

## Council Meeting Minutes – 4<sup>th</sup> February 2026 - 10.00am – 4pm (Virtual)



<b>Present</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>
Julia Ross	Chair/Honorary Officer/Director
Lewis Roberts	Vice-Chair/Director
Annie Ho	Elected Director/Chair of Policy, Ethics & Human Rights Committee
Janet Walker	Elected Director/Chair of International Committee
Merlin Joseph	Elected Director
Lyn Romeo	Elected Director
Dr Caroline Bald	Elected Director
Shantel Thomas	Appointed Director /Vice Chair of National Standing Committee – England
Caroline McDonald	Appointed Director /Co-Vice Chair of National Standing Committee - Scotland
Toyin Adenugba	Appointed Director/Co-Vice Chair of National Standing Committee – Scotland
Andrew Pennington	Appointed Director /Co-Chair of National Standing Committee - Cymru
Mark Lynes	Non-Director/Experts by Experience UK Forum Member (Part Attendance)
Reshma Patel	Non-Director/Experts by Experience UK Forum Co-Chair (Part Attendance)
Russell Hogarth	Non-Director/Experts by Experience UK Forum Member (Part Attendance)

<b>In Attendance</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>
Prof Samantha Baron	Interim Chief Executive
Kate O'Regan	Senior Executive Director of Professional Services and Organisational Development
Amanda Govani	Director of Communications & External Relations
Joanna Monro	Interim Finance Director
Luke Geoghegan	Head of Policy & Research
Andrew Reece	Strategic Lead for BASW England & Wales
Dave Callow	Social Workers Union – General Secretary – Joined at 10.15am – left at 10.33am
Andy Morris	Independent Auditor, Dains
Sarah Teasdale	Executive PA & Governance Support to CEO & Board (Minutes)

Minutes: Sarah Teasdale

<b>Apologies</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>
Jo Fox	Treasurer/Honorary Officer/Director/Chair of Finance & Organisational Development Committee
Janine Gordon	Appointed Director /Vice Chair of National Standing Committee – Northern Ireland
David Hayes	Appointed Director /Chair of National Standing Committee – Northern Ireland
Omar Mohamed	Non-Director/Experts by Experience UK Forum Co-Chair (Part Attendance)
Brian Littlechild	Finance & Organisation & Development Chair

<b>No Apologies Received</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>
Lisa Cheatham	Appointed Director /Co-Chair of National Standing Committee - Cymru

Agenda Item	Summary of discussion
<b>1.1 Welcome &amp; Inclusion</b>	<p>The meeting began with a welcome from the chair.</p> <p>Apologies for absence received from Jo Fox, Janine Gordon, David Hayes, Omar Mohamed, Brian Littlechild.</p> <p>No apologies were received from Lisa Cheatham</p> <p>The chair reminded participants about the importance of inclusion and equalities, encouraging anyone with concerns to raise them with the Chair, or other Honorary Officers.</p>
<b>1.2 Declaration of Interests</b>	<p>No new declarations of interest.</p>
<b>1.3 Agree Meeting Minutes</b>	<p>The minutes from the last meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2025 had been circulated in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed the formal approval of the minutes from the previous meeting, noting that no written corrections had been submitted or additional matters were raised for discussion.</p> <p>A Council member asked whether meeting transcriptions would be shared alongside abridged notes starting from the current meeting or if this could be backdated to September; the Chair clarified that while backdating depends on the availability of recordings, the practice will be adopted for future meetings.</p> <p>All action points reviewed and either cleared or on Agenda for discussion.</p>
<b>2.1 Social Workers Union Update</b>	<p>Dave Callow, Chair of the Social Workers Union (SWU), provided an overview of current activity and collaboration with BASW. SWU is progressing a General Secretary election following the planned departure of the current post-holder, with nominations closing on 2 March.</p> <p>SWU continues to deliver a wide range of campaigns, including work through the Austerity Action Group and ongoing Health &amp; Safety and Academics campaigns. Key findings highlight significant concerns about training, workload, and</p>

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	<p>wellbeing—closely reflecting BASW’s own member survey data. SWU remains active in national partnerships, including the GFTU, and is in positive dialogue with the TUC about future alignment.</p> <p>Joint BASW–SWU work remains strong, with collaboration on the Working Conditions Campaign, parliamentary engagement, and planning for World Social Work Day. Member engagement activity continues across councils, universities, and wider alliances.</p> <p>Council discussed rising practice stress, the need for earlier intervention, and the importance of coaching and mentoring. Members expressed appreciation for SWU’s consistent campaigning and partnership approach.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Dave Callow for the update and noted the importance of ongoing collaboration, alignment of evidence, and coordination of AGM dates.</p> <p>Best wishes were extended for his candidacy in the General Secretary election.</p>
<p><b>1.5 To receive Chairs report</b></p>	<p>Julia Ross presented the Chair’s Report, emphasising the need to clearly acknowledge recent financial developments across all organisational communications.</p> <p>Council stressed the importance of removing jargon and ensuring reports are accessible and transparent for all members.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that future bulletins and reports will include more explicit and direct references to financial matters.</p> <p><b>Recruitment of BASW CEO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Chair introduced the pre-circulated report on CEO recruitment and led a detailed discussion on the process and principles guiding the next appointment.</li> </ul>

