99%
Leave the profession for alternative employment	93	8.28%
I have already planned to retire	72	6.41%
Become independent or locum social worker	45	4.01%
I am taking early retirement	40	3.56%
Take a career break	22	1.96%
I will qualify as a social worker in the next three years	14	1.25%
Work more hours (e.g. change to full time working)	4	0.36%
None of the above	106	9.44%

This question was asked for the first time since the 2021 survey when 'I intend to continue in my current role' was also the most selected option, chosen by 23.32% of respondents. The proportion of respondents planning to leave the profession for alternative employment decreased from 15.4% in 2021 to 8.28% in 2025. This may reflect that the 2021 survey was run at a time when social workers were dealing with the recent experience of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the difference in sample sizes must also be considered.

# Public Perception of Social Work

On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is "poor" and 10 is "excellent" How would you rate the public's current perception of social workers?

**Average: 4.16**

The average this year represented an increase on previous years at 4.16. In 2021, the average was 3.6; in 2022, it was 3.3 and in 2023 it was 3.07. The 2025 finding therefore bucks an earlier trend of incremental worsening in how social workers believe they are perceived by the public. It remains to be seen whether this may be a one-off result rather than an overall trend reversal.

"Sadly there are still misconceptions of Social Workers partly perpetuated by negative views in the media. This has worsened with increasing demand in services. I am working tirelessly (one case at a time) to improve positive outcomes for families."

"There is a lack of understanding of the social worker's role beyond the media coverage when there are terrible events. There is a lack of interest in how social workers are constantly balancing approaches to promote relational and rights based practice with demanding work place pressures and finite resources"

There was a survey recently and the findings were that the public's view of us was more positive than our perception of what the public thought! Many people will say it's a tough job and that they could not do it



# Benefits and challenges of doing social work

► Figure 7: Of the following options, please choose 3 that have the most positive impact on your current (or most recent) workplace experience.

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Peer support	534	47.55%
Training and learning opportunities	457	40.69%
Appropriate level of management and supervision	405	36.06%
Effective multi-agency and/or partnership working	402	35.8%
Space and time for reflective practice	299	26.63%
Sufficient resource for people I work with	243	21.64%
Research and knowledge sharing opportunities	219	19.5%
Service development and improvement opportunities	207	18.43%
Engage in rights-based practice	173	15.41%
Career progression	147	13.09%
Effective workplace policy on anti-discriminatory practice	72	6.41 %

The number one most chosen option has been consistent since the start of the annual survey – peer support (chosen by 47.55% of respondents in 2025). The proportion of those choosing this option decreased from its highest point in 2022 (57.24%) but aligns with the finding from 2021 (46.75%). ‘Training and learning opportunities’ has risen from the fourth most selected option in 2023 (26.58%) to second most selected option in 2025 (40.69%). The third most selected option, ‘appropriate level of management and supervision’ registered a decrease in the proportion of respondents choosing it compared with 2023 (2023 – 44.2%). Whilst ‘effective multi-agency and/or partnership working’ has dropped from being the third most-selected option in 2023, it was actually selected by a greater proportion of respondents in 2025 – 35.8%, compared with 28.81% in 2023.

While there are no clear trends beyond the relative consistency of the most selected options, some of the variation is potentially accounted for by the absence of one of the lowest-ranked options from previous years. However, given that it was the second least chosen option from earlier surveys, it is unlikely to have had a significant impact on the rankings although it may have affected option choices. Some variation can also be attributed to changes in the number of respondents in successive annual surveys.



► **Figure 8: Of the following options, please choose 3 that you consider to be the biggest challenges to you in your workplace.**

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Access to resources for the people I work with	620	55.21%
Demands of administrative tasks	568	50.58%
Workload demand	484	43.1%
Adequacy of staffing levels	328	29.21%
Inadequate managerial support	256	22.8%
Management of change in organisation	211	18.79%
Inadequate reflective time, space and or practice supervision	199	17.72%
Lack of career progression	163	14.51%
Keeping up with professional development and/or mandatory training	134	11.93%
Bullying and/or harassment	91	8.1%
Discrimination	71	6.32%
Lack of autonomy in my work	58	5.16%
Relationships with colleagues	55	4.9%
Support and induction for NQSWs	48	4.27 %

