

PSW

PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORK

**Single College
of Social Work
now in sight**

**BASW and Interim Board
sign agreement to work
towards single entity**

**Calling time
on injustice**

**One man's struggle to blow
the whistle on a financial
abuse scandal**

Union due

**BASW/CoSW's AGM gives green light to
historic move to establish a trade union
arm – The Social Workers Union**

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PSW

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So, quite busy then?



There was never a danger of 2011 going down in history as a quiet year for the British Association of Social Workers. BASW has spent the first half of the year developing services to accompany its manifestation as BASW – The College of Social Work, since launching the name change on 24 January, but has simultaneously engaged in intensive talks with the Interim Board of another organisation with 'college' and 'social work' in its title.

Discussions with The College of Social Work, the nascent organisation that emerged from the work of the Social Work Taskforce in England, have been underway since February in a bid to prevent a split in the social work profession and ultimately ensure the existence of just one college, based on a federal structure, across the UK.

During April and May those talks reached a new and very positive stage when it became possible for each party to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), a document outlining a broad timetable for moving towards the dissolution of each organisation and the creation of an entirely new body – quite literally 'The' College of Social Work. Readers of a confused disposition will note the inverted commas; there would be one college and everyone would be committed to making it a success.

As Hilton Dawson makes clear in his The Chief report on page 13, there is much still to do before this end is achieved. Much to do and so little time to do it – it is hoped the new entity will be alive and kicking by January 2012.

As if this development wasn't sufficient, the BASW/CoSW AGM, which took place just hours before the pages of this magazine were magically dispatched through the ether to arrive on a printing press in Shropshire, decided it would be a good idea to back BASW Council's vision for a trade union arm, the Social Workers Union. It's a move borne out of history – a number of previous AGMs have debated such a move; pragmatism – BASW/CoSW's Advice and Representation Service has faced unjustifiable difficulties in supporting members in some local authorities; and opportunity – at a stroke it could offer a future College of Social Work a solution to the thorny problem of ensuring members can access all the professional services they could ever need under one roof.

It comes with complications too, not least the Interim Board's existing MoU with Unison, but certainly adds an interesting option into 'the mix' as football manager Harry Redknapp might put it if he were inclined to meddle in social work's affairs.

So, 2011, never quiet, never boring, never slow but now more raucous, intense and seismic than ever. Surely it's nearly time for a summer holiday?

Joseph Devo, PSW editor

You will see coverage of the BASW/CoSW AGM, which took place as PSW went to press, on page 06. There is plenty more to report, however, and we will be emailing you with details, including video highlights and insight into the Practice Symposium. We need your email address though, so please contact membersupport@basw.co.uk with your details.

06 news and views

News, developments, comment and your correspondence

College plan is approved

BASW/CoSW members gave near unanimous backing to a motion offering support to BASW Council in 'continuing negotiations with the Interim Board of The College of Social Work with a view to the establishment of a proposed unified College of Social Work'. The motion recognised that the creation of a single College would be brought before members formally at an Additional General Meeting, probably during the autumn.

It's been "emotional"

BASW/CoSW chief executive Hilton Dawson used his report to the conference to thank those involved in the Association's campaign to establish a College of Social Work. Describing a "very hard road" over recent months since BASW/CoSW decided to launch its own college, Mr Dawson [below] said the support of BASW Council, the chair Fran Fuller, staff and members was vital. He also applauded the willingness of ministers to become involved in the dispute with The College of Social Work.

Fran Fuller, BASW/CoSW chair, said it had been "an emotional journey" but that real progress was now being made. She was joined on the platform by the co-chair of the Interim Board of The College of Social Work, Maurice Bates, who described the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with BASW/CoSW as "in many ways simply the beginning" rather than an end to the process. He went on to describe "the huge prize" that lay ahead; of ultimately securing "the first ever national College of Social Work".



Members back plan for Social Workers Union



Forty-one years after the founding of the British Association of Social Workers and following more than three decades of wrangling, members used the Association's 2011 Annual General Meeting to offer overwhelming backing to the establishment of a trade union arm. The first AGM since BASW Council decided in January to launch as BASW – The College of Social Work, supported a motion to create an arms length body, The Social Workers Union.

Moving the motion, former chair Ronnie Barnes described the plan to establish a union arm as a separate legal entity, offering advice and representation as well as industrial relations services to members, as "a historic move". He told members: "This is an attempt to heal the divide between those who are members of a professional association, those who are members of a trade union and those who are members of neither."

Referring to the formation of a dedicated trade union for social workers in the early 1980s, the British Union of Social Work Employees (BUSWE), which struggled to secure significant support, Mr Barnes said the industrial relations landscape had changed radically since that time – "we are not looking to create another BUSWE", he said.

Seconding the motion, BASW/CoSW vice chair Lesley McDowell said the move was vital to enable the Association's Advice & Representation Service to represent members, in light of some local authorities making it

difficult for casework officers to support social workers in employment disputes. She added: "This is an opportunity to give so many members what they have said they want. It isn't an attack on any union but a chance to give members what they've a right to expect." Ms McDowell also highlighted how a number of trade unions had expressed broad support for the formation of the Social Workers Union.

Members voted down an amendment, moved by the Black Country Branch, which opposed the union plan and instead called for BASW/CoSW to 'restart negotiations with Unison and/or any other appropriate trade union'. Steve Moore, who moved the amendment, cautioned against the risks of isolation. "In a hostile environment any gains from independence would face trade unions such as Unison mobilising a large number of social workers against the College and accusing it of elitism, so a critical mass of College membership is not activated and the College will fail."

The amendment was supported by 16% of members, with 82% opposing it. The same number backed the overall motion for setting up the Social Workers Union, with 13% against and 5% abstaining.

See The Chief, page 13, for more. The AGM took place as PSW went to press. Members will receive an e-bulletin with more extensive coverage in June. The July PSW will also feature more details from the day's proceedings.

Deal agreed to move towards a single College of Social Work

BASW – The College of Social Work (BASW/CoSW) and The College of Social Work (TCSW) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) last month committing both parties to working towards establishing a single UK-wide College of Social Work.

The agreement outlines a path for creating a new entity, The College of Social Work, by January 2012. In a joint press release the two sides emphasised that the 'single College would benefit from BASW/CoSW's 41 years of promoting and supporting the profession, plus the impetus TCSW offers through its emergence from the Social Work Taskforce, which enjoyed near unanimous political and professional support'.

The MoU was launched by both parties on May 18 following a series of discussions since February. The talks followed a dispute between the two parties which arose in December 2010 over an agreement 'in principle' between TCSW and Unison to work towards the union providing services to College members. The MoU provides a framework for working through key issues and advancing a complex development process which will lead to the launch of a new College. The document outlines ambitious plans to develop a college capable of securing real change for a profession that lacks the public support and understanding of many other valuable public service disciplines.

The joint press release makes clear the need for social work to undergo 'real and sustained change if it is to effectively overcome the challenges that currently beset



the profession – high caseloads, high vacancy rates, poor morale and the absence of sustained political support'.

The statement continues: 'The development of a united College, strong and powerful enough to secure real change, offers the chance to challenge those failures and enable social work to prosper.'

A joint working group of BASW Council and TCSW Interim Board members has been established to undertake detailed thinking on moving towards a single College, and reciprocal governance arrangements are being set up so that each organisation's governing body can have a non-voting seat on the other's. Officers have been asked to undertake detailed work on a range of issues, including the constitutional arrangements for a federated UK structure, the business model, trade unions and staffing arrangements.

Commenting after the MoU was signed, BASW/CoSW chair Fran Fuller said: 'This is a very significant development in ensuring



social work can become the proud, confident and respected profession that we know it deserves to be. We are delighted that the expertise and experience that BASW/CoSW has accumulated over 41 years, as well as the unique array of member benefits we offer, will be part of a new and potentially very powerful College. There are still important issues to resolve, of course, but we now have a solid mechanism to work through them together in the best interests of the profession.'

The College of Social Work's Interim co-chair Maurice Bates said: 'We are very pleased to have made significant progress in our discussions with BASW. We can now focus on building a new College, providing the profession with a strong and powerful body, led by its members, accountable to its members; ensuring that the profession is properly understood by the public and properly represented to policy makers, to employers and the media.'

MoU in brief: excerpts from the agreed plan for a single College

For the complete MoU document please visit www.basw.co.uk

'Purpose' for the planned College

- raise the status, reputation and standing of social work
- ensure that social workers are enabled to work to the highest possible standards and to develop support and promote excellence
- engage as effectively as possible with people who use social work services and carers
- enable better opportunities and better outcomes for the people who social workers serve
- uphold the ethics, values, function and purpose of the profession
- provide or support the provision of quality assurance for social work education and continuing professional development.

'Vision' for the planned College includes...

BASW and TCSW envisage a College open to membership of social workers throughout the UK, Isle of Man and Channel Islands, organised on a federal basis with the aim of allowing the development

of independent Colleges of social work in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales in accordance with devolution and the aspirations of social workers in those countries.

Munro in summary

Chief social worker

A chief social worker would send out a strong message that the work is valued and important, reporting to ministers and advising on social work issues. They would also communicate with the principal child and family social workers in each local authority.

Practice

A radical redesign of who does what in child and family settings should be considered, says the review, so that practitioners can advance their careers while still connected to the frontline. The traditional view of the frontline worker carrying a caseload with a modest amount of supervision needs to be modified. The frontline social worker would be like a junior doctor and consideration should be given to the nature of casework responsibility, given that decision-making does not often lie with the social worker.

Training and CPD

The Social Work Reform Board's Professional Capabilities Framework should inform social work qualification training, postgraduate professional development and performance appraisal. The College of Social Work could develop and hold a national framework linked to Health Professions Council standards. Practice placements must be of good quality and employers should be able to apply for special 'teaching organisation' status.

Paperwork and administration

Timescales for initial and core assessments should be removed. The review commented on the time social workers spend on administrative tasks, and restated the case for administrative support.

Inspection

Inspections should be able to examine the journey of children through the system from needing to receiving help. They should be unannounced to lift the bureaucratic burden, and inspectors should observe direct practice, for example social worker visits to families or initial child protection conferences.

Act on Munro now, BASW/CoSW urges

BASW – The College of Social Work has welcomed a review into child protection in England that recommends stripping out bureaucracy to allow social workers greater freedom to exercise professional judgement, but has insisted that a failure to act on the recommendations swiftly will mean continued misery for frontline practitioners.

The review by Professor Eileen Munro, which was published on 10 May, calls for the removal of specific statutory requirements on local authorities for completing assessments within set timescales. Professor Munro has also taken up BASW/CoSW's call for the appointment of a chief social worker who would act as a voice for the profession within government and report annually to parliament.

Commenting on the day the Munro Review of Child Protection was published, Nushra Mansuri, BASW/CoSW England professional officer, said: "These recommendations are like music to the profession's ears, coming at such a challenging time for social workers. BASW/CoSW has long campaigned to relieve social workers of the unbearable bureaucracy and administrative overload that prevents them working directly with people who need their services. It's a huge relief at a time when social workers are under extraordinary added pressure from deep funding cuts as local authorities pass on the effects of reduced central government support. The changes cannot happen soon enough."

She added: "The appointment of a chief social worker, as BASW/CoSW proposed in our Social Work Bill last year, offers the chance to ensure social work – all too often under-appreciated by policy makers – has a voice within the corridors of power, and will make it that much harder for ministers to ignore the ready advice of an on-the-spot expert."

Professor Munro's report says centrally dictated targets should for the most part be removed and children's departments should be free to decide how to design their child protection service. Her report also recommends a radical change to the social work career structure, which will include the appointment of a principal social worker in each local authority who will be responsible for reporting the views of social workers to senior managers.

Speaking at the launch of the review, children's minister Tim Loughton said the

government wanted to move away from "imposing a central template on every local authority" on how they should arrange their child protection service. "We are ripping up some of the rule books because they have been what has got in the way of social workers being able to do their jobs," he said.

Professor Munro likened the changes she was proposing to "turning an oil tanker," adding: "The tick-box culture stifles thinking but it also takes time so it means less time is spent doing home visits and getting to know a family." Mr Loughton said the government planned to take time to consider Professor Munro's "measured, well-considered" review before responding to its recommendations. But BASW/CoSW is urging swift action to address the problems plaguing the profession.



Tim Loughton



Professor Eileen Munro

Social worker becomes children's minister in Scotland



Angela Constance

Qualified social worker Angela Constance has been appointed minister for children and young people in the Scottish government, a move welcomed by the Scottish Association of Social Workers (SASW – part of BASW). The Livingston MSP replaced Adam Ingram in the post as the SNP formed Scotland's first ever majority government.