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	<p>Council expressed strong consensus that the next CEO must be a qualified social worker with recent practice experience, ensuring professional credibility and alignment with BASW's core identity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Chair proposed forming a working group to oversee the recruitment process, with representation from Directors, Experts by Experience, and all four nations. Council emphasised broadening participation beyond current Council members to ensure fairness and diversity.</li> <li>- Council discussed the potential use of external recruitment agencies, noting the cost of £25,000–£35,000. Most members favoured relying on internal networks, professional contacts, and social media for candidate attraction, while recognising that external involvement could support transparency.</li> <li>- Council agreed that recruitment should be deferred until after the election of the new BASW Chair in September. Members noted the value of stability and the strong performance of the interim CEO. A vote confirmed the decision to formalise this later timeline.</li> </ul> <p><b>Next Steps and Decisions</b>                      Votes were held to confirm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The requirement for a qualified social worker as the next CEO</li> <li>• The deferral of recruitment until after September</li> <li>• The establishment of a representative working group to lead the process</li> </ul> <p>The Chair will now invite volunteers and ensure broad and inclusive representation.</p>
<p><b>1.6 To receive Interim Chief Executives Report</b></p>	<p><b>Interim Chief Executive's Report</b></p> <p>The Interim CEO presented an overview of organisational progress, including the introduction of 30- and 90-day business planning cycles, impacts of the financial restructure, and strengthened centralised support for nation teams. Updates were provided on CRM improvements, membership initiatives, governance review work, and the high</p>

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	<p>engagement levels achieved through the 'Big Conversation'. Plans are in place to develop a new vision, strategy, and business plan for presentation at the May Council.</p> <p><b>Council Reflections and Discussion</b></p> <p>The Vice Chair welcomed BASW's stabilisation and renewed focus on everyday practice, highlighting concerns about low student and early-career membership. An Expert by Experience representative stressed that EBEs must be involved from the outset of workstreams if BASW is to model genuine co-production.</p> <p>Directors requested greater historical context in future CEO reports, strengthened marketing effectiveness analysis, clarity on legal costs, and a clearer shared understanding of Council and Executive roles. Emphasis was placed on the importance of strong external relationships with regulators, universities, local authorities, and government.</p> <p><b>Governance and Organisational Development</b></p> <p>The Chair noted the need for additional members on key committees, particularly Finance &amp; Organisational Development (F&amp;OD), and acknowledged the need for improved support, communication pathways, and shared understanding of governance. The Interim CEO confirmed plans to enhance governance clarity, introduce a KPI framework, and strengthen two-way communication with Council and National Standing Committees. Two nation-focused workstreams are progressing.</p> <p>The Interim CEO closed by acknowledging a renewed sense of optimism across both staff and Council.</p>
<p><b>3. Equality, Equity, Diversity &amp; Inclusion</b></p>	<p><b>Experts by Experience Update</b></p> <p>Lewis Roberts, Vice Chair and Reshma Patel EBE Co-Chair introduced the report on the Experts by Experience Forum. Members of the Forum highlighted concerns about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of clarity and direction regarding expectations, priorities, and tasks</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of dedicated staff resource, which has significantly limited the Forum’s ability to coordinate meetings, manage communications, or progress project work</li> <li>• A need for BASW-wide integration, with EBEs involved from the outset of all relevant workstreams</li> <li>• Activities currently on hold (including webinars and events) due to insufficient support capacity</li> <li>• The impact of budget constraints on Forum membership and four-nation representation</li> </ul> <p>The Forum requested:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clearer expectations and a defined work plan</li> <li>2. Improved resourcing, including dedicated staff support</li> <li>3. Formal recognition of EBE contributions</li> <li>4. Integration of lived experience into BASW’s new vision and strategy</li> <li>5. A follow-up report at the next Council meeting</li> </ol> <p>Council members praised the Forum’s commitment and reinforced the importance of long-term structures supporting co-production. Members especially noted that the loss of dedicated resource has materially affected the Forum’s functioning, visibility, and ability to contribute to organisational work.</p> <p>The Interim CEO acknowledged the concerns, welcomed the report as a fair challenge, and committed to review the issues at the 10th February Executive Team meeting and provide an update before the next Council meeting.</p> <p><b>EDI Advisory Group (EDIAG) Update</b></p> <p>The Vice Chair provided a verbal update, noting capacity limitations that had affected recent activity. They reiterated that EDI remains a core organisational priority and that work will continue in partnership with the Executive.</p>

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	No EDIAG meeting took place between Council meetings due to current constraints; the Vice Chair and Interim CEO will continue discussions regarding future support.
<b>4. Confidential Item (Directors Only)</b>	
<b>5. Membership Update</b>	<p>Amanda Govani, Director of Communications &amp; External Relations, with Executive Lead for Membership, presented an overview of the Membership Report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.</p> <p><b>Membership Trends</b></p> <p>Council was informed that overall membership has continued to decline since 2022, returning to pre-COVID-19 levels. A four-nation approach has been in place for several months as part of the 30/90-day plan to stabilise and grow membership. Encouragingly, the most recent reporting period (end of January) showed the highest number of joiners in 18 months, following targeted recruitment activity.</p> <p><b>Recruitment Campaigns</b></p> <p>The Membership Lead outlined recent recruitment initiatives, including a series of member-focused recruitment films distributed across social media, LinkedIn newsletters, and direct email campaigns. A new CRM-generated lead-generation database of approximately 3,000 opted-in non-members has been established. Early indicators show strong engagement, particularly among students, with increased traffic and conversions linked to recruitment films. These interventions have directly contributed to increased joiner numbers.</p> <p><b>New Membership Initiatives</b></p> <p>Under the Membership Delivery Board, several recruitment and retention initiatives are now underway:</p>

