



# 06 news and views

News, developments, comment and your correspondence

## Switch to Direct Debit

It may still be summer but BASW is asking all members to update their details or switch to Direct Debit as part of the annual membership renewal process, in readiness for 1 October 2012. You can find out more on page 04 but, the gist of it is as follows ...

### Already a Direct Debit payer?

You don't need to do anything UNLESS your details (address, email or employer) have changed. If so, please email [membersupport@basw.co.uk](mailto:membersupport@basw.co.uk) or visit [my.basw.co.uk](http://my.basw.co.uk)

### Not already paying by Direct Debit?

Please consider switching – it's easier for you and for BASW. More than 90% of members already pay by Direct Debit.

**BASW will be contacting members by email soon with more information, and via post in September.**

## Charitable aid

The Social Workers' Benevolent Trust (SWBT) has been making headlines recently as attention focuses on growing numbers of social workers facing financial difficulties. You can find out more about this on page 24 but you can also play your part in this important charity for social work by becoming a trustee for SWBT.

In particular, the Trust is looking to fill imminent vacancies for a treasurer and secretary. Trustees need to attend six meetings a year, making decisions about how to allocate SWBT's limited funding to increasing numbers of hard up social workers. To find out more or to apply for one of the positions, please email Pam Green – [p.green@basw.co.uk](mailto:p.green@basw.co.uk)

## BASW's AGM

BASW's UK Annual General Meeting took place on 14 June, alongside a conference and the first ever Social Workers Union AGM. Find out more by turning to page 18.



## Government says it recognises BASW's State of Social Work concerns

The minister responsible for social work in England has been joined by 17 local authorities [see facing page for more] in responding formally to BASW's damning assessment of current practice conditions, contained in the Association's State of Social Work survey, published in PSW last month.

BASW sent a copy of the report, outlining serious concerns about caseloads, administration and morale, to all councils across England, as well as to the Westminster secretaries of state for health and education.

Giving the government's response, Tim Loughton did not seek to deny the state of the profession, and highlighted the measures currently being taken to reform social work. "The survey reinforces the inter-related issues of high caseload, inefficient staff deployment arrangements and an over-emphasis on process driven administrative tasks at the expense of direct work with children and families."

Restricting his comments to his children and families brief, Mr Loughton pointed to the imminent appointment of a chief social worker and the work of Professor Eileen Munro in reforming the child protection system, which he said would "move practice away from the defensive rule-bound culture that has been so problematic".

Mr Loughton also responded to BASW's three policy calls aimed at relieving the immediate pressure on social workers – reallocating administrative staff from elsewhere in local authorities to social services teams, placing an onus on inspectorates to consider caseloads and placing a moratorium on pay and conditions cuts.

He said the suggestion "to redeploy administrators to support social workers better echoes Professor Munro's recommendations for operational structure and systems that enable all social workers to spend most of their time with children and families". Prioritising the risks of high caseloads was a matter for Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission to consider, he said, but added that the new Ofsted arrangements for child protection inspections, introduced in May,

involves "more direct observation of practice and an emphasis on management oversight and supervision that results in reflective practice and learning. As part of that, Ofsted will routinely ask for information around workforce, including that relating to caseloads."

Describing the issue of a moratorium on further cuts to pay and conditions as a matter for local authorities, Mr Loughton nonetheless made his views clear: "I have, however, been clear in my dealings with local government that I believe it would be a false economy not to prioritise social work in budget conversations."

Responding to the letter, BASW chief executive Hilton Dawson said Mr Loughton's comments confirmed the State of Social Work survey findings. "I very much welcome the minister's response and note that he has not attempted to deny the stark reality that BASW's research has uncovered. While the general sentiment is positive and there are undoubtedly a number of initiatives underway across England, the government must go further and recognise that piecemeal reforms designed to shape future services aren't enough to tackle the current crisis facing the profession and the people who need social workers. Ministers can, and must, press for immediate action within local government and inspectorates to relieve the unsustainable pressures social workers are having to manage every single day."



Tim Loughton