Here there was a clear gap between the three most selected options and the rest. The biggest concern reported by more than half of respondents was ‘access to resources for the people I work with’ (55.21%; 2023: 46.09%) followed by ‘demands of administrative tasks’ (50.58%; 2023: 43.13%). ‘Adequacy of staffing levels’, dropped from the most selected option in 2023 to fourth most selected option (2023: 46.91%; 2025: 29.21%), The second and third most selected options are closely related – ‘workload demand’ and ‘demands of administrative tasks’. These represent the same top four as in the previous surveys, although 2023 was the only time that ‘adequacy of staffing levels’ was the most chosen option, having been third most selected in 2022 (34.89%) and second-most selected in 2021 (42% of the total number of respondents).

► **Figure 9: Of the following options, please choose 3 that you consider to be the biggest challenges for the social work profession now and in the immediate future.**

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Failure to adequately fund social care	827	73.64%
Cuts to local services	641	57.08%
Not enough time to spend with people using services	475	42.3%
Recruitment and retention	443	39.45%
Widening/deepening poverty	250	22.26%
Privatisation and profit-driven models in health and social care	238	21.19%
Cost of living crisis	185	16.47%
Public perception	143	12.73%
Media/TV/news perception	131	11.67%
Meeting requirements of the regulators	75	6.68%
Encouraging/promoting social work activism and campaigning	61	5.43%
Abuse or violence at work	49	4.36%
Communicating digitally with the people I work with	33	2.94%
Recruiting and encouraging social workers to be active trade unionists	31	2.76%

The most selected option was very clear in the 2025 survey with ‘failure to adequately fund social care’ being chosen by almost three-quarters of respondents (73.64%; 2023 – 62.22%). This was followed by ‘cuts to local services’ (57.08% down from 67.49% in 2023). After being the second most selected option in 2023, this year’s survey saw ‘failure to adequately fund social care’ return to being most selected option for this question, emphasising the pressing need for social care policy reform, something that has been delayed by successive governments.

There was then a drop to the third-most selected option of ‘not enough time to spend with service users’ (2025: 42.3%, up from 31.36% in 2023) and the fourth most selected option ‘recruitment and retention’ (2025: 39.45%, 2023: 41.23%) These two options are thus reversed from the 2023 survey, largely due to an increase in the proportion of respondents selecting ‘not enough time to spend with service users’, rather than a drop in the proportion choosing ‘recruitment and retention’.

“The profession needs more respect and more funding. There needs to be recognition that social care is not a poor relative of the NHS.”

# Workload

► **Figure 10: Are you able to complete all your work within your contracted hours?**

	Number of respondents	Percentage (n = 1123)
Yes	336	29.92%
No	649	57.79 %
Not applicable	106	9.44%

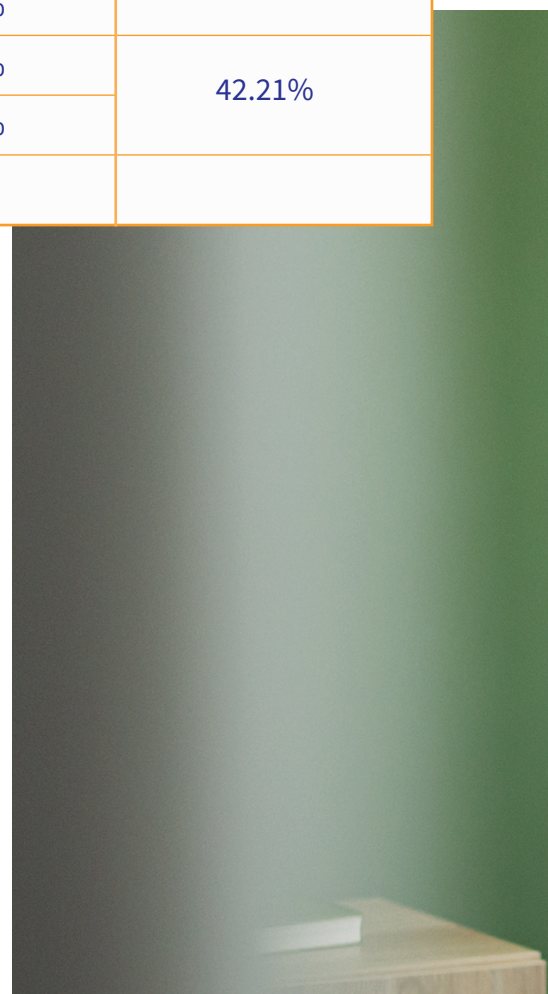
Almost three-fifths of the total number of respondents reported being unable to complete their work within their contracted hours. This aligns with the findings of previous BASW surveys asking this question. The results indicate that a majority of respondents consistently feel unable to complete their work within the contracted hours. Those studying for a social work qualification were exempt from this question.