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	<p><b>Recruitment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow-up contact with individuals who abandon joining forms.</li> <li>• Development of clearer, bolder messaging.</li> <li>• Improved coordination between Membership and Professional Officers to strengthen workplace engagement.</li> </ul> <p><b>Retention</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing member-only value by clarifying benefits and increasing practitioner-focused content.</li> <li>• Locking down previously open-access resources.</li> <li>• Producing new explainer films for BASW and the Advice &amp; Representation Service.</li> </ul> <p><b>Commercial Positioning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanding engagement with employers and universities.</li> <li>• Adopting more commercial approaches to events and resource promotion.</li> <li>• Growing lead-generation capability through CRM enhancements.</li> </ul> <p><b>Data, Reporting and CRM Improvements</b></p> <p>The Membership Team has implemented a new reporting framework enabling monthly and quarterly trend analysis, with a particular focus on student, independent, and early-career member patterns and four-nation comparisons. A major phase of CRM review workshops has been completed, and preparation is underway for full end-to-end journey mapping to improve efficiency and growth potential.</p> <p><b>Questions and Discussion</b></p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council expressed concern about declining student and academic membership, noting the link between academic disengagement and lower student uptake. Student membership has dipped and that academic engagement data will be reviewed and reported back.</li> <li>- A request was made for a clear written membership strategy. This will be supported by the new reporting dashboard and will be shared once completed.</li> <li>- Council requested more detailed demographic data; this is being developed within the expanded reporting framework.</li> <li>- Questions were raised about whether BASW’s messaging reflects the realities facing early-career practitioners. The central theme emerging from the Big Conversation and will inform future offers.</li> <li>- Council identified opportunities to utilise Directors of Children’s and Adult Services to support wider dissemination of BASW materials across local authorities. The Chair agreed this is a key area and welcomed further Council support.</li> <li>- An Expert by Experience representative asked for clarification of the core BASW membership offer. The CEO acknowledged inconsistent articulation across teams and confirmed work is underway to develop a consistent organisational message and tone of voice.</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>It was concluded that recent joiner numbers are encouraging. Insights from the Big Conversation (over 1,000 respondents) will further shape the future membership offer. National-level engagement and cross-team collaboration remain priorities for strengthening recruitment and retention.</p>
<p><b>6.1 Dains Audit Feedback</b></p>	<p>The Chair welcomed Andy Morris (Dains) and thanked him for presenting the Audit Findings Report and Draft Statutory Accounts.</p> <p>Andy Morris confirmed that the external audit is substantially complete, with only minor outstanding items:</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final bank confirmation</li> <li>• Updated narrative within the Strategic Report section of the annual accounts</li> </ul> <p>A clean (unqualified) audit opinion will be issued.</p> <p>Due to previous system interface issues between the CRM and finance systems, income was a major audit focus. The auditor reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive transaction-level testing</li> <li>• Inclusion of earlier commissioned forensic review work</li> <li>• Full rebuild of reconciliations using actual cash data</li> </ul> <p>Income is materially correct. Significant improvements have been made since October in monthly reconciliations, financial controls, and variance investigation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic tax liabilities have been fully settled.</li> <li>• BASW now operates under mutual trading status, with tax due only on bank interest.</li> </ul> <p>Audit evidence supports BASW meeting the 12-month going concern requirement. Management plans support this position.</p> <p><b>Other Findings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor findings relating to SWES were noted.</li> <li>• Medium-risk observations concern income controls, with management actions underway.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No matters required additional Council representation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Draft Statutory Accounts Overview</b></p> <p><b>Statement of Financial Activities (Group)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total income: £21.78m</li> <li>Operating loss: £948k</li> <li>Final deficit: £870k                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes approx. £400k in restructuring and settlement costs</li> </ul> </li> <li>SWES: small surplus</li> <li>BASW Trust: small deficit</li> </ul> <p><b>Balance Sheet</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fixed assets decreased due to depreciation</li> <li>Investments increased to £1.1m+</li> <li>Cash reduced to £1.9m</li> <li>Creditors increased due to settlement accruals</li> <li>Net assets: £3.94m</li> </ul> <p>The auditor confirmed alignment with management accounts earlier reviewed by Council.</p> <p><b>Management Response</b></p> <p><b>Interim Finance Director</b></p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant work has been completed to cleanse the balance sheet and improve reconciliations.</li> <li>• Monthly monitoring now identifies unusual movements promptly.</li> <li>• Controls, authorisation limits, and budget oversight have been strengthened.</li> </ul> <p><b>Interim Chief Executive</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BASW is now in a substantially stronger operational and financial position than six months ago.</li> <li>• Audit outcomes reflect considerable staff effort.</li> <li>• Thanks were given to the Interim Finance Director for leading improvements.</li> </ul> <p><b>Director Questions</b></p> <p><b>Q1: “How long can BASW continue if nothing changes?”</b></p> <p>The Interim Finance Director advised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BASW restructure has created financial headroom.</li> <li>• Current membership income enables sustainable operations while a 3–5-year recovery and growth plan is developed.</li> <li>• The going-concern assessment provides assurance for the next 12 months.</li> <li>• Work continues to shift fixed costs to variable costs for greater resilience.</li> </ul> <p><b>Q2: “How vulnerable are we to membership decline?”</b></p> <p>The Interim Finance Director confirmed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scenario modelling of different membership loss levels is underway.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost controls and contract renegotiations are increasing flexibility.</li> <li>• Further detail will be provided during the management accounts discussion.</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>The Chair thanked Andy Morris and the Dains team for their comprehensive work and collaboration with BASW staff. Council accepted the audit findings and draft statutory accounts for assurance.</p> <p>A more detailed financial discussion followed under the management accounts section.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Andy Morris for the completed Audit report and Feedback.</p>
<p><b>6.2 Financial Report - Quarter 1</b></p>	<p>Joanna Monro, Interim Finance Director, introduced the financial report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, and confirmed she was happy to take questions throughout. A summary of the key financial tables was presented, setting out in-month performance, year-to-date outcomes, and the projected year-end forecast.</p> <p><b>1. In-Month and Year-to-Date Financial Performance</b></p> <p><b>December (In-Month)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A net profit of £31k was achieved (vs. reforecast £30k).</li> <li>• Performance comprised:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Slightly under-budget income</li> <li>○ A small overspend on salary costs</li> <li>○ Savings across several non-salary cost areas</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Year to Date (First Quarter)</b></p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As at end December, the organisation recorded a £33,419 surplus, compared with an expected £12,500.</li> <li>The positive variance (£20k ahead) results primarily from non-salary cost savings.</li> </ul> <p>The Interim Finance Director confirmed that if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>membership remains stable, and</li> <li>current controls—including the recruitment freeze—are maintained,</li> </ul> <p>BASW is expected to exceed its planned surplus for the full financial year.</p> <p><b>2. Income Breakdown</b></p> <p>Key points noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Membership subscriptions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>£5k ahead of budget in December</li> <li>£15k ahead of plan year-to-date</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Insurance/indemnity income</b> slightly below expectations and under review.</li> <li>Other income lines remain broadly stable, with variations linked to project-related funding which moves in line with delivery expenditure.</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Forecast Adjustments</b></p> <p>Adjustments made in the updated year-end forecast include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removal of conference income/costs pending a separate break-even business case.</li> <li>Restricted funds (IDF) moved to the balance sheet in line with accounting standards.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project income reforecast to contracted values.</li> <li>• Training income increased in line with improved targets.</li> <li>• SWES income reduced based on updated performance expectations.</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Pay and Non-Pay Costs</b></p> <p><b>Salary Costs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A small December overspend due to a one-off unplanned item.</li> <li>• The vacancy freeze continues to generate significant savings.</li> <li>• Staffing levels may change following ongoing strategic reviews.</li> </ul> <p><b>Non-Salary Costs</b></p> <p>Key areas highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waterloo Street building repairs (significant unplanned spend):             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Pest control</li> <li>○ Heating system pump replacement</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Telephone/internet contracts under renegotiation to achieve savings.</li> <li>• Cyber insurance secured at approx. £7.5k versus expected £30k.</li> <li>• IT software contract was inadvertently extended; ongoing cost £7.2k.</li> </ul> <p><b>5. Balance Sheet and Cash Position</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operating cash outflow: £47k (driven by large upfront annual payments).</li> <li>• Closing cash balance (Dec): £777k.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receivables: approx. £10k, within normal terms.</li> <li>• Payables: now being actively managed to full 30/60/90-day payment terms to optimise cash flow.</li> </ul> <p><b>6. Reserves Position</b></p> <p>The Interim Finance Director provided a detailed explanation.</p> <p><b>Reserve Requirements (minimum thresholds)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three months’ operating costs: approx. £1.5m</li> <li>• Staff severance liabilities: approx. £2.4m</li> <li>• Total required liquid reserves: approx. £3.9m</li> </ul> <p><b>Current Position</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liquid reserves: £1.9m</li> <li>• Reserves deficit: approx. £1.9m</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Points</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The deficit is not new and has built up over several years.</li> <li>• As long as BASW breaks even or produces small surpluses, the deficit is manageable in the short term.</li> <li>• Future focus:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rebuilding reserves</li> <li>○ Reducing fixed costs</li> <li>○ Moving contracts to variable models</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strengthening income—especially membership</li> </ul> <p><b>7. Questions and Discussion from Council Members</b></p> <p><b>Clarification on Reserve Calculations</b></p> <p>Members requested a repeated explanation of how fixed and variable costs impact reserve requirements. The Interim Finance Director confirmed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historically high fixed costs require full coverage in reserve calculations.</li> <li>• As contracts renew, the aim is to increase variable costs, reducing reserve requirements over time.</li> </ul> <p><b>Pensions and Business Rates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These are included within the three-month operating cost assumption.</li> </ul> <p><b>Recruitment Freeze and Operating Model</b></p> <p>Questions were raised about whether the recruitment freeze must remain in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Interim CEO confirmed:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A freeze is in place, but decisions are made case by case.</li> <li>○ Some vacancies may be repurposed (e.g., Communications → Marketing).</li> <li>○ Northern Ireland’s staffing is under review to determine minimum operating requirements.</li> <li>○ These measures are temporary, pending the new strategic vision and operating model under the Big Conversation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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	<p><b>Concerns About Reserves Deficit, Terms &amp; Conditions, Past Governance</b></p> <p>A Member raised concerns about:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How the long-term reserves deficit developed</li> <li>2. Past overspending despite governance frameworks</li> <li>3. The sustainability of future salary levels</li> </ol> <p><b>The Chair responded:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous checks and balances did not always operate effectively.</li> <li>• The F&amp;OD Committee has had recurring quoracy issues, reducing its oversight capacity.</li> <li>• Responsibility is shared across Council, committees and staff.</li> <li>• Financial information was historically not visible enough.</li> <li>• New controls are now in place, including:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Monthly reporting</li> <li>○ Stronger budget holder accountability</li> <li>○ Need for more Council members to join committees, especially F&amp;OD</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Vice Chair Reflections</b></p> <p>The Vice Chair emphasised the need to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The type of employer BASW wants to be</li> <li>• The sustainability of terms and conditions</li> <li>• The need for fairness while ensuring financial viability</li> </ul>