A specialist mental health officer, Ms Constance spent much of her career working with offenders. Her career in social work included positions with HMP & YOI Glenochil, HMP Perth and The State Hospital, Casters.

Responding to the news SASW manager Ruth Stark said she hoped Ms Constance

would use her previous experiences to raise the profile of the profession within parliament.

The health brief in the Scottish government went to Michael Matheson, who takes over from Shona Robson. Ms Stark welcomed Mr Matheson's appointment too, highlighting his previous working relationship with SASW's Forth Valley Branch on a number of issues.

Following Northern Ireland's Assembly elections, also held on 5 May, another former social worker, Jonathan Bell MLA, was appointed junior minister responsible for equality issues. David Ford MLA, also a one time social worker, retained his high profile brief as policing and justice minister.

Call for adult safeguarding reforms to go further

BASW/CoSW has welcomed aspects of a review of adult social care law in England and Wales but has warned there is an "unacceptable erosion of the social worker role" within the document.

The review, published by the Law Commission, recommends placing adult safeguarding boards on a statutory footing, giving carers new legal rights to services and a single assessment and eligibility framework. Under the commission's recommendations, over 40 statutes would be repealed or amended and thousands of pages of often contradictory guidance would be scrapped.

While welcoming the move to make safeguarding boards statutory, BASW/CoSW made it clear, however, that a bonfire of other legal provisions for care services should be resisted. Ruth Cartwright, England manager, said specialised activities around assessment of need, devising care and support with the service user and the delivery of care and support needs the expertise of a qualified social worker. She said: "The Law Commission consulted widely and its review must be treated with respect but



Ruth Cartwright

we have to highlight the unacceptable erosion of the social worker role in adult social care."

BASW/CoSW also urged the government to give social workers additional powers when they suspect an adult is being abused. Ms Cartwright said it was "disappointing" that the announcement by care services minister Paul Burstow had not included powers for social workers to enter properties where vulnerable people were believed to be at risk, as it does under Scottish law. "We will have a duty to investigate but lacking in powers to do so which is always a perilous position when things go wrong," said Ms Cartwright, adding: "Baroness Hale of the Supreme Court did recommend these powers recently and it is possible the government will move forward with this."

New laws hope for Wales

BASW Cymru has welcomed the announcement that the newly-elected Labour government in Wales is planning to publish legislation that will cover some of the issues highlighted in its own Social Work Bill. BASW Cymru manager Robin Moulster described the proposed Social Services Act as "promising". He added: "One of the key issues we want to see addressed within new legalisation is the regulatory Code of Practice for employers, which should be made statutory, just like that for employees. The lack of support given to social workers by their employers is too often interlinked with their individual practice." He urged the Assembly and new health minister Lesley Griffiths to involve BASW Cymru in drawing up new laws.

In its manifesto Labour pledged to introduce an Act that will review post-qualifying training arrangements for social workers, with a view to setting national standards for continuing professional development, and also look at the training available to social work managers. The Act, outlined in the manifesto, promises to 'simplify the web of legislation that currently regulates social care in Wales in order to make access to services much easier and more understandable to those who need them'. It also promised to introduce a Wales Children Act and to review the law relating to child protection.

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PSW's sounding board for members' opinions, views and updates

Why German social pedagogy has much to offer UK social workers

It was heart-warming to read Clare Jerrom's article about the pilot studies centred on the inclusion of the German social pedagogic approach to social work [*The bigger picture*, PSW, May 2011].

When I wrote to the British Council's National Academic Recognition Information Centre to enquire about the equivalent of my German qualification as a 'State-Acknowledged Educator' (Staatlich Anerkannte Erzieherin) in 1986, I was advised that this was not recognised in the UK and I would either have to qualify as a nursery nurse or pursue a social work qualification. As it happens, I did the latter and, as practitioners Alexander Borchert and Martina Elter said in the article, I have been astounded by the variation in residential staff's understanding of, and availability towards, those very vulnerable young people in care.

My three-year training at the Froebel Seminar, Fachschule, for sozialpädagogik provided me with the equivalent of a BTEC to work with children and young people in various settings; from kindergarten and after-school institutions to youth clubs and children's homes. The subjects I studied included child development, psychology and an introduction to child psychiatry, as well as pedagogy and didactics to understand and contribute to young people's learning in a skilled way.

In addition to those core subjects, as well as politics, sociology and youth law, there was a whole variety of practical subjects too, such as studying youth literature, health & physical education, art and creative activities with



individual children and young people as groups.

Although I have not practised my profession outside of the UK, I have always found my basic training in Germany to be complementary to the skills I use for direct work with children. I would recommend that this model is looked at more closely and applied in staff training for those who have such a highly responsible task as looking after our children in care.

Barbara Parbles

The case for well targeted service cuts

Well done for taking a lead on campaigning against local authority cuts [BASW/CoSW asks members to detail cuts in their area, PSW, April 2011].

I am a BASW/CoSW member, currently working in an inner London authority children's specialist service. In this authority, children's social work services have been protected and are 'only' being cut by a total of 8%. There are a small number of frontline practitioner posts being lost but I have to say that the impact on service delivery will be minimal. There are a number of team manager/service manager/service head posts being removed through a restructure. Again, I have to say that this is being well managed in my view and will not impact significantly on service quality.

I think we have to be professional and honest in how we engage in debate about the way budget reductions are achieved and how the process is managed. It is no use us pretending that there are not inefficient and ineffective systems, or some people who add very little value. There has been a bloating in many parts of the public service over the past 12 years and increasing expenditure has not always equated with greater output or better outcomes for service users. A review and some trimming and squeezing the systems for improved efficiencies is overdue. Where that is happening BASW/CoSW should welcome it.

But I fully agree that BASW/CoSW should be exposing cases where we can show a level of cuts and/or bad management of cuts impacting negatively on services to the most vulnerable. In my personal view, a lot of care and skill is going into protecting services to vulnerable children where I work at the present time. But I've no doubt it is a different story in other places.

Name and address supplied

Have your say in PSW

Email the editor: j.devo@basw.co.uk

Or write to: **Joseph Devo, Editor, PSW, 16 Kent Street, Birmingham B5 6RD**

Please note that while PSW reserves the right to edit letters for length we will always make every effort not to alter the intrinsic content of any correspondence.

Criticism of move to axe Sandwell car allowance

BASW/CoSW has written to senior managers at Sandwell Metropolitan Council warning that its plans to axe the essential car user allowance for social workers is 'ill-thought out' and devalues the profession.

The Council will scrap the lump sum payment, which is worth a maximum £1,239 a year, in August and has also said it will reduce mileage from 65 pence to 50 pence per mile.

In a letter sent last month, BASW/CoSW stated: 'We are extremely concerned by these detrimental changes to social workers' terms and conditions and would urge decision-makers in Sandwell to review this action.'

'Social work clearly is an essential service for children, adults and communities and many social workers willingly use their own cars in order to be able to do their jobs more efficiently,' it adds.

The letter goes on to highlight the recommendations of the Social Work Taskforce in 2009 to better support social workers and the role employers have in implementing the proposals.

'We appreciate that these are very challenging times and that there is huge pressure being applied to local authorities to make efficiency savings but a line has to be drawn where the most vulnerable in society are concerned,' it states.

The local authority is the latest of a number of councils across the country to decide to



axe or heavily cut essential car user allowances and reduce mileage expenses.

Cabinet member for improvement and efficiency, councillor Mahboob Hussain, said: 'We are facing a squeeze on our funding by the government and any savings from changes to business mileage allowances will be used to protect frontline services and jobs.' He added that the Council's proposed lower mileage rates were in line with those set by HM Revenues and Customs, and the Council was considering introducing pool cars.

BASW/CoSW in the news



It's been a busy month for social care stories and the big news last month was the announcement that BASW/CoSW and the Interim Board of The College of Social Work have agreed to work towards a single College, writes **BASW/CoSW PR manager Sam Crisp**. This announcement was covered by The Guardian Online, by Community Care and also featured on the Children and Young People Now website, featuring interviews with Fran Fuller, BASW/CoSW UK chair, and Hilton Dawson, chief executive.

Professor Munro's report into child protection social work generated the most notable media attention this month. BASW/CoSW supported her findings, stressing the need for immediate action to begin to embed the recommendations in practice. Nushra Mansuri, professional officer, who led the BASW/CoSW response to the enquiry was featured in Children and Young People Now magazine, Community Care magazine and in Society Guardian online. Janet Foulds, a member and a former BASW chair, was interviewed about the findings on Radio 5 Live.

BASW/CoSW's supervision policy has continued to receive attention, with Social Work Now and Care Appointments magazine featuring the policy alongside some supervision figures drawn from a survey of BASW/CoSW members. BBC Radio WM in Birmingham revealed findings from Newman University College last month showing that social care applications had tripled this year, presenting a real challenge for the social work profession and prompting Nushra Mansuri's participation in the station's Drivetime programme.

Ruth Cartwright, England manager, has featured numerous times in Community Care magazine, commenting on the Law Commission's proposals for care services, self funder's assessment rights and privatised adult care. Carolyn Ewart, manager of the Northern Ireland Association of Social Workers, also appeared in the magazine on the issue of quality versus cost in adult social care.

BASW Cymru featured in Aberdare Online, Torfaen County Borough's website, in the Cambrian News and the Bridgend and Porthcawl Gem, in stories centred on advice and representation issues and on its role as a judge in the Social Care Accolades 2011.

Visit www.basw.co.uk/media for more

Interested in a trip to Russia?

BASW/CoSW is looking for members interested in taking part in a week-long visit to Russia to find out about social work practice in the country. The aim is to finalise a two-site



trip involving three days in Moscow and three days in Vologda where UK social workers will be able to gain insight into practice issues in Russia and view social work provision in and away from Moscow.

It is expected that UK social workers will take part in a programme of visits organised

in partnership with the Russian Union of Social Workers.

The visit will only go ahead if enough members express interest in the trip, which would take place towards the end of September 2011. The

visit would be largely funded by the participants themselves, although it is hoped that some financial support will be available.

If you are interested at this early stage of planning please contact Sue Kent for further details by emailing s.kent@basw.co.uk



the chief

Now for the next stage

Chief executive **Hilton Dawson** on the decision by members at the Annual General Meeting in Birmingham to back moves to establish a dedicated Social Workers Union, and the huge task that still lies ahead

So now we move on. Two decisive votes from the best attended Annual General Meeting (AGM) in years ended our dispute with the Interim Board and committed BASW to the establishment of a trade union arm to take forward into the new College of Social Work that we are jointly building.

We all have a monumental task ahead of us, with much of the work to be done ahead of an Additional General Meeting to be held in the autumn. There you will be invited to take the biggest decision of all – to end BASW and to transfer all that you have built up over the past 41 years into the big, powerful, transforming organisation that our founding members inscribed in our constitution.

Wherever you are, whatever you do, please go out to your social worker colleagues and friends to tell them that now actually is the time to join us. Becoming a member of BASW links social workers into the work of our Joint Working Group with the Interim Board, gives access to an excellent range of services now being developed and ensures that they have a vote not only in the future of BASW but in the future of social work. We can now take the future of our profession into our own hands and every social worker in the land should be able to have their own say.

Frankly we also need every penny we can obtain from new subscriptions. The Interim Board haven't yet opened the books on The College of Social Work's finances but there will not be a pot of government gold to spend, and nor in fact should there be. This will be our own organisation, built and owned by ourselves. It must be an organisation which is relevant to every social worker in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and the Isle of Man and Channel Islands too.

This means the College will take on different forms in the devolved nations where the place of our profession is rightly in their own hands. The common denominator, however, is our

desire to empower social workers and assert the critical role of social work in all societies – all, of course, based on our international definition, Code of Ethics and our role on behalf of the UK in working with the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW).

There is a huge job for your Council and your officers to do. Much is already proceeding apace but I think that the first task for your representative members is to work with their colleagues from the Interim Board to share ideas and hopefully come to a common understanding about the way in which a social worker-led organisation strikes the correct balance between working with governments, employers and many other institutions, and when necessary challenging them. We all want the College to be central to decision-making in every country but we must recognise that social workers need and will require it to be properly assertive and effective on your behalf.