► **Figure 11: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I feel able to manage my current workload.**

	Number of respondents	Percentage	Combined
Strongly agree	131	11.67%	48.71%
Agree	416	37.04%	
Disagree	306	27.25%	42.21%
Strongly disagree	168	14.96%	
Not applicable	70	6.23 %	

In another repeated question, more than two-fifths respondents (42.21%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that they felt able to manage their current workload, with just under half (48.71%) agreeing or strongly agreeing. This reverses the results from the 2023 survey when just over half (50.21%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement and just over one-third (36.87%) agreed or strongly agreed.

In terms of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement, this represents an increase. Previous surveys have consistently shown just over one-third of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing (34.48% in 2021; 36.14% in 2022). The number of those disagreeing or strongly disagreeing jumped sharply in 2022 following the removal of the 'Neither agree nor disagree' option, from 37.6% in 2021 to 52.19% in 2022. In 2025, the results have shown a decrease in the proportion of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this statement.



► Figure 12: In an average week, do you work any additional hours to complete your work?

	Number of respondents	Percentage (n = 1123)	Percentage (n = 649)
No, I do not work any additional hours	16	1.42%	2.47%
Yes, up to 1 hour per week	12	1.07%	1.85%
Yes, between 1 and 5 hours per week	294	26.18%	45.3%
Yes, between 5 and 10 hours per week	211	18.79%	32.51%
Yes, between 10 and 15 hours per week	77	6.86%	11.86%
Yes, over 15 hours per week	39	3.47%	6.01%

Most respondents who answered this question reported working some additional time in an average working week. Only those who answered 'No' to the question reported in Figure 10 were asked this question.



# Bullying, harassment, discrimination

► **Figure 13: Have you experienced bullying, harassment and/or discrimination in your place of work or study over the past 12 months or are you aware of someone who has?**

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	412	36.69%
No	711	63.31%

Over one-third of respondents (36.69%) reported that they had experienced bullying, harassment and/or discrimination or were aware of someone who had. In consecutive surveys the proportion of respondents has hovered repeatedly around the two-fifths mark, between 36% and 43%.

Respondents who responded 'Yes' to the preceding question were asked a follow-up question.

► **Figure 14: Please indicate which of the following you have experienced in your place of work or study in the past twelve months.**

	Number of respondents	Percentage (n = 412)
I have personally been a victim of bullying, harassment and/or discrimination	257	62.38%
I have witnessed at least one person experience bullying, harassment and/or discrimination	194	47.09%
At least one person has confided in me about their experiences of bullying, harassment and/or discrimination	174	42.23%
I have witnessed at least one person do/say things that I consider to be bullying, harassment and/or discrimination	132	32.04%

Over three-fifths of these respondents (62.38%) reported having personally been a victim of bullying, harassment and/or discrimination. Almost half (47.09%) had witnessed someone receiving such treatment, an increase from 2023. Over two-fifths (42.23%) had been told of such experiences by another person. Almost one-third (32.04%) reported having witnessed activity they considered to be bullying, harassment or discrimination.

Respondents to this question were also offered the opportunity to make qualitative comments about their experiences. Many shared their experiences of bullying from management and other colleagues and/or discrimination shaped in racism, sexism and religious difference amongst others. Whether or not formal complaints had been made, those respondents often felt unsupported and some ended up leaving their role.