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	<p><b>Interim CEO Clarifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A clear explanation of how BASW reached this financial position has been shared with Council, staff and members; given complexity, repetition is sometimes necessary.</li> <li>• A review of terms and conditions is underway: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Immediate priority: ensuring people at the same grade are on the same Terms &amp; Conditions.</li> <li>○ Larger future changes will apply to new roles</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Historical job descriptions and salaries have not always aligned; this will be corrected in future role design.</li> <li>• Example: The future NI post may be redesigned around member engagement and marketing.</li> </ul> <p><b>Honorariums</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two honorariums were issued last year: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An independent specialist delivering a programme</li> <li>2. A staff member for substantial additional hours during the restructure</li> </ol> </li> </ul> <p>Such payments are rare and tightly controlled.</p> <p><b>Major Financial Risk</b></p> <p>The Interim Finance Director identified the biggest current risk as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient reserves to absorb major unexpected shocks</li> </ul> <p>Membership decline remains a risk, but modelling suggests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Even with a 20% drop, cost reductions could create temporary stability.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The restructure created essential headroom; without it, insolvency would have been likely.</li> </ul> <p>January performance is continuing the positive trend seen in December.</p> <p><b>8. Conclusion of Item</b></p> <p>The Interim Finance Director confirmed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Departmental accounts are available</li> <li>• Budget holders understand their budgets</li> <li>• No expenditure is permitted without authorisation</li> </ul> <p>The Chair noted Council may benefit from future deep dives into selected cost centres to strengthen financial literacy and oversight.</p> <p><b>Overall Summary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BASW is stable but not yet secure.</li> <li>• Liquid reserves remain well below required levels.</li> <li>• Strong cost controls, membership income, and the restructure have created short-term stability.</li> <li>• Rebuilding financial resilience will require:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Maintaining break-even or surplus performance</li> <li>○ Strengthening income</li> <li>○ Shifting more costs from fixed to variable</li> <li>○ Well-governed strategic transformation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Agenda Item	Summary of discussion
<p><b>6.3 Finance &amp; Organisational Development Committee Report</b></p>	<p>Jo Fox, BASW Treasurer, shared a report in advance of Council. As the F&amp;OD Committee Chair was unable to attend, Lewis Roberts, BASW Vice Chair introduced the Committee’s report on their behalf.</p> <p><b>Committee Report Overview</b></p> <p>The Vice Chair summarised the Committee’s work and recent activity, noting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The F&amp;OD Committee continues to provide regular, detailed oversight of financial performance, organisational capacity, and risk.</li> <li>• The Committee meets six times per year, and reciprocal attendance arrangements with the Risk &amp; Audit Committee are now in place to strengthen transparency and alignment.</li> <li>• Directors were reminded they are welcome to attend as guests of F&amp;OD meetings.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee highlighted evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved financial grip and stability, supported by the appointment of the Finance Director.</li> <li>• Migration to a more robust financial system with monthly reporting and reconciled membership/financial data.</li> <li>• Benefits from the 30- and 90-day financial plans, improving focus on stabilisation.</li> <li>• Operational efficiencies, including improved banking arrangements reducing manual processing.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee also noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current constraints (e.g., recruitment freeze; limited activity budgets) are not sustainable long term.</li> <li>• Staff capacity remains under pressure.</li> <li>• The current operating model cannot simply revert to previous structures.</li> </ul>