Following the AGM decision on establishing a trade union arm [see page 06] I have contacted the Trade Union Certification Officer with a copy of the rules approved by members and a

request to now certify the Social Workers Union as an independent trade union. I am not sure how long this process will take but I hope that our preliminary work with their office will have helped to progress matters smoothly. As soon as we have our certificate I will take it to the TUC and apply for membership. In the meantime I will be seeking a meeting with all trade unions with social workers in membership, as well as taking part in a joint meeting with Unison with the Interim Board.

The message to everyone will be the same: establishing our own trade union arm is critical for the identity and empowerment of the social work profession and it is also an important way in which we can work more effectively with the whole trade union movement on issues of common concern. Having a distinct union voice for social workers means that we can resist being subsumed into huge organisations which can lose sight of our profession in amongst their work in also serving other, larger groups of workers. However, our social work principles and values mean that we will, of course, look to make common cause with others in pursuit of social change and mutual goals.

Union membership is a member benefit to which BASW members can 'opt in'. There is no financial or other reason to preclude any member who wishes to do so from also joining another union or in fact deciding that they would prefer to be part of a union other than our own. At an organisational level BASW wants the new College to establish a Trade Union Forum where all trade unions with social workers could be represented and in turn have their views heard by its governing body. We have had preliminary talks with the TUC and sincerely hope that our proposed membership will be welcomed.

What a wonderful, extraordinary time.



**I HAVE CONTACTED
THE TRADE UNION
CERTIFICATION
OFFICER WITH A
REQUEST TO NOW
CERTIFY THE
SOCIAL WORKERS
UNION AS AN
INDEPENDENT
TRADE UNION**

**Hilton Dawson is chief executive of
BASW – The College of Social Work**



Social care journalist **Sally Gillen** hears first hand from Martin Morton, a social worker who more than a decade ago first highlighted the financial abuse being experienced by a number of vulnerable adults – whistleblowing that would lead to the loss of his job and the start of an 11-year emotional roller-coaster that only came to an end in February 2011 when his efforts were finally vindicated.

Calling time on injustice

In the end it played out like the final scene from a Hollywood film. As social worker Martin Morton steeled himself for another bout in his long-running fight with Wirral Council, which had seen him bullied out of his job after blowing the whistle on the abuse of vulnerable people, he was left stunned as council leader Jeff Green turned to him, apologised for the treatment he had endured, and offered him his job back.

It marked the end of a drama that had dominated Mr Morton's life for more than a

decade. An independent investigation into his case, handed to the council, concluded that he had been bullied and recommended that the local authority urgently address its whistleblowing policies. Morton's story, like many involving whistleblowing, is of one man's battle against a corporation and the eventual triumph of justice.

It began in 2000 when, then a supported living development officer, he discovered that the council was financially abusing 16 people with learning disabilities, who had moved from institutional care into supported living. They

were being charged £64, which rose to £100 over time, for care, while other vulnerable people, including those with mental health problems, were paying just £18. The charging policy, imposed on people who in many cases could not read or write, left them facing financial hardship. One man was forced to apply to a charity for assistance, while the sister of another resident described the place he was living in as a "prison without bars" because there were not enough staff to take him out and, left with little money after paying the weekly charge, he was unable to pay anyone to

accompany him so he could go out, remembers Mr Morton.

"I was complaining about the charge, saying that it was discriminatory and that it did not fit with the Fairer Charging Policy but my complaints fell on deaf ears," he says. "I felt the chief officers group was like a gentleman's club and I was just an irksome oik who had to be put in my place."

Repeatedly

For the next six years he repeatedly complained yet still nothing was done. In August 2006 he was told that he would be redeployed at a lower level and in the same month he was told by his union representative that he was making himself "unemployable". Eventually he decided to lodge a grievance about the way he was being treated and used the Council's whistleblowing procedures to raise his concerns about the charging policy. Months of "problem-solving meetings" were held but nothing was resolved. "From May to July 2007 I was excluded from meetings. I had nothing to do because I was getting no referrals through. Mencap was complaining, asking what was happening to supported living," he says.

Privately his colleagues supported him but in public nobody backed him. "They were operating in a culture of fear. People would surreptitiously come down to see how I was. They were understanding about the situation I was in," he says. Later, as the independent investigation got underway, a former colleague interviewed as part of it rang him to apologise for not speaking up in support of him at the time.

Months passed and then his grievance was heard, leading to a stunning attack. "I was told I was a social worker who did not actually want to do social work," he says. "The following day I came into work but collapsed and was driven home by a colleague. I was on diazepam and my self-esteem was shot to pieces," he recalls. "Psychologically I was all over the place." He returned to work in September, having taken the summer holidays off to look after his son, and after an Audit Commission report into the charging was published he says his job became untenable.

Frustrated by the lack of action that had followed his complaints internally, he had disclosed his concerns to the Audit Commission in October 2007 under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, legislation that protects whistleblowers from being dismissed or treated unfavourably as a result of raising complaints. It produced a report, paid for by the Council, which concluded that it was not clear there was a special charging policy.

By April 2008 the stress was such that Mr

Morton was admitted to hospital with chest pains. The Council agreed to pay him £45,000 to leave his post, as part of a compromise agreement, which he accepted, despite his solicitor's advice that he would have a "cast-iron case" at an employment tribunal. "I thought I'll be dead if I do that. I knew they would drag it out and I just wanted to put everything behind me."

He left and quickly found another job but still he could not move on. In September 2009 he was called to give evidence to the Council's audit committee and revealed to a packed public gallery that he was bullied out of his job. The revelation prompted the launch of an investigation. Five months later, in February 2010, the Council admitted it had overcharged the services users and agreed to reimburse £244,000. A victory but one that had cost Morton a job he loved. Like many whistleblowers, Morton found that doing the right thing had catastrophic consequences, not just for his career, but also for his family.

His persistence and courage in pursuing the case are undeniable. Yet social workers are routinely expected to raise concerns, despite the risks it carries for them professionally and personally. Under 3.5 of the General Social Care Council's (GSCC's) Code of Practice social

workers must 'inform your employer or an appropriate authority where the practice of colleagues may be unsafe or adversely affecting standards of care', while 3.4 says you must 'bring to the attention of your employer or an appropriate authority resource or operational difficulties that might get in the way of the delivery of safe care'. All fine in theory.

But a poll of social workers carried out by the GSCC in September 2009 found that half who had reported operational difficulties or concerns about a colleague did not have them taken up by their employer. However, 85% said they would be able to report concerns. Sherry Malik, corporate director at the GSCC, says she is encouraged by the willingness of social workers to report concerns. But she admits there is a "mismatch" between what the regulator expects of social workers and employers, given that the Code of Practice is statutory for individuals but voluntary for organisations. Individuals can be called to account over their practice, while employers that fail to provide the right working conditions – including support, supervision and protection – for social workers are not subject to the same scrutiny. It is a double standard that many critics, including BASW – The College of Social Work, have long campaigned to see addressed.

WHAT REGULATORS SAY ABOUT BLOWING THE WHISTLE

The Care Quality Commission:

Q: What advice would you offer a social worker looking to blow the whistle?

A: 'We need to know the service in question, the timescale and the circumstances in order to investigate. Hard evidence (such as photos or documents) is not always necessary, although it can greatly help us.'

Q: A lot of people, including whistleblowers, feel that if inspections were more robust there would be no need for them to intervene – to what extent do you feel this is a valid point?

A: 'Inspections provide a perspective at a given moment in time, whereas an individual who either works or has direct contact with a service over a longer period of time may be able to offer additional information to the CQC on how a provider is delivering care and the quality of that care. Intelligence gained from "whistleblowing" is just one source of information – although a valuable one – that the CQC considers as part of its regulation of providers.'

Q: What does the CQC do, if anything, to promote whistleblowing among social care staff, especially social workers?

A: 'We will shortly be launching a new policy on raising concerns and will be underlining the importance of staff, social workers, service users and members of the public sharing information with the Commission if they have any concerns relating to the quality of care being provided.'

Ofsted

Q: What sort of evidence do people need to provide in order to prompt an investigation?

A: 'We will be looking for evidence of systemic weakness. We do get calls about staffing levels but the person really needs to be able to show the impact on the system. Social workers have contacted us and they will say they have raised a concern with their line manager and nothing was done. But they have raised it at too low a level.'

16 feature whistleblowing



Martin Morton

PUBLICLY, NOBODY BACKED HIM: "COLLEAGUES WERE OPERATING IN A CULTURE OF FEAR. PEOPLE WOULD SURREPTITIOUSLY COME DOWN TO SEE HOW I WAS."

"There is huge imbalance of power when a whistleblower takes on an organisation. It is this imbalance that needs addressing," Morton argues. "In social care there are a couple of ways of addressing this imbalance; firstly, ideologically repositioning whistleblowing as an essential part of the armory of safeguarding; and secondly, practically, by implementing Laming's recommendations from 2008 that the GSCC Code of Practice becomes mandatory for employers of social care and not just employees."

In the current financial climate, where some employers are rewarding social workers who can recommend ways to save money, many practitioners are voicing concerns that they are being forced to operate unsafely. It seems inevitable that more social workers will need to whistleblow, knowing, if the GSCC's poll findings are a true reflection of what follows, that there is only a 50/50 chance their concerns will be acted on.

"There are many excellent social workers out there who are prepared to stick their necks out to protect our vulnerable relatives, but

unfortunately I am not confident that they are able to effect any changes in the culture of those social services departments where the bottom line is cash rather than people. That requires a major shift in the attitudes in the population as a whole, and councils and governments in particular," says Joan Green*. As a supporter of Morton, she has followed his case closely. "I cannot understand the lengths so many bosses will go to to cover up wrongdoings by staff, rather than putting things right and protecting vulnerable people. What's the point in protecting a bad reputation?"

BASW/CoSW professional officer Engand Nushra Mansuri says: "Even trying to raise your concerns through the echelons of your organisation can lead you to be reprimanded. There's a lot to deter people from raising concerns and we really need social workers to have some strategies when doing this.

"There should be some focus on whistleblowing included in pre-qualifying training so that social workers understand the implications of whistleblowing and are equipped in how to protect themselves," she

adds. "We need a code of practice in this area and it could be something for the emerging College of Social Work to look at. There are too many social workers out there who do not belong to a union or a professional body and they are so vulnerable."

Despite his experience, Martin Morton still believes that whistleblowing is vital. Even before he received an apology and was offered his job back he made it clear that he would do the same again "in a heartbeat".

But social workers and other professionals need help, he says, adding that the Care Quality Commission (CQC), responsible for regulating adult social care in England, needs to have proper guidance making it clear what it considers substantive evidence.

Media

"Whistleblowers need to make full use of the media to expose bad practice. It can be a very strong arena for people to make use of. I never anticipated what would follow. My wife and my family have seen me upset but I wouldn't want to wake up in 20 years and think I should have done something about that," he says.

When asked whether he will accept another job at the local authority – "re-engagement" – it would be easy to assume that he would turn down flat such an offer. So it's a surprise when he says he hasn't ruled out a return to Wirral Council. It is complicated. At 48 he worries his job prospects may be hampered by ageism; his current job in the voluntary sector, which he enjoys but involves a lot of travelling, ends in July, and we are in the middle of a recession. The Council offices he had worked at happily for a decade are just a five-minute drive from home. The fantasy of breezing back in to the office, sunglasses on, and announcing "I'm baaaaack" is almost too good to resist, he laughs. But aside from the pragmatic considerations, he is understandably apprehensive about what it may mean in reality. One thing will be key to his decision – his commitment to social work. Before 2000 and the beginning of his troubles, Martin Morton had been a social worker for 17 years. "I loved it," he says.

* Name changed to protect identity

PSW

A WHISTLEBLOWER'S ABC

Martin Morton is in the process of writing a guide book, following his experience of blowing the whistle. He says: "I'm convinced that if I had been represented or supported by someone who had an understanding of social work practice and wasn't reliant on someone from the union with a background in parks and gardens I may well have saved myself a lot of grief."

- You cannot take on an organisation on your own – you can be easily dismissed as a lone malcontent. You need at least two allies, one of whom has some form of power. This power can be political power, although that in itself can be fraught and subject to the vagaries of politics, knowledge power (provided by an organisation like BASW/CoSW), or legal power – for example, that held by regulators such as the CQC.

- Record everything. Gather evidence and do your research to establish a network of support which is not wholly reliant on family and friends.

"The profile of this particular case has meant that I have been contacted by many whistleblowers seeking advice and support and the most common refrain I hear is, 'Is it me?' ('am I over-reacting, am I too sensitive, am I misunderstanding something?'). I have yet to come across a case where I have felt that the concerns being raised were not justified. It is vitally important for people to know they are not alone and whistling in the dark."