# Cost-of-Living Crisis

► **Figure 15: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: The number of people I work with has increased as the cost of living has increased.**

	Number of respondents	Percentage (n = 1123)	Combined
Strongly agree	252	22.44%	54.23%
Agree	357	31.79%	
Disagree	184	16.38%	19.59%
Strongly disagree	36	3.21%	
Not applicable	262	23.33%	

Over half of respondents (54.23%) reported that they agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, a slight increase on the 2023 result (51.19%; 2022: 49.88%). Just under two-fifths (19.59%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, compared with 22% in 2023 and 23.97% in 2022. Only 3.21% of respondents strongly disagreed with this statement in 2025 (2023: 4%).

► **Figure 16: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I work with more people living in poverty now than before the cost-of-living crisis.**

	Number of respondents	Percentage (n = 1123)	Combined
Strongly agree	290	25.82%	63.67%
Agree	425	37.85%	
Disagree	137	12.2%	13.62%
Strongly disagree	16	1.42%	
Not applicable	223	19.86%	

Approaching two-thirds of total respondents (63.67%), agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, a very similar proportion to 2023 (63.79%). Just over one-eighth (13.62%) disagreed or strongly disagreed.. In 2022 more than two-thirds (68.67%) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, indicating the continued impact of the cost-of-living crisis on the people with whom social workers work.

# Appendix A – Workforce Profile

► Figure 17: Where do you currently (or most recently) work or study?

	Number of respondents	Percentage (n = 1123)
Cymru (Wales)	82	7.3%
England	927	82.55%
Northern Ireland	32	2.85%
Scotland	82	7.3 %

► Figure 18: Are you a member of BASW?

	Number of respondents	Percentage (n = 1123)
Yes, I am currently a member of BASW	944	84.06%
No, I am not a member but was previously	68	6.06%
No, I am not a member and never have been	111	9.88%

► Figure 19: Which best describes your social work qualification?

	Number of respondents	Percentage (n = 1123)
Have a social work qualification	1064	94.75%
Do not have and am not studying for a social work qualification	5	0.45%
Studying towards a social work qualification	52	4.63%

Almost 95% of respondents to the survey were qualified social workers. A further 4.63% were working towards qualifying as social workers. Those studying towards a social work qualification were not asked all of the questions in this Appendix.

► **Figure 20: What best describes your current (or most recent) employment status?**

	Number of respondents	Percentage (n = 1123)
Self-employed/Independent	148	13.18%
Agency	73	6.5%
Employee	788	70.17%
Retired	39	3.47%
Student social worker	32	2.85%
Unemployed	14	1.25%
Other (please specify)	29	2.58%

Seven-tenths of respondents (70.17%) reported being employees of an organisation. A further 13% described themselves as independent or self-employed and 6.5% reported that they worked for an agency. In the 'other' category, the most frequently mentioned role was in social work education.

► **Figure 21: Which best describes your current (or most recent) professional status?**

	Number of respondents	Percentage (n = 1123)
Manager	272	24.22%
Experienced	541	48.17%
NQSW	76	6.77%
Educator/academic	77	6.86%
Supervisor	53	4.72%
Other	72	6.41%

As with previous BASW surveys asking this question, the majority of respondents reported being experienced social workers or holding more senior positions. Almost half (48.17%) identified themselves as experienced and almost one quarter (24.32%) reported being managers. Almost 7% of respondents were Newly Qualified Social Workers.

► **Figure 22: Please specify your current (or most recent) area of practice.**

	Number of respondents	Percentage (n = 1123)
Adults	371	33.04%
Children and families	563	50.13%
Mental health	190	16.92%
Justice	33	2.94%
Social work educator/academic	74	6.59%
Other	44	3.92%

The most frequently reported area of practice was in Children and Families (just over half of respondents) with approximately one-third working with Adults (33.04%). Around one-fifth of respondents (16.92%) reported working in mental health. Respondents were able to choose more than one option for this question, reflecting that many social workers are engaged across multiple areas of practice.