Agenda Item	Summary of discussion
	<p><b>Key Areas for Ongoing Committee Focus</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expansion and diversification of income.</li> <li>• Integration of outcomes from the 'Big Conversation' into strategic and financial planning.</li> <li>• Recruitment of a permanent fractional Finance Director.</li> <li>• Review of the reserves policy, with proposals due at the April F&amp;OD Committee.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee expressed appreciation for the work of BASW staff and volunteers during a period of significant constraint.</p> <p><b>Committee Recommendations Requiring Council Decisions</b></p> <p><b>1. Staff Pay – Cost of Living Increase (COLI)</b></p> <p><b>F&amp;OD Recommendation</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reject the Unite union request for a 6% cost of living increase for 2025–26.</li> <li>2. Develop an options paper for April F&amp;OD Committee on a possible one-off payment acknowledging staff contributions during 2025–26.</li> <li>3. Re-open pay discussions with Unite regarding pay increase in October 2026.</li> </ol> <p><b>Council Decision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Approved.</b> Following discussion and a recorded vote, Council accepted all F&amp;OD recommendations on staff pay.</li> </ul>

Agenda Item	Summary of discussion
	<p><b>2. Membership Fee Levels</b></p> <p><b>F&amp;OD Recommendation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership subscription fees should not increase at the present time.</li> <li>• Membership fees should be reviewed following the 'Big Conversation' and completion of the new business planning process.</li> </ul> <p><b>Council Decision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Approved.</b> Council confirmed no fee increase at this time.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair thanked the Vice Chair for presenting the report and confirmed all F&amp;OD Committee recommendations had been accepted.</p> <p><b>Discussion on F&amp;OD Membership and Delegated Authority</b></p> <p>A Member raised concerns regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee capacity, noting that F&amp;OD had recently been inquorate due to absences.</li> <li>• Whether consideration should be given to joining F&amp;OD with the Risk &amp; Audit Committee due to thematic overlap.</li> <li>• The use of delegated authority by the Committee Chair to approve a change in the organisation's business bank account, following the most recent inquorate meeting.</li> </ul>

Agenda Item	Summary of discussion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ While supportive of the decision, the Member stressed the need for clear communication to all Directors given Council’s governance responsibilities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Chair’s Response</b></p> <p>The Chair agreed and confirmed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The observation would be formally minuted, and</li> <li>• The F &amp; OD Committee Chair would be asked to provide a full explanation at the next Council meeting.</li> </ul> <p><b>Executive Clarification on the Banking Decision</b></p> <p><b>Interim Chief Executive’s Explanation</b></p> <p>The Interim CEO provided additional context, noting that BASW had been considering banking changes for some time due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two issues with salary payments.</li> <li>• Declining service quality and poor interest rates.</li> <li>• Member concerns regarding the existing bank’s association with potentially unethical credit card providers.</li> </ul> <p>Three options were assessed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Remain with existing provider – not recommended.</li> <li>2. Move to another ethical bank – other providers lacked required bulk payment functionality.</li> <li>3. Move to Virgin Money, which offers:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ethical banking standards – researched as part of options paper</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

Agenda Item	Summary of discussion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Automated bulk payments</li> <li>○ Strong cybersecurity controls</li> <li>○ Acquisition by a UK-based mutual, strengthening long-term alignment</li> </ul> <p>Delegated authority was used to avoid operational disruption, including manual payroll corrections.</p> <p><b>Interim Finance Director’s Clarification</b></p> <p>The Interim Finance Director added that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improved banking controls are essential for cybersecurity, audit trails, and reducing manual processes.</li> <li>● Virgin Money provides:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Locked supplier bank details</li> <li>○ Automated bulk payment functionality</li> <li>○ Full traceability of all transactions</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>These enhancements address vulnerabilities created by reliance on Excel-based processes under the previous arrangement.</p> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>The Chair thanked members for raising concerns and confirmed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Council will receive a full update on the banking decision at the next meeting.</li> <li>● The discussion highlights the ongoing need to strengthen committee membership to ensure quorum and robust financial oversight.</li> </ul>