Whistleblowing – sources of help

- Call BASW's Advice and Representation Service on 0121 622 8413
- Public Concern at Work is a whistleblowing charity: www.pcaw.co.uk, helpline 020 7404 6609
- Ofsted has a whistleblowing service, whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk or call the hotline on 0300 123 3155

The Surgery



Expert advice from BASW/CoSW's Advice & Representation Service on commonly raised social work concerns

How to deal with... references

Q

I am an agency worker and left my old job last month so I could have a couple of weeks off before starting a new job. I asked my former line manager for a reference for my new job three times before she supplied one to the agency. However, having seen the reference, I don't think it is particularly fair or accurate. I didn't have any major problems in my last job and don't want it to affect my new role. Can I ask my former line manager for another reference or are they not obliged to help? A former colleague says I'm lucky as her reference from her last agency job just confirmed that she had worked there. I didn't think this was legal, but what are my rights around this?

A

BASW – The College of Social Work's Advice and Representation Service has received a lot of calls around references lately, particularly from agency social workers.

What we recommend in situations like this, particularly for agency staff who will be changing jobs more frequently, is to always ask for a reference before you leave any employment. It is good practice for a manager to share the reference with you before you leave your job if you have requested one. This gives you the opportunity to deal with any issues while you are still employed by this organisation, which is far easier in terms of logistics and getting hold of people than after you've left.

A manager should not be writing anything about you in the reference that they have not already shared with you prior to leaving their employment. If you receive a reference and you are unsure about something that has been written, you are entitled to ask the author for clarification. An employer may choose to give a reference that just confirms your dates of employment. There is nothing unlawful in this, although there is room for investigation if your

Further information

The law around references is quite vague but here are further sources of information which may help with specific queries.

- Total Jobs – jobs and careers advice website (www.totaljobs.com)
- Direct Gov – public services website (www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment/index.htm)
- Acas – promoting employment relations (www.acas.org.uk)
- The Information Commissioner (www.ico.gov.uk)
- The Children's Workforce Development Council (www.cwdcouncil.org.uk)

employer normally gives full references.

Many agency workers are only contracted to give one weeks notice. You should always check your contract and be aware of your entitlements to notice and pay before you start. Notwithstanding this, however, we would always recommend you sort out the issue of a reference before you leave that employment. If this is not possible, and you have left your job without seeing a reference, first check with your agency that a copy of a reference has not been sent to them directly. If it hasn't then contact your former manager by phone or email and ask for a copy of a reference that they will be sending, or have sent, to your new employer.

Once you receive a copy, if you are not happy with the contents then you can go back to the author. Be as clear as you can about what you are unhappy about. Do not use sweeping statements such as 'It's unfair' – try and select which part of the reference is not fair and explain why not – always use any evidence to back up your case. Be realistic about the impact this will have on future employment and explain this to

the author. You can try negotiating with the author to see if they will edit the reference. However, the author is under no obligation to make any changes unless they have said something that is factually incorrect; for example, if they have said you do not have a qualification, when you do and have a certificate to prove this fact. The A&R Service can assist in this process.

References are about opinion and unless a reference contains blatant untruths or libellous or discriminatory comments, there is little chance of legal recourse. However, if a reference you have been given isn't accurate or is deliberately misleading it may amount to defamation, in which case you could claim for libel. You would need to speak to a lawyer about how to do this. As an agency worker your agency has a duty of care towards you and should support you in obtaining and if necessary challenging the content of a reference.

BASW – The College of Social Work would not provide legal representation for a member who wanted to sue a former employer over a disputed reference as this is a civil matter, therefore outside the A&R remit and would need to be funded by the member through their own solicitor.

Remember that a reference is merely a passport to your next job. If your reference is adequate for this, but you think it insufficiently positive, our advice would be to accept it as it is and move on.

PSW



This month's The Surgery was produced by Dave Allan, senior officer at BASW/CoSW's Advice and Representation Service. If you have an issue for The Surgery, email editor@basw.co.uk

The A&R Service is available to BASW/CoSW members from 9am to 4.30pm weekdays on 0121 622 8413 or at aras@basw.co.uk

To celebrate the launch of BASW/CoSW's new online bookshop
we are delighted to offer Members

30% Discount*

on all titles ordered online

Browse the BASW/CoSW Bookshop at
<http://shop.basw.co.uk>

Add the BASW/CoSW members promotional code **ODS9MHU** at checkout to obtain your discount.

* Offer expires 30-6-11. BASW/CoSW members will receive a standard 25% discount from 1-7-11.

New publication from Venture Press

Early Professional Development for Social Workers

Edited by Raymond Taylor, Malcolm Hill and Fergus McNeill

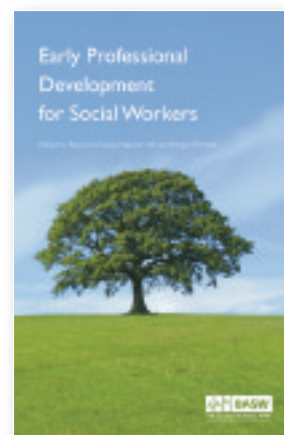
Discounted Price: £24.95 £17.47 + £2.50 p&p

The central focus of this book is on the early professional development needs of social workers. It has been compiled by editors with extensive experience of social work practice, education and research. The collection examines the radical changes that have taken place in social work over the last decade within the wider context of welfare policy and practice change within the United Kingdom.

The editors have brought together a broad range of experts to provide a contemporary perspective on a wide spectrum of social work issues, taking account of legal and policy differences between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Each country within the UK faces similar challenges and there is much learning to be gleaned from exploring the range of social work interventions that have been developed and applied in different parts of the United Kingdom in recent years.

The book will be an important reference for social workers, managers, practitioners and social work educators, and for all those with an interest in raising standards of social work practice.



Other titles available include



When the going gets tough – are you tough enough?

Edited by
Helen Ogilvy,
Anne Sambidge and
Gail C. Tucker

An invaluable guide to the challenges of going it alone as an independent social worker and coping in a difficult economic climate.

**Discounted price: £15.00
£10.50 + £2.50 p&p**

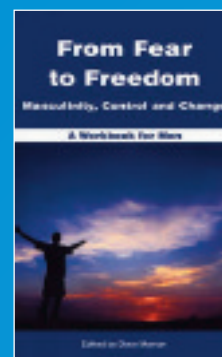


Rural Social Work Practice in Scotland

Colin Turbett

Rural Social Work Practice in Scotland brings international approaches to rural social work into a modern Scottish context.

**Discounted price: £15.95
£11.17 + £2.50 p&p**



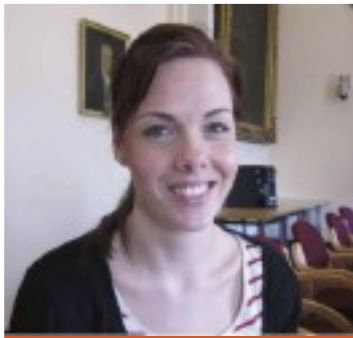
From Fear to Freedom: Masculinity, Control and Change – A Workbook for Men

Edited by Dave Morran

The aim of this book is to speak directly to men who, through their controlling beliefs and behaviour, are causing worry and harm to their families, partners and children, and not least, to themselves.

**Discounted price: £19.95
£13.97 + £2.50 p&p**

the Q&A



Name

Stacey Senior

Age

26

Lives

West Midlands

Employer

Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

Career

Two years

Favourite film

Inception

Favourite book

The Know by Martina Cole

Favourite holiday

Shell Island,
Gwynedd, Wales

Favourite food

BBQ

Favourite drink?

Milk

This month PSW speaks to **Stacey Senior**, an adult community social worker for Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council, about the challenges and rewards she faces as a frontline practitioner

Why did you become a social worker?

I was a care assistant working with older adults in a rehabilitation setting and I loved it. Seeing the change in people from having high dependency needs to going home four weeks later with just a grab-rail and pendant alarm was a really positive feeling. I wanted to work with people in their own environments rather than in an institution and as a social worker I spoke to was very positive about the profession. I never thought I'd go back to studying but I was soon enrolling on the social work degree course.

Why did you choose to work as an adult community social worker?

My strengths were always with adults but with the shift towards a more 'Think Family' approach I have begun working with more young families and I do find it interesting. Community social work is about working with groups as well as individuals to promote and enable social inclusion, social action and positive activity. It is less about heavy-end case management and more about prevention and keeping people independent for longer, which I find more motivating.

What is it about the job that gets you out of bed in the morning?

No two days are the same. I get to work with so many interesting people from all sorts of professional and organisational backgrounds, that we may think have nothing to do with social work, but when you start working preventatively the opportunities to work more creatively and collaboratively really open up.

... and what parts of the job tempt you to just stay in bed?

Paperwork. Necessary, but time-consuming.

What one piece of advice would you offer a new social worker?

Grab every opportunity to get involved in projects or pilots; there is so much more to learn besides case management. Don't be afraid to say you are not sure – I often request a joint worker when a situation has me stumped.

How well did your training prepare you for the job?

I felt I'd been set up to fail because the theory didn't seem to match the practice, but after about a year I started to see the links. What helped me was having a mentor who explained the relationship between theory and practice as I went along. You still need that guidance even after you have qualified; I think that is being recognised more now with the introduction of the 'assessed year in employment'. Supervision should be as much about professional development as case management.

How do you feel training should be improved to enhance the practice of new social workers?

I think there needs to be a philosophy module on the social work degree and also more attention paid to what to do when you are close to burnout and how to avoid it.

And finally, what do you do away from work that helps you unwind?

Camping, cycling, running, walking, BBQ's – anything that gets me outside with family and friends.



N.IRELAND ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

(PART OF BASW)

Temporary Manager NIASW to cover Maternity leave – beginning June 2011 Based in Belfast

Start Salary: £37,000.
(payscale £37,000–£51,000)

Minimum 6 months contract

Applications are invited from qualified social workers who are experienced managers with a commitment to the highest standards of social work practice and the ability to take on a high-profile role across Northern Ireland, increase membership and develop BASW – The College of Social Work activities. Must have the vision and passion to support and engage our members and other interested stakeholders.

An experienced and successful Social Worker and Manager you will work closely with our National Committee to pursue the transformation that Social Work needs and empower social workers to develop the profession.

This is an exciting opportunity to be part of NIASW in a dynamic and challenging role. Working with a dedicated local team and as part of a wider UK staff group.

A secondment arrangement or job share application would be considered.

**Application Deadline: 8th June 2011 (10.00am)
Interviews to be held 16th June 2011**

**For application information visit www.basw.co.uk
or email s.hickin@basw.co.uk**

BASW – The College of Social Work is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all sections of the community irrespective of nationality, religion, colour, race, age, gender, disability and sexuality.



Part-time Development Worker (Wales)

17.5 hours per week

Start Salary: £25,000 (pro-rata)

Registered Social Worker wanted with the vision and passion to support our members and a proven track record of delivering results to fill the position of Development Worker in Wales. Based from our Cardiff Office, we are looking for someone with the skills and enthusiasm to increase and engage the BASW – The College of Social Work membership throughout Wales, feed in to the social work political and policy agenda, support the work of the Country Manager and help deliver the BASW – The College of Social Work message to all Frontline Social Workers and their employers in Wales. The post holder will need to be conversant with current legislation, policy and practice issues and ideally be able to communicate in Welsh.

**Application packs can be downloaded from our website
www.basw.co.uk or you can email s.hickin@basw.co.uk or
telephone 0121 622 8402.**

Deadline for Applications 10am 17th June 2011

Shortlisting will take place week beginning 20th June 2011

Successful applicants will be invited to attend an interview week beginning 27th June 2011

BASW – The College of Social Work is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all sections of the community irrespective of nationality, religion, colour, race, age, gender, disability and sexuality.



England Policy Development Reference Groups

England is now running a number of specific reference groups which are looking towards developing and influencing policy both internally and externally. Their role is to bring BASW/CoSW members' expertise and experience to bear on changes and developments affecting social work through a focussed work plan for each group.

The groups will be running virtually, via teleconference, email and telephone contact and will be made up of members, supported by an England staff member. There will be occasional face-to-face contact. They do not intend to take a lot of your time and there will be areas more relevant to your interests and experience than others.

We therefore need motivated members from all parts of England working in a variety of settings to offer their knowledge and assistance.