► **Figure 23: Which of the following best describes the sector where you predominantly work?**

	Number of respondents	Percentage (n = 1123)
Government	34	3.03%
Local authority	751	66.87%
NHS	107	9.53%
Private	79	7.03%
Voluntary/charity	55	4.9%
Other (please state)	64	5.7%

In this question, previously asked in 2023, respondents were asked to choose the best description for the situation in which they work. More than two-thirds (66.87%) reported that they worked predominantly in local authorities. The next most frequently selected sector of employment was the NHS (9.53%), a small increase on the proportion from 2023. This question helps to demonstrate and understand the different types of organisation in which social workers find employment.

► **Figure 24: Where did you (or will you) qualify as a social worker?**

	Number of respondents	Percentage (n = 1123)
In the UK	1051	93.59%
Outside of the UK	61	5.43%
Not applicable	8	0.71%

Almost 5.5% of respondents to the survey reported qualifying outside the UK. This compares to just over 4% in the 2023 survey and 5% in the 2022 survey. Social workers who qualified outside the UK represent a growing proportion of the social work workforce. Of those who qualified outside the UK, out of the 19 different countries mentioned, the most commonly identified countries of qualification were Australia, South Africa and the United States, followed by Canada and Nigeria.

# Appendix B – How we conducted this survey

The survey was conducted on-line through the BASW website. It opened on 8 December 2025 and closed on 13 January 2026. The survey was designed to allow social workers, educators, and students to reflect on their experiences in the profession during 2025 and is thus the 2025 BASW survey exploring the state of the profession. Although hosted on the BASW website, the survey was open to non-member social workers to respond.

The survey consisted mostly of closed questions. For some questions, respondents were able to select multiple responses. Some questions included the option to enter a free-text response to either provide an answer that was not listed or to expand further on the responses selected.

A number of questions adopted Likert scale responses, which are commonly used in surveys. The Likert scale is used as a way of establishing respondents' attitudes on an issue. The scale indicates the extent to which respondents agree or disagree with a given statement. In this instance, an option to indicate that the statement did not apply to their situation was also included. While Likert responses can include a 'neither agree nor disagree' option, this was not available for questions in the 2025 survey. For some questions that were also asked in BASW's 2021 survey this option was included. This means that some sets of responses are not directly comparable with the equivalent questions in the 2021 survey.

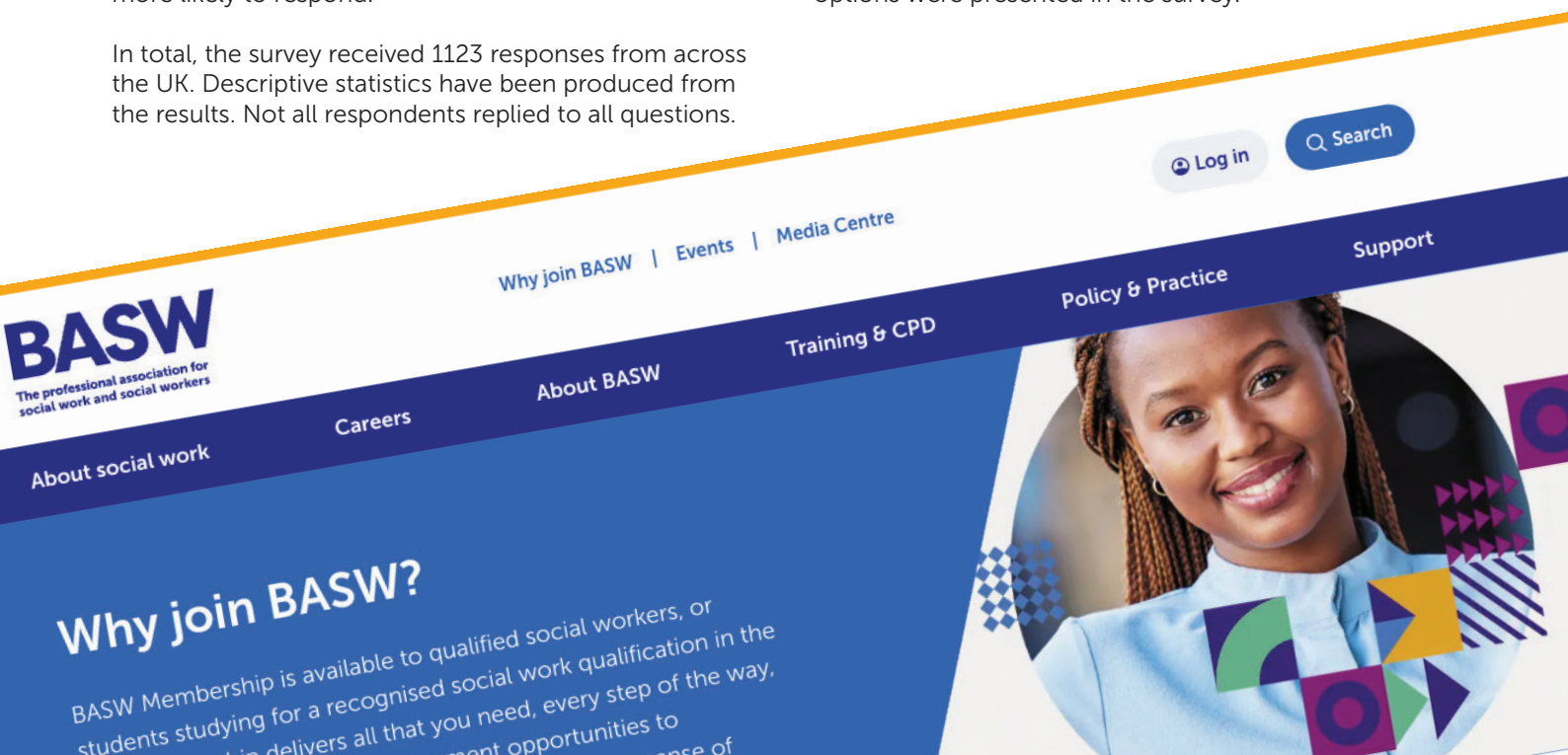
As an on-line survey, there are caveats that should be noted. Respondents represent a self-selecting sample, being those social workers, educators and students who felt motivated to respond. Consequently, this may result in bias if those with particular types of experience were more likely to respond.