Agenda Item	Summary of discussion
<p><b>6.4 Risk &amp; Audit Committee Report</b></p>	<p>Brian Littlechild, Chair of the Risk &amp; Audit Committee, submitted a report in advance of Council. Kate O’Regan provided a verbal update highlighting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The risk register has been remodelled to focus on high-priority risks and is now used dynamically to structure committee discussions.</li> <li>• A deep-dive review of partnership arrangements with SWU is planned for the next Committee meeting.</li> <li>• The Committee will oversee the invitation to tender for new external auditors in the coming period.</li> </ul> <p>Council noted the update.</p>
<p><b>6.5 AGM 2026 &amp; Elections Timetable</b></p>	<p>Luke Geoghegan, Governance Executive Lead, shared a report in advance of Council and presented a timetable for the AGM and associated election processes.</p> <p><b>AGM Date and Core Functions</b></p> <p>The Governance Lead confirmed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The AGM will take place on 3 September 2026.</li> <li>• The AGM will complete two statutory functions:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Appointment and confirmation of new Directors</li> <li>2. Voting on motions submitted by members</li> </ol> </li> </ul> <p>Two detailed process grids were included in the papers, setting out the timetable and governance steps. These are primarily for internal use by the Governance Lead, Chair and Interim Chief Executive.</p> <p><b>Committee Structure and Requirements</b></p>

Agenda Item	Summary of discussion
	<p>To streamline delivery of the AGM and elections, it was proposed that the same group of individuals serve on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Nominations Committee, and</li> <li>• The Standing Orders Committee (responsible for reviewing AGM motions and policy alignment)</li> </ul> <p><b>Committee size requirements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum: 3 Directors (for quoracy)</li> <li>• Maximum: 6 member’s total</li> </ul> <p><b>Immediate Timetable Requirement</b></p> <p>The first task for both committees is to approve the Director and Chair role descriptions ahead of recruitment advertising.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deadline for completion: 16 February 2026</li> <li>• Existing role descriptions remain valid, and no changes to legal duties are expected.</li> </ul> <p><b>Committee Membership – Call for Volunteers</b></p> <p>The Chair reminded Directors that volunteers are needed to populate the two committees.</p> <p>Points discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One Director expressed willingness to volunteer but queried restrictions on repeated service.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Governance Lead confirmed restrictions do exist, but returning members may still be eligible, subject to clarification.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Agenda Item	Summary of discussion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directors were asked to express interest within three days of the meeting. If vacancies remain, individuals may need to be nominated to ensure the committees are appropriately staffed.</li> </ul> <p><b>Volunteers identified during the meeting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One Director volunteered to serve again.</li> <li>• One Expert by Experience (EBE) representative volunteered, noting the previous year had no EBE representation.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A second EBE representative may also join, subject to availability.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The Chair thanked colleagues and confirmed follow-up communication will be issued to confirm committee membership and next steps.</p>
<p><b>6.6 Governance Review</b></p>	<p>Luke Geoghegan, Governance Lead, and Lewis Roberts, BASW Vice Chair, shared a paper in advance of the meeting and provided an update on the proposed Governance Review.</p> <p><b>Overview</b></p> <p>The Governance Lead acknowledged ongoing frustrations with aspects of BASW’s governance processes in recent months. Some issues were minor, while others were more substantial and had created confusion for both Directors and executive staff. Whilst legal advice has been the BASW Articles of Association are fit for purpose, the current governance framework was described as opaque and overly complex, even for those familiar with it, and a structured review is therefore considered timely.</p> <p>The review aims to increase clarity, improve efficiency, and ensure governance processes are practical and supportive of Directors’ responsibilities, while remaining fully compliant. Additionally the review will ensure the Articles of Association are fit for purpose for a modern membership organisation.</p>

Agenda Item	Summary of discussion
	<p><b>Proposed Approach</b></p> <p>Given current capacity and time constraints, a full-scale governance overhaul is not feasible. Instead, a phased approach is proposed:</p> <p><b>Phase 1 – Quick Wins</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Straightforward improvements introduced rapidly.</li> <li>• Focus on removing unnecessary complexity and addressing common barriers faced by Directors.</li> <li>• Review Directors training</li> </ul> <p><b>Phase 2 – Moderate Changes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Items requiring deeper exploration that do not require major constitutional change.</li> <li>• Focus on improving processes, documentation, and clarity.</li> </ul> <p><b>Phase 3 – Articles of Association</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential amendments to BASW’s Articles of Association, representing major structural change.</li> <li>• These would require:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Council agreement</li> <li>○ Member consultation</li> <li>○ Drafting and approval of formal resolutions</li> <li>○ Voting at an AGM</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Agenda Item	Summary of discussion
	<p>The Governance Lead advised that changes to the Articles are unlikely to be ready for the next AGM, given the required timelines.</p> <p><b>Next Steps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Governance Lead and Vice Chair will convene an initial mapping meeting to collate governance concerns and define the phased review programme.</li> <li>• Directors were invited to submit specific governance issues, frustrations, or suggestions for improvement. These will be synthesised into a consolidated working document.</li> <li>• Directors wishing to join the Phase 1 working group will be included, ensuring the process is inclusive but proportionate.</li> </ul> <p><b>Vice Chair’s Comments</b></p> <p>The Vice Chair noted that previous concerns raised by individual Directors have informed the early framing of the review. Governance issues had also surfaced throughout Council discussions earlier in the day, reinforcing the need for action.</p> <p>He emphasised the importance of delivering quick, practical improvements to support BASW’s wider transformation and to give Directors clearer confidence in their roles and responsibilities.</p> <p><b>Chair’s Summary</b></p> <p>The Chair thanked colleagues and confirmed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A call for volunteers will be issued.</li> </ul>