The Policy Development Groups running at present are as follows:

- 1 **Children & Families**
- 2 **Mental Health**
- 3 **Learning & Development**
- 4 **Social Work with Adults**
- 5 **Criminal Justice**

If you would like to become involved with any of the above groups please contact Sharon or Cheryl at our England office for further details (england@basw.co.uk, 0121 622 8411). Please come and join us and help shape the future of social work.



in conversation with...

... Peter Hay

Birmingham's adult services director and new president of the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS), a former social worker, talks about the challenges facing social work.

What is the greatest challenge you face as ADASS president this year?

Managing events that come up while balancing the long-term objectives – sustainable funding for care, a personalised model of care and the next Comprehensive Spending Review in three years time.

What are the greatest opportunities and challenges in adult services currently?

When resources increased, adult care ended up serving fewer people. Now there is strong political backing for reform. There is a gap in resources but we won't win that argument unless we take steps forward in reform. We need a social model at the heart of that reform and, looking back, we have moved too far away from the universal roots of the social model.

How do you feel about the NHS reforms and potential impact on adult services?

I have been invited onto the future forum where the government is pausing, talking, reflecting, and I hope to be a strong presence there. That is an important acknowledgement of the role local government can play and there is opportunity for local government to be close allies with public health and social care, making real impact on local health outcomes.

What do you hope will come from the Dilnott review of the funding system for care and support in England?

ADASS has been consistent in wanting recognition that there remains a gap in long-term funding of care and we need a national solution. I hope we have something that leads to comprehensive reform and not another report on the bookshelf.

BASW/CoSW has concerns that non-qualified staff are increasingly carrying out social work tasks. Are you concerned by this?

I am absolutely clear in my authority and

generally about the role of social workers. We don't want social workers just in assessor roles; in fact we want less assessment, and more support planning by social workers, working imaginatively with people and resources to meet need and get outcomes that work for people.

A BASW/CoSW survey found that three quarters of adult social workers have suffered emotionally due to work stress. How can social workers be better supported?

The [Moir] Gibb inquiry and Social Work Reform Board (SWRB) work had some pertinent points for adult social workers. Good councils will be taking on the SWRB's work, such as the health checks. I think energy is needed to make sure Moira Gibb's work is being taken forward. There is a lot of strength in our workforce, though, that we often underplay.

Adult social workers have expressed fear about the disappearance of social work, a loss of identity and absorption into health. What's your view on this seeming trend?

There is the reform agenda in councils, as well as Dilnott and public health changes, these aren't mergers but an integrated approach [to care provision]. You can't wrap it all up into one organisation, there will always be boundaries and what you need is skilled people who can

work across teams and boundaries and social workers have these skills aplenty. There is a lot to be positive about.

Many social workers fear good preventive work is being lost with raising eligibility criteria. Should the focus be on prevention regardless of cuts?

We used to spend £1.5m a year on prevention in Birmingham, now we spend £9m and we tightened the eligibility to get more money upstream. The cuts forced transparency: communities were saying to us: 'we know you haven't got enough money, why don't you put resources into prevention'. Eligibility criteria is a crude device, it can be used to control how much you put into a part of the system. Prevention should be the last thing you get rid of.

You have said ADASS would not oppose cuts but point out the potential effects. Don't you have a duty to speak out?

We are chief officers and as such are politically restricted. If a government is elected they import their policy and it is our duty to advise about the consequences. We are public servants and the link between the profession and politics.

What has been your greatest career achievement so far?

When I joined Birmingham in 2003, they said it was an impossible job but we've gone from being Britain's worst [provider] to adult care being delivered to a high standard in very personalised ways. Outcomes for people are very different. Care shouldn't be 'you get what you're told' – you need aspiration.

What advice would you give a NQSW?

Social work has to come from the head and the heart, and that's the same for social work management. You can't do it all intellectually, it's about how people feel too. If you can combine the two, it's a fantastic career.

PETER HAY FACTFILE

Peter started out in social work in Grimsby, Lincolnshire, in 1985. In 1996 he became assistant director of children's services in North-East Lincolnshire, and director in 1997, before taking the post of director of social services in Birmingham in 2003, and adult director in 2006. He plays the piano, sings in a choir and shares a love of rugby with his wife and three children.

Practice: Social Work in Action

Appointment of new Co-Editor

Practice: social work in action journal is seeking to appoint a Co-Editor. Working in partnership with the current Editor, the main tasks will include the day-to-day work associated with the management and administration of the journal, (including coordinating the peer review process), writing/co-writing Editorials, promoting the work of the journal to the academic and practice community, representing the journal at relevant events and conferences and setting priorities for the future.

The current Editor and the new Co-Editor will work closely with the editorial and production staff at Routledge, the publishers of the journal, and with BASW/CoSW. They are supported and assisted by an Editorial Board, consisting of social work academics, social work consultants and practitioners from the four countries of the UK. The Editorial Board meets twice a year, usually in central London.

The initial term for the Co-Editor will be three years, with the option to renew for a further period by mutual consent.

Practice: social work in action is a forum for the publication of research and knowledge from practice and the experiences of people using services. The journal has a strong base in social work practice and seeks to promote a proactive, reflective and critical perspective. The journal promotes the international dimension of social work. The Editorial Board is committed to offering constructive support to those in the early phases of developing a publication profile.

Application Process

We are looking to appoint a Co-Editor who has in-depth knowledge and experience of social work in the UK as a discipline and profession and who has recent or current experience of serving as an Editor or on the Editorial Board of a peer-reviewed academic journal. The process will take the form of a written application, followed by an interview for shortlisted candidates.

Further details and a role specification can be obtained from: practicejournal@bournemouth.ac.uk

The application deadline is 13th June 2011.

Interviews are scheduled to take place on the afternoon of Friday 1st July, please indicate in your application if this date will be suitable.

For an informal discussion about the role please contact the Editor, Anne Quinney, Senior Lecturer Social Work, Bournemouth University: practicejournal@bournemouth.ac.uk

Practice: Social Work in Action

Appointment of new Book Reviews Editor

Practice: social work in action journal is seeking to appoint a book reviews editor or editors. The role is currently shared and applications for joint or single appointments are welcome. The main tasks of the book reviews editor/s include the day-to-day work associated with the management and administration of book reviews for the journal, including liaison with book publishers, arranging and assigning reviews, maintaining a database of book reviewers, and editing and submitting reviews for each edition of the journal.

Book reviews editors are normally appointed for three years but this can be renewed for a further period. The current joint Book Reviews Editors will work closely with the newly appointed Book Reviews Editor/s to support a smooth transition of the role and the work in hand. Attendance at the twice yearly Editorial Boards is expected, which are normally held in central London.

The journal is a forum for the publication of research and knowledge from practice and the experiences of people using services. The journal has a strong base in social work practice and seeks to promote a proactive, reflective and critical perspective. The journal promotes the international dimension of social work. The Editorial Board is committed to offering constructive support to those in the early phases of developing a publication profile.

Application Process

We are looking to appoint a book reviews editor/s who has in-depth knowledge and experience of social work in the UK as a discipline and profession. Experience of membership of Editorial Boards is not essential.

If you would like to apply please send a CV with an accompanying letter setting out your interest in the role, your experience and what you can contribute to the role and the journal, by email to the Editor, Anne Quinney, Bournemouth University: practicejournal@bournemouth.ac.uk

The application deadline is 17th June 2011.

For an informal discussion about the role please contact the current joint book reviews editors Karin Crawford or Janet Walker, at the University of Lincoln: kcrawford@lincoln.ac.uk or jwalker@lincoln.ac.uk





the guest

Why maintenance matters

Encouraging parents to agree regular maintenance payments, sometimes of just a few pounds a week, is about so much more than just money or reducing the benefit bill, according to **Dame Janet Paraskeva**

Under half of Britain's three million children living in separated families benefit from regular maintenance payments because their parents don't have an effective arrangement in place. Many of the children that social workers meet are living in families where there is no stable relationship between their parents. So it is not likely that the issue of child maintenance will ever have been discussed.

Parents have had a legal duty to support their children after separation since well before the Child Support Act created the Child Support Agency (CSA) in 1991. A late 2009 YouGov survey of 900 separated parents with children aged 18 or below found that 93% of separated parents believe mothers and fathers should continue to have a financial responsibility for their children. Nevertheless, hundreds of thousands of children grow up without financial support from both parents. Often this is accompanied by the absence of one parent from their daily lives. So how is this difference between belief and action to be addressed?

The Munro review and others focussing on early intervention (Dame Clare Tickell's review of the early years foundation stage and Graham Allen MP's review of early intervention) have recognised the need for a greater joining-up of the provision of universal services in order to increase the effectiveness of support services for families and children. The reforms of the child maintenance system proposed by the government earlier this year follow a similar theme, calling for the range of support services for separated and separating parents to be better connected in order to make it easier for parents to sort out the issues they face at the time of separation.

At the Commission we are working with other government departments, the voluntary sector and key frontline professionals such as midwives,

health visitors and, of course, social workers to try to implement the government's vision. Social workers are ideally placed to help separated parents take a simple step towards fundamentally improving their children's lives by asking them whether they've thought about child maintenance, or raised the subject with their ex-partner. Not knowing the other parent's whereabouts doesn't necessarily mean it's a hopeless cause.

This work with key professionals is designed to enhance their understanding of child maintenance and the role they can play. Through the Social Work Reform Board we are exploring how better knowledge of child maintenance can become part of social workers' continuing professional development, adding to the information needed to help the families they work with. Our experience has shown that when parents are equipped with the facts they can talk more confidently to their ex-partners and are more likely to make effective arrangements. When they can't, the state system (currently the Child Support Agency or CSA) is there to help them. But a separate 2009 You Gov poll, conducted among 1,000 parents, found that many separating parents don't know where to find useful information about child support. To deal with this the Commission has set up Child Maintenance Options, a free information and support service for all parents, and even grandparents and the friends of separating or separated parents.

Payments may only amount to a few extra

pounds every week but can make a big difference to the lone parents who make up 80% of those eligible to receive maintenance. Social workers will be only too aware of the devastating effect on families that separation can have – not just financially, but socially and psychologically. A Department for Work and Pensions survey in 2008 showed that where a child and one of their parents live apart, 23% had no contact with their non-resident parent. The paying of maintenance can help both parents to remain involved in their child's upbringing.

Sorting out child maintenance should, of course, be a priority for all separated or separating couples. But it often isn't, either because of the pain and hurt of separation or, in other cases, because they simply don't know how to get hold of each other.

Sometimes absent fathers don't want to pay, and mothers caring for their children don't know what a reasonable amount would be. They may be unsure how much their former partner earns, or they may want to cut ties with the person altogether. But far from the stereotypical 'deadbeat dads', are the men who call to tell us they want to provide for their children but are unsure about how much to pay and how often.

Social workers can help with this before the absence of an arrangement becomes a habit. Offering the right support to separated families at the right time can transform lives – helping to boost children's life chances and secure their futures.

PSW

Child Maintenance Options (0800 988 0988/www.cmoptions.org) is a free, publicly-funded helpline and website offering support and information to parents on child maintenance. Callers are talked through their options and the website provides tips on how to start talking about maintenance; an online calculator, giving parents an idea of how much maintenance they would be paying if they went through the state system; and family-based agreement packs. The service can also signpost parents to organisations which can help them with everything from emotional support to debt, housing and employment.

Early
Notification

IMPORTANT CONFERENCE ON MUNRO REVIEW

The Munro Review and the Future of Child Protection

The Munro review is out

Book your place at this important event in order to
explore the changes likely to happen in relation to child protection

Date: 19th September 2011
Time: 10.30am-3.30pm
Venue: The Friends Meeting House
Euston Road, Central London

This conference will explore the recommendations of the Munro Review of
Child Protection and will also consider some emerging practice issues

Speakers include:

- **Steve Goodman**, former Assistant Director of Hackney Children's Services and one of the architects of 'The Hackney Model', which is seen as a major influence on best practice
- **Professor Sue White**, part of the reference group on the Munro review, will talk about the implications of this report for managers and practitioners
- **Professor Harry Ferguson**, author of 'Child Protection Practice' (Palgrave, 2011), explores the critical skills needed for workers to undertake effective practice
- **Ceri Willmott**, manager of a radical new social work service seen as a model for new ways of working

Cost:
BASW/CoSW members: £25.00
Students: £20.00
Others: £35.00

**For discounts on bookings for
five or more delegates contact
Sarah Richards –
s.richards@basw.co.uk**



the trainee

My false start

As he completes his degree, resident student columnist **Andrew Ellery** casts his mind back three years to how his social work training began and the challenges of his first year, and reflects on what lies in store for this year's intake.