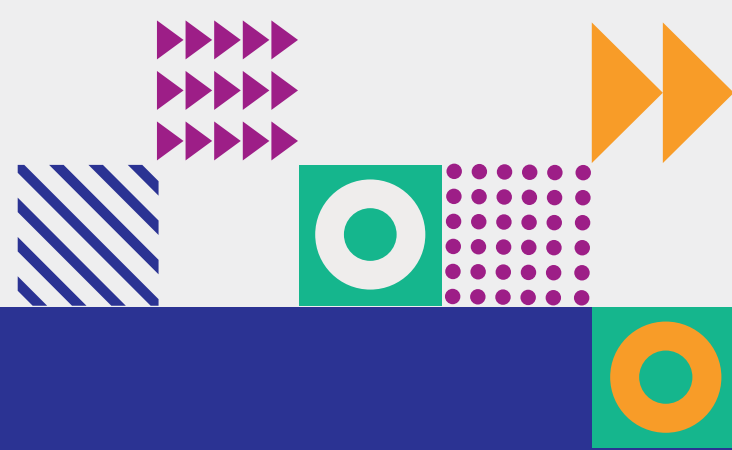
In total, the survey received 1123 responses from across the UK. Descriptive statistics have been produced from the results. Not all respondents replied to all questions.

Not all questions were asked of all respondents. Certain responses to questions created skips allowing respondents to bypass questions that were not relevant to their situation, for example student respondents. The number of non-responses has not been included in the Figures.

Most of the descriptive statistics are calculated out of the full sample size of 1123. This creates some discrepancies when comparing results with questions repeated from the 2021 survey, as descriptive statistics in the 2021 summary report were calculated based upon the number of people responding to a specific question, not the overall sample. This change creates the impression that percentages have shifted more noticeably than is actually the case once the 2021 descriptive statistics are recalculated out of the overall sample size.

In the results, percentages have been calculated to two decimal places. Percentages may not total 100% due to non-responses and the rounding process. Where respondents were allowed to select more than one option in response to a question, percentages will not total 100%. Where respondents were allowed to select more than one option, Figures show the ranking of results in highest to lowest order, not the order in which options were presented in the survey.





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