Agenda Item	Summary of discussion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common questions from Directors about their governance responsibilities will be shared with the Governance Lead to inform Phase 1.</li> <li>• The review will proceed as outlined, with further updates to be brought back to Council.</li> </ul> <p>No further questions were raised.</p>
6.7 Independents Committee Report	<p>Orlaith McGibbon, Chair of the BASW Independents Committee, submitted a report in advance of Council. The Chair noted apologies from the Committee Chair. As the designated presenter was also unable to attend, the Interim CEO introduced the report.</p> <p><b>Report Summary</b></p> <p>The Interim CEO confirmed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A recent meeting had taken place with the Chair of the Independents Committee.</li> <li>• The number of independent practitioners within BASW continues to grow and now represents a significant proportion of overall membership.</li> <li>• Independent practitioners have distinct needs and working practices, requiring tailored support and representation.</li> </ul> <p>A refreshed work plan is now in place, and the strategic link for independent members sits with the England &amp; Wales Strategic Lead.</p> <p><b>Operational Update – Andrew Reece, England &amp; Wales Strategic Lead</b></p> <p>The Strategic Lead added:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements to the Independents Directory/Portal are a current priority.</li> </ul>

Agenda Item	Summary of discussion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A “report this page” function has been introduced to allow members to flag updates, errors or issues in the independent toolkit and directory.</li> <li>• Coordination across internal teams working on independent-focused areas has been strengthened through a new monthly cross-team meeting.</li> <li>• Some planned improvements may require additional resource, which will be progressed through internal processes as appropriate.</li> </ul> <p><b>Request for Consideration – Independent Member Director Role</b></p> <p>The Independents Committee asked Council to consider introducing a dedicated Independent Member Director role on Council, reflecting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The growth of the independent membership, and</li> <li>• Their distinct contribution and identity within the profession.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair suggested that any changes to Council structure should be considered as part of the Governance Review, rather than addressed in isolation.</p> <p><b>Council Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Vice Chair expressed support for ensuring independent members are properly represented within governance structures, agreeing the matter should be considered through the Governance Review.</li> <li>• No objections or alternative approaches were raised by Council members.</li> </ul> <p><b>Outcome and Decision</b></p>

Agenda Item	Summary of discussion
	<p>Council received and noted the report and agreed the following:</p> <p><b>Decision</b></p> <p>The request for a dedicated Independent Director role will be referred to the Governance Review for full consideration.</p> <p><b>Further Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chair will ensure the request is captured and progressed within the governance reform work.</li> <li>• Formal thanks will be conveyed to the Independents Committee Chair for their report and continued contribution.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7.1 Nations Update – England &amp; Wales</b></p>	<p>The Chair noted that, due to the size of the agenda, nation updates had not been taken at the beginning of the meeting as usual. She reaffirmed the importance of receiving regular updates from all four nations—England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland—and confirmed that the next Council meeting will ensure each nation is fully included.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Andrew Reece, BASW Strategic Lead for England &amp; Wales, to provide the updates.</p> <p><b>Wales Update</b></p> <p>The Strategic Lead reported the following:</p> <p><b>Team and Capacity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No staffing changes within the BASW Wales team, aside from temporary acting arrangements to provide additional support.</li> <li>• The team continues to comprise:</li> </ul>

Agenda Item	Summary of discussion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Professional Officer</li> <li>○ Anti-Racism Lead</li> <li>○ Events Coordinator</li> </ul> <p><b>Senedd Elections – May 2026</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● BASW launched its manifesto alongside the Working Conditions Campaign.</li> <li>● Engagement has taken place with several Members of the Senedd.</li> <li>● Meetings with political parties are underway to secure BASW priorities within party manifestos.</li> </ul> <p><b>Professional Support Service (PSS) Contract</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Welsh Government will not renew the PSS contract when it ends in September 2026.                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Although disappointing, the decision reflects low uptake and wider financial pressures across Wales.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● BASW Wales will continue to offer coaching support to BASW members via independent coaches.</li> </ul> <p>Council noted the update.</p> <p><b>England Update</b></p> <p><b>Committee Leadership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Chair of the England National Standing Committee has resigned.                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Vice Chair is now acting as de facto Chair.</li> <li>○ The role is being advertised, with nominations closing at the end of the month.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Agenda Item	Summary of discussion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Student and Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW) representative role is being re-advertised; four applications have been received.</li> </ul> <p><b>Branch Representation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Committee has agreed to invite a representative from England branches to strengthen links with national activity.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Different branch representatives will attend on a rotational basis.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Stop–Pause–Continue Review (Capacity Pressures)</b></p> <p>Due to two unfilled Professional Officer posts, the England team undertook a review:</p> <p><b>Stopped</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student &amp; NQSW Thematic Group (students redirected to the Student Ambassador Scheme)</li> <li>The 80–20 Campaign (to be merged into the Working Conditions Campaign)</li> <li>New branch development activity</li> <li>Support for the Homes Not Hospitals campaign roundtable</li> </ul> <p><b>Continuing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key campaign work (including Homes Not Hospitals), though without the roundtable format</li> </ul> <p><b>Cross-Nation Support</b></p>