A lot of people are now having their interviews for the social work degree, which makes me think back to my own. I remember my interview, which was at my first choice of university, like it was yesterday. Reading Twitter, it seems the interview process is so different for each university. Mine was quite rigorous: a written exercise, a group interview, and finally an individual interview with a member of staff and a service user. I remember thinking that it was my chance to sell myself. I chose social work because I felt it was where I could make the biggest impact, a real difference. Believe me, the interviews to even get a chance at this were gruelling. The relief when I found out that I had been accepted was immense. I was a step closer to helping vulnerable people, promoting human rights and standing up for those facing injustice.

When I gained my place at university I was still working within statutory children's services. Although the pressure was pretty intense, immersing myself in everything to do with social work seemed like the right way forward. It was during this introductory year that I was exposed to residential care for the first time, something I was adamant I never wanted to do. However, I soon began to realise that it was a useful learning opportunity and that spending so much time with service users was invaluable. It was at this point I realised that statutory social work was not the be-all and end-all and how the entire social care workforce contributes to the social work profession. I recognised that achieving everything I wanted for individuals was not possible without the support from the wider local workforce.

However, my approach to this first year proved all too much. I was living in halls, juggling a job and doing a full-time placement involving shift work. It was tough. At this point in your training you're so easily influenced it is vitally important to have a good placement. I believed anything that came out of a social worker's mouth. I wanted to be like them and there was no reason to question a thing I was told. Not now. My first year went by so quickly, even though I wasn't finding it that stimulating and

unavoidable, decision I have taken to date.

The overriding issue, however, was the feeling that something was missing. I was working, studying and doing a placement but it didn't seem as though I was doing enough. Something was telling me that if I wanted to prove my worth, I had to do more. This was much harder than I thought. What was I going to be able to offer as a first year undergraduate? And where was I going to go to find opportunities? This led me to look at BASW and what it could offer me as a student.

I BELIEVED ANYTHING THAT CAME OUT OF A SOCIAL WORKER'S MOUTH. I WANTED TO BE LIKE THEM AND THERE WAS NO REASON TO QUESTION A THING I WAS TOLD. NOT NOW.

occasionally I felt as if I had made the wrong career choice.

It wasn't anyone's fault. When you come from being employed in a social services setting, and then find yourself comparing this with learning about how social work should be, it can be quite irritating. The reality doesn't always stand up to the learning. What we shouldn't forget, of course, is that the foundations of social work practice are incredibly important, no matter how experienced you may feel you are; we shouldn't dismiss or resist learning about it. Towards the end of my first year I had to give up my employment due to the demands of my training, probably the most regrettable, yet

But it wasn't just what it could offer me – I also wanted to be part of an organisation that could help me grow as a professional. Thankfully, at the end of my summer holidays, before the second year, I decided I wanted to write for a publication and attempt to put the voice of a student social worker out there, something I have now done, to my immense satisfaction.

PSW

Andrew Ellery is a year 3 social work degree student. If you would like to comment on this article or any other issues connected to student training or the social work degree, please email editor@basw.co.uk

NIASW Aids to Practice by Social Workers for Social Workers

Friday 10 June – 10am-1pm

Substance Use – Hidden Harm and Impact on Family

Meeting Room 3, MDEC Building, Altnagelvin Hospital, Derry

Tuesday 13 September – 10am-1pm

Domestic Violence Interventions – Managing Personal Beliefs to Ensure Professional Practice

Room 1, Staff Restaurant, Knockbracken Healthcare Park, Belfast

Wednesday 26 October – 1.30-4.30pm

Substance Use – Hidden Harm and Impact on Family

Laganview Conference Centre, Lisburn

FREE TO NIASW MEMBERS

NON-MEMBERS: £10.00

2 hours PRTL

For more information please contact Amanda Beattie,
National Administrator, NIASW
Email: a.beattie@basw.co.uk Tel: 028 90648873



Getting Started ... and Keeping Going!

A workshop day aimed at those considering a move into
independent social work
or established independents in need of encouragement!

Working in partnership with Dains LLP, BASW are pleased to provide a series of workshop days run by Helen Ogilvy and Gail Tucker, two highly experienced independent practitioners and two of the editors of BASW's recent publication 'When the Going Gets Tough – Are You Tough Enough?'

The workshops aim to

- Provide practical information about what is involved in being an independent practitioner from both the professional and business perspectives
- Explore some of the risks involved and how to manage them
- Consider what is required to develop a stable and ethically-sound practice
- Give you some insight into different types of independent practice and settings
- Put you in touch with a network of independent practitioners

The day will be a blend of presentations, workshops, plenary discussions and the opportunity to network with like-minded colleagues. It may be counted as part of the post-registration training and learning requirements for registered social workers.

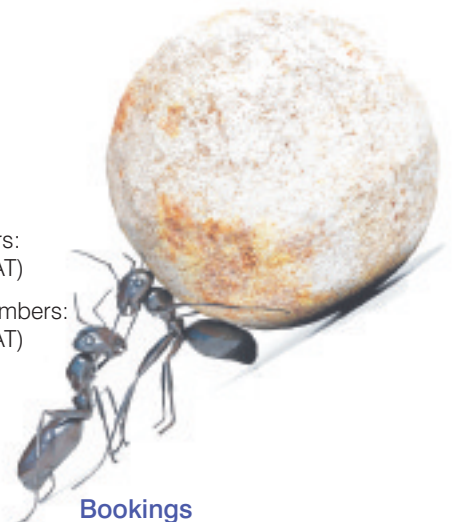
Bookings are now being taken for

Friday 16 September 2011

Village Hotel
Nottingham

Costs

- BASW members:
£118.80 (inc VAT)
- Non BASW members:
£174.00 (inc VAT)



Bookings

To book your place, please download a booking form which you can find at www.basw.co.uk/independents/workshops. Bookings can also be returned with payment to Conference Department, BASW, 16 Kent Street, Birmingham, B5 6RD or fax to 0121 622 4860.



independent thinking

This month's independent social work report looks at research being carried out into the role of ISWs, details of a forthcoming conference and a vital new member benefit.

Oxford University to study effectiveness of ISWs

Oxford University is to undertake a major new study evaluating the work and effectiveness of Independent Social Workers (ISWs) in a bid to clarify their role and value.

Dr Julia Brophy of Oxford University is to head up the study which will evaluate the independent social work reports commissioned within care proceedings. The research will examine the timing and duration of reports, issues of duplication and added value. In conjunction with a sample of 24 judges who will be asked to consider case management issues, the study will also examine the impact and value to courts of independent assessments and seek views on the impact of social workers and other professionals.

"The study will aim to ascertain whether an independent assessment is replacing, duplicating, extending/augmenting [existing information] or providing new and different information for the court," said Dr Brophy. "Where it can be established there was an existing core assessment, the study will explore information on the need for the independent report."

There is very little research into the effectiveness of the work of ISWs, yet there are competing views on the issue compounded by recent UK government moves to reduce the use of ISWs acting as experts in court proceedings. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) last month capped the fees ISWs could charge and, separately, has

omitted ISWs from a detailed list of expert witnesses who appear before family courts. Further proposals have outlined plans to reduce the ISW role in court proceedings, despite the fact many child care lawyers have pointed to the absence, or poor quality, of core assessments.

The research will track 300 ISW reports, analysing information from where an ISW undertook an assessment and determining whether the report addressed new issues or provided additional information. The study got underway last month and will conclude late in 2011 or early 2012.

Mark Willis, chair of the Confederation of Independent Social Work Agencies (CISWA-UK), which is one of the major funders of the independent research, said: "There is a total lack of data about the role and value of independent social workers in the family justice system. Many of the comments made about ISWs are anecdotal and lacking an evidence base."

"This research will provide much needed information about the issues that have a major impact upon children and their families in the court system. It is well overdue."

For more information on the research go to www.ciswa-uk.org or contact BASW/CoSW's business development officer for ISWs Tricia Gbinigie (independents@basw.co.uk).

New CRB benefit for members

Independent social workers who sign up to either of BASW – The College of Social Work's enhanced independents packages – BASW Independents or BASW Independents Plus – can now access discounted Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks as an additional member benefit.

The scheme is being launched in conjunction with the Social Care Association (SCA). To access the service, simply visit MyBASW (my.basw.co.uk). Log in and select the 'CRB' icon, before then completing a brief form. The request is then sent off directly to the SCA which will dispatch a pack to the member. The cost for this service, which many independent practitioners are unable to complete alone, because they aren't attached to an organisation which can apply for a check on their behalf, is just £74.

ISW conference in June

BASW/CoSW is supporting the inaugural conference of the Confederation of Independent Social Work Agencies in Birmingham on 24 June. Speakers at the conference include professor Eileen Munro, who has recently carried out an independent review into the child protection system, Dr Julia Brophy, who is currently leading research into the role of ISWs, and David Norgrove, chair of the Family Justice Review.

For more information on the Confederation conference, visit www.ciswa-uk.org/events

Your say on Family Justice Review

BASW/CoSW is keen to hear your views on the interim report of the Family Justice Review, published by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) in March. The Association has concerns around some of the proposals in the report, which seeks to further reduce the role of independent social workers acting as expert witnesses in court, and

would welcome member views on what should be included in its response.

Email n.mansuri@basw.co.uk with your comments. To view the interim report, visit www.justice.gov.uk/publications/policy/moj/family-justice-review.htm

28 books extra



Developing research based social work practice

Joan Orme and David Shemmings. Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN: 978-0-230-20045-6. Paperback: £17.99 (www.palgrave.com)



Orme and Shemmings provide a comprehensive account of matters relevant to the development of research-based social work practice. This overview will be useful to practitioners, students and educators alike

and is informative and encouraging.

They refute the suggestion that social work is

only 'the appliance of social science' with no research base of its own and give diverse examples of research which informs and is informed by social work. Their narrative has the effect of guiding the reader to consider their own research questions whilst introducing the research task and following this through from design to the dissemination of findings.

The text highlights potential areas where social work foundations may be significant for methodology, ethics and outcomes and regularly asks the reader to make links with their practice experience. A key feature is the frequent referencing to other sources and web-based material which allow the reader to take on further enquiry. After I initially (and wrongly) presumed that the chapters on statistical techniques might be too simplified to be useful, I

was happy to find material that provided an erudite reminder of the application of standard statistical methods. The writers successfully describe statistical tools linguistically and make them accessible to non-statisticians without being patronising. There is limited discussion of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) but they do refer to more detailed recommended resources.

They conclude by noting the role of research reflection in supervision and the influential but perhaps under-utilised role of social work education. This is a persuasive argument for the place of research in development of the profession and the services we provide.

Helena Simmonds, Social Worker and Approved Mental Health Professional

Foster care and social networking: A guide for social workers and foster carers

Eileen Fursland. British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF). ISBN: 9-781907-585 142. Paperback: £14.95 (www.baaf.org.uk)



This is a must read book for social workers and foster carers which explores the issue of looked after children and their use of online communications.

The author challenges social workers and foster

carers to wake up to the 'social web' and acknowledge the context in which young

people live and socialise; no longer can we avoid the issue of online contact by merely denying the young person access to the internet or by discharging responsibility by pleading a lack of knowledge. Contact/non contact has to be managed and the book gives some helpful starting points for foster carers/social workers anxious about this area of work. While the book doesn't include a risk assessment format for online contact, it certainly provides the reader with an excellent starting point.

The book goes further than its title of 'foster care and social networking' suggests, as the author takes the reader on an educative journey. This starts with an informative introduction to different types of

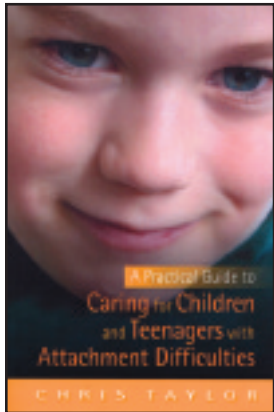
online contact, including social networking, and explores the benefits and risks involved. It goes on to highlight the need for social workers or carers to widen their traditional thinking about contact to take into account the use of mobile phones, emails, webcams and social networking sites.

There is a useful chapter on safe foster care online practice as well as a chapter signposting to further reading and resources. Case studies interspersed throughout the book give good examples as to why this is a live and current topic and one not to be ignored.