Agenda Item	Summary of discussion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• England’s events and administrative team will increasingly support <b>other nations</b>, including recent work on SASW’s conference planning.</li> </ul> <p><b>England Activity Data (Previous Year)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 105 events delivered (1,339 attendees)</li> <li>• 22 university visits (out of 87)</li> <li>• 17 local authority team presentations (out of approximately 150)</li> <li>• 27 external events attended</li> </ul> <p>Council noted that university engagement has decreased (previously around 30 visits). This was attributed to significant pressures within the higher education sector. Regional and cross-nation approaches to university liaison will be reviewed for consistency and effectiveness.</p> <p><b>Additional Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Interim CEO updated Council on efforts to strengthen stakeholder relationships across England, including regulators, government departments, and professional networks. A strong professional infrastructure is essential for social work.</li> <li>• A joint World Social Work Day event is being held with Social Work England.</li> <li>• A Member raised concerns about the continued conflation of social work with social care in England’s policy landscape.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Chair agreed and emphasised the importance of sustained advocacy to protect the distinct identity and purpose of social work.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Agenda Item	Summary of discussion
<p><b>8. Any Other Business</b></p>	<p><b>8. Any Other Business</b></p> <p><b>BASW-Branded Virtual Backgrounds</b></p> <p>A member queried the availability of BASW-branded virtual backgrounds for online meetings, noting inconsistency in their use among participants. The Member requested access to ensure consistent and appropriate representation.</p> <p><b>Chair’s Response</b></p> <p>The Chair confirmed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BASW-branded backgrounds will be available for Council use.</li> <li>• The Communications Team will circulate the backgrounds and provide support to Directors in applying them.</li> <li>• All Council members should use the standard background at future meetings to ensure consistent branding.</li> </ul> <p>A Member asked whether the backgrounds could be shared more widely. It was confirmed that they would be distributed to Council members.</p> <p><b>Sharing of Meeting Recordings and Transcripts</b></p> <p>The Chair advised that Council members had requested access to both the recording and transcript of Council meetings. Council confirmed that they wished to receive these materials.</p> <p><b>Agreed Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recordings and transcripts will be shared with Council members.</li> </ul>

Agenda Item	Summary of discussion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sharing will only occur after all Council members have signed confidentiality agreements, given the sensitive nature of discussions.</li> <li>The Chair reminded all members that recordings and transcripts must not be shared outside Council once received.</li> </ul> <p><b>Closing Remarks</b></p> <p>The Chair thanked Council members for what she described as a constructive and positive meeting. She expressed her appreciation for the collaboration and engagement shown throughout the session and for the continued work alongside the Executive Team.</p> <p><b>The meeting concluded at 3.50pm</b></p>

**Dates of Next Meetings**

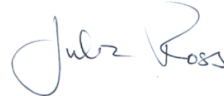
**2026 Council meeting dates:**

Date	Meeting	Place	Time
6 May 2026	Council	Online	10am-4pm
8 July 2026	Council	Online	10am - 4pm
7 October 2026	Council	Online	10am – 4pm

**Meeting Ends at 3.50pm**

Minutes: Sarah Teasdale

Council Meeting Minutes – 4<sup>th</sup> February 2026 - 10.00am – 4pm (Virtual)



Signed by Chair:

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> May 2026

ACTION POINTS	DESCRIPTION	ALLOCATED TO	DATE TO BE ACTIONED	CLEARED
<b>1.3 Sharing Council Meeting Transcripts and Recordings</b>	Confirm whether the recording and transcript from the last meeting (September) are still available and, if so, upload and share them with Council.	Sarah Teasdale		
<b>2.2 Member Communication on Financial Reserves</b>	Address the recent history and current status of financial reserves in the next member bulletin to ensure transparency and member awareness.	Julia Ross		
<b>2.2b CEO Recruitment Working Group Formation</b>	Invite expressions of interest from directors and experts by experience, including considering a wider pool beyond council members, to join the CEO recruitment working group, ensuring four-nation and wider experts by experience representation.	Julia Ross		
<b>2.3 CEO Report Amendment - Inclusion of Historical Context and Financial Details in Report</b>	Amend the report to include details on how the redundancy process was managed, associated costs, and changes to the staffing complement, and upload the revised version to Council.	Sam Baron		
<b>3.Experts by Experience Forum Support and Clarity</b>	Discuss the Experts by Experience Forum report and recommendations at the upcoming executive team meeting and provide a prompt update to Council on how the work will be supported, coordinated, and resourced moving forward.	Luke Geoghegan		
<b>5.Membership Data Reporting:</b>	Provide a written dashboard or report showing concrete membership data, including demographic breakdowns (e.g., students, academics), trends, and analysis, to Council.	Amanda Govani		

Minutes: Sarah Teasdale

## Council Meeting Minutes – 4<sup>th</sup> February 2026 - 10.00am – 4pm (Virtual)

<b>6.3a Banking Arrangements Update:</b>	Submit a report to Council on 6 <sup>th</sup> May explaining the delegated authority used to change the business bank account, including rationale and process.	Jo Fox		
<b>6.3b/4 Finance &amp; Organisational Development (F&amp;OD) &amp; Risk &amp; Audit Committee Membership</b>	Address the lack of members on the F&OD Committee and consider options for joining it up with Risk and Audit as part of the Governance Review	Jo Fox/Brian Littlechild/Luke Geoghegan		
<b>6.6a Governance Review</b>	As part of Governance Review develop a flow chart clarifying where decisions are made and the current governance structure, to improve understanding among the executive and members. Flow chart to be shared with Council.	Luke Geoghegan		
<b>6.6b Governance Committees Membership</b>	Issue a call for volunteers to join the Nominations and Standing Orders Committees for the upcoming AGM, ensuring at least three members are confirmed within three days.	Sarah Teasdale		
<b>6.6c Governance Review Participation:</b>	Invite Directors to submit their specific governance frustrations and suggestions to inform the initial governance review meeting and subsequent report.	Sarah Teasdale/Luke Geoghegan		
<b>6.7 Independents Representation on Council</b>	Review and reconsider the proposal for an Independent member position on council as part of the ongoing Governance Review, ensuring it is not lost in future discussions.	Sam Baron/Luke Geoghegan		
<b>7. Student and University Engagement</b>	Arrange a discussion between Andrew and Caroline Bald to explore a regional approach and improved timing for university engagement, aiming for automatic annual scheduling.	Andrew Reece/ Caroline Bald		
<b>8. Confidentiality Agreements for Council</b>	Issue confidentiality agreements to Council members and ensure they are signed before sharing the transcript and recordings outside the council.	Sarah Teasdale		