**Lynn Jackson
LSCB E-Safety Lead Officer**

A Practical Guide to Caring for Children and Teenagers with Attachment Difficulties

Chris Taylor. Jessica Kingsley Publishers. ISBN: 978-1-84905-081-4. Paperback: £18.99 (www.jkp.com)



I first came across this book in an in-house training session at work on the subject of adult attachment. The trainer often referred to it and I became curious so I agreed to review it from a practitioner

perspective.

It is reasonable to assert that many adults who have attachment issues will trace the

origins of their problem to their early childhood and teenage years, so it is equally reasonable to question how can you address the problems in practical ways before they become entrenched? This is where I feel this is an excellent easy-to-read resource which can help practitioners in their work.

It has eight chapters covering: The development and patterns of attachment (Chapter 1), How change can be initiated (Chapter 2), Care giving (Chapter 3), Working towards recovery (Chapter 4), Working with conflict (Chapter 5), Working with anger (Chapter 6), Managing challenging behaviour (Chapter 7) and Changing problem behaviour (Chapter 8).

I would thoroughly recommend Chapter 1 for those interested not just in patterns of

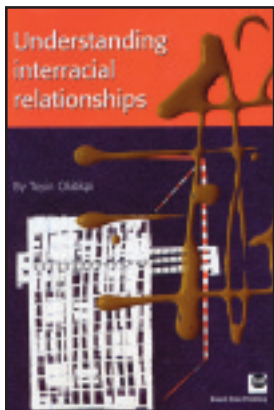
attachment but also the implications of attachment in families where domestic violence is a feature. One negative is the use of certain jargon, which did throw me a bit, such as 'the child's socio-emotional environment provides a developmental niche in which to grow and develop' – I am sure that could have been explained with more panache.

That apart, this book adds so many extra dimensions to the understanding of attachment and adds such extra value to the understanding of problematic attachment behaviours and their management that it would be a shame not to have it on your bookshelf.

Carolyn Taylor-Score
Family Court Advisor CAFCASS

Understanding interracial relationships

Toyin Okitikpi. Russell House Publishing. ISBN: 978-1-905541-53-9. Paperback: £18.95 + £1.50 p&p (www.russellhouse.co.uk)



Understanding Interracial Relationships examines long term relationships between black men and white women in the UK, a choice based on the fact that these constitute the highest proportion of in-

terracial marriages in the UK. The book is based on interviews with 20 black (African and African-Caribbean) men and white women involved in such a relationship.

To begin with, the author puts interracial relationships in a historical context, by providing a brief overview of how the relationship between black and white people in the UK has developed since the Middle

Ages, and how these relationships were and are portrayed in literature, films and other mediums. His general conclusion is that the relationship started off as fairly equal before developing to a stage where black people were considered to be inferior and discrimination became justifiable.

In the second part of the book Okitikpi outlines how and why the interviewees got involved in an interracial relationship, and especially how they manage the often negative responses from the people around them. Even though interracial relationships occur more and more, according to the interviewees there is still a lot of suspicion and hostility (from both white and black people), even to the extent that some couples have tried to hide their relationship from others.

Okitikpi puts these personal experiences in the wider perspective of the previously mentioned historical setting of black people in the UK, seeking supportive evidence from several sociological studies. Sadly, the

terminology and the author's repetitiveness don't always make these parts of the book easy reading for those less familiar with sociology. The same applies to the first part of the book.

However, the book can be useful for social workers who work with multiracial couples and families. They may not be aware of their own assumptions about these relationships, nor of the difficulties such couples may experience. Although in the introduction the author also refers to the difficulties children from interracial relationships can experience, the book, sadly, offers very little attention to this particular issue. Perhaps this would require another, specific, study.

Having said this, the book does provide some good and at times (to me anyway, being white and non-British) shocking information about the issues interracial couples in this country come across.

Annelies Barth
Social worker

30 uk reports

Four pages of reports from professional officers and BASW committees around the UK



Scotland

Annual meeting

Scotland's annual members meeting in Glasgow was well attended by those seeking further information and offering their views on the future direction of the Scottish Association of Social Work (SASW), now that discussions are in full flow for major changes to BASW UK and the formation of a single College of Social Work.

Concerns were expressed that the drivers for this structural change are coming from the process emerging from the Social Work Taskforce in England and the rearrangement of bodies related to social work services south of the border. Scottish members are keen to be involved in the development of a UK federated model that will give greater clarity to the different cultural, political and legislative environments of the four countries. Further meetings will be taking place before the constitutional convention in October. To get involved please contact Tim Parkinson.

Post-election campaigning

As the new government in Scotland sets its course for the next five years, SASW is identifying issues that will form the basis of our lobbying and campaigning to improve the conditions and resources that we need to make our full contribution to social development in our country. We look forward to establishing contact with new ministers, Michael Matheson, minister for health, Angela Constance, minister for children and young people, and Roseanna Cunningham, minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs.

- We have already raised concerns about the decreasing number of student placements and support for newly-qualified social workers.
- We are contributing to the dissemination and use of the new Practice Governance Framework published by the Scottish Government, which we were very involved in developing.

- We are collecting information about the new criminal justice payback orders introduced just before the election, recognising that their success in reducing crime and the prison population simultaneously will only happen if sufficient funds are transferred out of the Scottish Prison Service and into communities.
- Equally, there is a pressing need to identify the issues that need addressing for cost-effective care and health services as we get older. These and many more issues are crowding SASW's current campaigning agenda.

ADSW Conference

The Association of Directors of Social Work's Annual conference in May offered food for thought on a number of the above issues. The contributions from Ireland and England, describing the challenges facing health, adult and children's services, provided a chance to reflect on what we can learn from our neighbours. Other presentations included examples of where social development has been strengthened by community-led initiatives – the kind of intervention that we have been encouraged to look at through community capacity building as recommended in the *Changing Lives* agenda.

The main message from the research-based presentations was the equal importance of defining and analysing the issues, addressing the need for cultural change as a primary action, and only resorting to structural change if genuine improvements can be guaranteed.

The issues we face in the coming years are, as always, challenging for social work but we do have the intellectual capacity to address them. We need to be involved in the defining and analysis of what needs changing and be catalysts for that reform.

The coming months ...

Local meetings to shape the way forward for

SASW, in order to meet the needs and aspirations of our increasing membership, will be at the forefront of our activities in SASW over the coming months. Contact Tim Parkinson to get involved.

As well as shaping how we operate, the coming months will also see us continuing to campaign and lobby on behalf of members for the resources and support of employers and politicians in providing good quality services in these stringent times.

Finally two dates for your diary:

4 October in Hamilton, South Lanarkshire, *Supporting Competent and Confident Social Work Professionals: Strengthening Ethical Practice*;

6 October in Concert Hall, Perth, *Mental Health Officer Annual Study Day*

Contact point



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What do you think?

If you have any comments on anything you have read, please get in touch using the details above.

VISIT DEDICATED WEBSITES FOR EACH UK COUNTRY

BASW – The College of Social Work's website includes dedicated content from each of the four UK national associations. On each of the four national pages you can now find news, updates on forthcoming events and details about government consultations or guidance.

To view the new-look country association pages, visit ...

FOR ENGLAND:

www.basw.co.uk/england

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND:

www.basw.co.uk/niasw

FOR SCOTLAND:

www.basw.co.uk/scotland

FOR WALES:

www.basw.co.uk/wales



England

The last few weeks have been incredibly busy for all the team. Just before Easter our Alcohol and other Drugs Special Interest Group (SIG) put on a very successful conference in Birmingham, *Taking a Closer Look at Alcohol and Drug Treatment*. Presentations from the event can be found on the SIG pages of the BASW/CoSW website. The group want this to be a mainstream issue in social work training and have made representations on the matter to the Social Work Reform Board.

Anyone interested in joining a separate SIG, looking at relationships with Russia and the development of social work in that country, should contact Sue Kent [see page 12 for more].

Children's rights

May kicked off with a meeting in parliament on the subject of children's rights, led by UNICEF and Save the Children, which had jointly published a report on the issue. Nushra Mansuri was stunned when individuals started debating whether to use the term 'children's rights' at all given the potential media backlash on such a notion. She decided that rather than register her disgust that participants were spending time on something she considered non-negotiable, perhaps it would make more sense to positively reframe the issue. She reminded people that human rights are very much understood in popular daily discourse, most notably in coverage of global atrocities. She emphasised how this should bring the message home very strongly about the need to value our human rights given that an absence of them doesn't bear thinking about, particularly for those with the least voice – children.

Munro Review

Nushra attended a stakeholders meeting of the final Munro review report. She believes that this review is a breath of fresh air compared to so many of its predecessors, many of which have smacked of a remedial approach to problems and endless lists of 'Thou Shalt...' rather than recognise the challenges that practitioners face. Professor Munro should be commended for taking such a principled stance as well as remaining true to her academic roots and employing a systems approach to the whole exercise which meant that she could authoritatively make her points drawing from a sound evidence base and employing good analysis.

Nushra welcomed the fact that so many of the points and suggestions that BASW/CoSW members made in the evidence submitted to the review were incorporated in the report's recommendations. And so now, for the acid test – will the government and employers have the political will to implement the recommendations? We sincerely hope so. One of BASW/CoSW's tasks over the coming weeks and months is to continuously apply pressure on the government to make sure that it doesn't put the findings on the back burner or, as Professor Munro herself says, 'cherry pick' from the proposals. At last, a review that uses the word 'radical' with some legitimacy.

As for the Social Work Reform Board, the work of which is ongoing, Sue Kent is involved with a sub-group focusing on workload measurement as part of the proposed Employment Standards. The aim is to ensure that social workers are involved in developing a positive tool rather than further their own bureaucracy.

Adult services

Ruth Cartwright and Joe Godden are wondering what action the government is going to take now the Law Commission has published its review of adult social care law, something which could change aspects of the working lives of those of us in adult services. It is probable that any sort of response will await the conclusions of the Dilnot Commission report on funding of long-term care and that there will be some big statements about adult social care, either in the autumn or earlier.

Cuts

Social workers are continuing to contact us about the cuts, effects on pay and working conditions and the impact on service users. This gives us good information to share with policy formers and the media, so keep the information coming. BASW/CoSW, through our A&R Service, is also able to support some members in more practical ways.

Events

Joe Godden led a successful adult social work seminar in Bristol on 4 April and is running another in Staffordshire on 29 June [see the events calendar on the BASW/CoSW website]. If you would like to discuss hosting a similar event please contact Joe directly.

The student and newly-qualified social worker (NQS) conference in London is going to be a really interesting event and a must for all current, or imminent students as well as NQSWs [see more information on page 36]. Please note that you do not have to be a student or NQS to attend as there is a lot to interest others.

Policy development

BASW/CoSW's new reference groups have started to focus on their business. However, we are eager to secure the involvement of new members in the work needed to be done by these groups, which will usually keep in touch using teleconferencing and email rather than meeting in person. If you are interested in any of the reference groups please let us know. For more details see page 20.

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If you have comments on anything you have read, please get in touch.

Wales/Cymru



Assembly elections

Welsh Labour won 30 of the 60 seats in the National Assembly elections on 5 May with Welsh Conservatives becoming the second largest party with 14 seats. Plaid Cymru lost ground securing only 12 seats and although Welsh Liberal Democrats lost a large share of the vote, the party only lost one seat, leaving it with four. Welsh Labour has said it will form the Welsh Assembly Government on its own, yet seek to work with other parties on specific issues where appropriate. The ministerial team has yet to be announced.

One of our BASW Cymru Patrons, Helen Mary Jones (Plaid Cymru), lost her seat to Welsh Labour in the Llanelli constituency. On the positive side, Julie Morgan, the new Welsh Labour AM for Cardiff North, was previously a social worker in Barry and worked in a senior capacity for Barnardo's. Welsh Labour included many of the issues raised in the BASW Cymru Social Work Manifesto, so we can expect some positive developments over the next term of office.

Wales Committee

The BASW Wales Committee met on 6 May to consider the current draft Development Plan for Wales. We are keen to involve all members in taking the issues forward to improve our visibility, the quality of services and our membership levels across the country. Once finally approved in June, we will post the final Development Plan on the Wales section of the website. Engagement with existing and future members will be key to the success of these plans, so we would welcome non-committee members who can support events in their own areas. Developments will give opportunities of engagement to social workers whether they are BASW – College of Social Work members or not.

College of Social Work

By the time you read this, the outcome of the AGM debate on the future of BASW – the College of Social Work will be known. There will have been much debate and consideration

about the future of the organisation and how it can support social work across the UK. A federated structure will be necessary to support all four nations (as well as the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) to ensure that the local needs and political structures are fully recognised. In Wales, we will need to ensure that this develops and builds on current developments and reflects the specific needs here – particularly the growing powers of the National Assembly.

Staffing update

We are currently recruiting a development worker and are looking forward to the successful candidate helping to support the work of our vibrant committee in the development, focus and visibility of BASW Cymru across the country.

Partnership working

There has been continued positive engagement with our key partners and

Enillodd Llafur Cymreig 30 o'r 60 sedd yn Etholiadau'r cynulliad a gynhaliwyd ar 5 Mai gyda'r Ceidwadwyr Cymreig yn dod yr ail blaidd fwyaf gyda 14 o seddau. Collwyd tir gan Blaid Cymru gan sicrhau 12 sedd yn unig ac, er i'r Rhyddfrydwyr Democritaidd Cymreig colli canran uchel o'r bleidlais, un sedd yn unig a gollwyd ganddynt gan eu gadael gyda phedair sedd. Mae Llafur Cymreig wedi datgan ei fod am greu Llywodraeth y Cynulliad ei hun a'i bod am geisio gweithio gyda'r pleidiau eraill ar faterion penodol pan yn briodol. Ni chyhoeddwyd y tîm gweinidogaethol hyd yn hyn. Collodd un o Noddwyr BASW Cymru, Helen Mary Jones (Plaid Cymru) ei sedd i Lafur Cymreig yn etholaeth Llanelli. Ar yr ochr cadarnhaol, bu Julie Morgan, yr AC newydd dros Lafur Cymreig yn etholaeth Gogledd Caerdydd, yn weithiwr cymdeithasol yn y Bari a bu'n gweithio mewn swydd uchel gyda Barnardos. Mae Llafur Cymreig wedi cynnwys llawer o'r materion a godwyd ym Manifesto Gwaith Cymdeithasol BASW Cymru, felly gallwn ddisgwyl rhai datblygiadau cadarnhaol yn y tymor sy'n dod.

Pwyllgor Cymru

Cyfarfu'r Pwyllgor ar 6 Mai i ystyried y

Cynlluniau Datblygu drafft ar gyfer Cymru. Bydd pob aelod yn gwneud ei ran i symud pethau ymlaen er mwyn gwella'r gwelededd, ansawdd y gwasanaethau a hybu aelodaeth ar draws y wlad. Unwaith y caiff ei gymeradwyo ym Mehefin, byddaf yn ei ychwanegu at adran Cymru ar y wefan. Bydd ymrwymo'r aelodau presennol a'r rhai newydd yn allweddol i lwyddiant y cynlluniau hyn, felly mae'n bosibl i'r rhai nad ydynt yn aelodau o'r pwyllgor i gefnogi digwyddiadau yn eu hardaloedd eu hunain. Bydd y datblygiadau yn rhoi cyfle i gysylltu gyda gweithwyr cymdeithasol os ydynt yn aelodau o Goleg Gwaith Cymdeithasol - BASW ai peidio.

Coleg Gwaith Cymdeithasol

Erbyn i chi ddarllen hwn, bydd canlyniadau dyfodol Coleg Gwaith Cymdeithasol - BASW yn hysbys. Cafwyd llawer iawn o drafodaethau ac ystyriaeth am ddyfodol y mudiad a sut y gall cefnogi gwaith cymdeithasol ar hyd a lled y DU. Bydd angen cael strwythur ffederal i gefnogi pob gwlad (yn ogystal ag Ynysydd y Sianel ac Ynys Manaw) er mwyn sicrhau cydnabyddiaeth lawn o bob angen unigol a strwythur gwleidyddol. Yng Nghymru, bydd angen i ni

sicrhau bod hyn yn datblygu ac yn adeiladu ar ddatblygiadau presennol i wneud yn siŵr ei fod yn adlewyrchu anghenion penodol yma - yn arbennig o gofio pwerau cynyddol Cynulliad Cymru.

Y diweddaraaf ar Staffio

Rydym ar hyn o bryd yn recriwtio am Weithiwr Datblygu ac rwy'n edrych ymlaen at gael help yr ymgeisydd llwyddiannus i fy

Contact point



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Development worker

Vacant part time post – see advertisement on page 20

Wales administrator

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What do you think?

If you have comments on anything you have read, please get in touch.



Northern Ireland

stakeholders. In addition to promising early contact with the Care Council for Wales (CCW), we have met with the Chief Inspector of Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) and a local authority social services director, with further meetings planned with key individuals in the Welsh Assembly Government office, the Welsh Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru.

The Social Care Accolades Ceremony, hosted by the Care Council for Wales, takes place on 23 June at the City Hall in Cardiff.

Membership

We make no apologies for repeating the call for increased membership of our Association. These are difficult times – with budget cuts threatening our core values – but this is also an opportunity to share in a fundamental development of the profession which will not only safeguard our current values but enhance them.

helpu i gefnogi gwaith ein pwyllgor bywiog yn natblygiad, ffocws a gwelededd bywiog BASW Cymru ar draws y wlad.

Gweithio mewn Partneriaeth

Bu'r cyfathrebu cadarnhaol gyda'n partneriaid a'n rhandeiliaid allweddol yn parhau. Yn ychwanegol at gysylltiad cynnar addawol gyda Chyngor Gofal Cymru (CGC), rwyf wedi cwrdd â Phrif Arolygwr y CSSIW a chyfarwyddwr gwasanaethau cymdeithasol awdurdod lleol, ac mae fwy o gyfarfodydd wedi cael eu trefnu gydag unigolion allweddol yn Swyddfa Cynulliad Cymru, Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru a Chymdeithas Cyfarwyddwyr Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol Cymru. Fe gynhelir y Seremoni o Wobrwy Gwaith Cymdeithasol dan ofal CCW, ar 23 Mehefin yn Neuadd y Ddinas Caerdydd.

Aelodaeth

Nid wyf am ymddiheuro am ailadrodd y galwad i gynyddu aelodaeth ein Cymdeithas / Coleg. Rydym mewn amser anodd - gyda thoriadau mewn cyllidebau yn bygwth ein gwerthoedd craidd - ond mae hwn yn gyfle hefyd i rannu mewn datblygiad sylfaenol i'r proffesiwn a fydd nid yn unig yn diogelu ein gwerthoedd presennol ond hefyd yn eu gwella.

We are delighted to welcome Anne McAllister who took up post as our first development worker in the Northern Ireland Association of Social Workers (NIASW) team on 4 May. Her focus for the next six months is to visit as many social work offices in Northern Ireland as she can, talk to you about NIASW and hear what is happening on your patch. To invite Anne along to meet your team, please get in touch.

Assembly Elections

Local council and Assembly elections in Northern Ireland took place on 5 May and saw a low turnout, with less than 50% of those eligible to vote actually doing so. As expected, the big winners were the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and Sinn Féin – the DUP remaining the largest party. As a result the DUP has four ministerial offices – finance, health, enterprise and social development – Sinn Féin has taken education, agriculture and culture, and the Alliance Party, which also increased its vote, has two seats, representing employment and justice.

It is interesting that the DUP has opted to lead the two major offices, finance and health. With the support of Sinn Féin it should see the previously proposed budget pushed through the new Assembly regardless of opposition from smaller parties. Unfortunately, this means that we in social services and social care continue to face huge budget cuts, unless there is a sudden intervention. On this front it was

welcome to hear the new health and social care minister Edwin Poots quoted as saying: "Everything is on the table, nothing is off the table." We at NIASW certainly hope so and will be pressing ministers to spare social work services from cuts.

College of Social Work

By the time you read this our UK AGM will have taken place with two really key decisions about the College of Social Work being debated by members: the first concerning moves to form a trade union arm and the second around establishing a unified College of Social Work.

It is our hope that both these resolutions are passed and that we at NIASW can establish a College of Social Work in Northern Ireland based on the premise of a UK College with 'local expression'. This point is of key importance and will ensure that any developments here will be specific to NI. NIASW has lobbied strongly that a one-size-fits-all approach should not be adopted and we welcome the development of a federated model with a bottom up approach.

Advice & Representation

We have visited four areas across Northern Ireland and feedback from you on the ground reveals a varied picture. We have heard about direct service cuts causing concern for practitioners across programmes of care. We have also heard of significant employment contract disparities across the country for trainee social workers, which is causing real concern for those involved. We will ensure that issues raised are acted on appropriately and confidentially.

NIASW AGM

We held our NIASW AGM on 10 May and were delighted to have a good turnout from members. We launched our Advice & Representation Service in Northern Ireland and Susan Gordon and Jane Lindsay, A&R officers based in Belfast and Edinburgh, presented information on 'staying safe at work'. Susan has developed a tool to help record your activity so that those to whom it is applicable can easily demonstrate how overloaded they are. Please contact the office for a copy. We would like feedback from those who use it. We were delighted to have three new committee members elected at the AGM and would like to say a big welcome to Glynn Middleton, Margaret Dunn and Hilary Neill.

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What do you think?

To comment on anything you have read, please get in touch.

34 diary dates

A round-up of the conferences BASW is attending plus details of other forthcoming meetings and events taking place around the UK



Meetings and conferences

10 June 2011

NIASW Aids to Practice by Social Workers for Social Workers: Substance Use – Hidden Harm and Impact on Family

Derry

See advert page 26

19 & 20 June 2011

BASW Renal Special Interest Group

19th: AGM

20th: Study Day

St. James Hospital, Leeds

For further details email: lisa.robertson@fife.gov.uk

24 June 2011

BASW/CoSW in partnership with Tameside Safeguarding Children Board

Child Sexual Abuse: Intersections of Controversy

Greater Manchester

See advert page 35

24 June 2011

CISWA-UK in association with BASW/CoSW and Nagalro

Public or Private? The Future of Social Work

Austin Court, 80 Cambridge Street, Birmingham B1 2NP

See advert page 4

28 June 2011

Social work student summit

The Camden Centre, Camden Town Hall, London WC1H 9JE

See advert page 36

29 June 2011

Child Sexual Abuse: Intersections of Controversy

London

See advert page 35

29 June 2011

Adult Services Seminar

Staffordshire County Council, Tillington Training Ctr, Stafford ST16 1PS

www.basw.co.uk/events

16 September 2011

Getting Started ... and Keeping Going!

Village Hotel, Nottingham

See advert page 26

19 September 2011

The Munro Review and the Future of Child Protection

Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, London

www.basw.co.uk/events

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CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

INTERSECTIONS OF CONTROVERSY – Race – Culture – Gender –

24th June 2011
Greater Manchester

29th June 2011
London

KEY THEMES:

- LEARNING FROM SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION
 - UNDERSTANDING AND ASSESSING MALE AND FEMALE SEX OFFENDERS
- SUPPORTING AND REACHING OUT TO VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
 - THE CULTURAL AND GENDER CONTEXT OF SEXUAL ABUSE
 - MAKING COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONS SAFE
 - PROMOTING PRO-ACTIVE CAMPAIGNS FOR CHANGE
- RETAINING OUR VALUE-BASE WHEN DEALING WITH EMOTIONALLY CHALLENGING OFFENDERS
 - USING REFLECTIVE PRACTICE TO PROMOTE BEST PRACTICE

CHAIR FOR THE DAY:

Fran Fuller: Chairperson of BASW – The College of Social Work; Head of Social Work, University of Derby

SPEAKERS

Siobhan Maclean has written extensively on reflective practice.

Michael Sheath is principal practitioner for the Lucy Faithfull Foundation and consultant on adult sex offenders.

Dr. Surinder Guru teaches on the Social Work programmes at the University of Birmingham.

Janet Foulds, Johanna Collins and **Phillip Morris** all work for Derby City Children's Services Department.

Rob Jackson is Assistant Director of The Children's Society region in the north west

This event will explore practice-based issues with experienced clinicians and practitioners and will consider the need to maintain our values in the face of appalling child abuse. The event platforms some leading practitioners who will provide specific and practical skills to help frontline practitioners and managers but will also be of use to trainers and policy-makers.

Delegate fees:

BASW – The College of Social Work members: £25.00

Non-BASW/CoSW Social Workers/Clinical Workers/Others: £55.00 • Students (unwaged): £15.00

This event is open to any staff in social work, social care and allied professions.

It is costed to reflect ethical events for frontline workers, but all are welcome to attend.

To join BASW – The College of Social Work visit www.basw.co.uk

To book for this event, please download and return the booking form at: www.basw.co.uk/events and email to Sarah Richards: Email: s.richards@basw.co.uk Fax: 0121 622 4860 or post to BASW – The College of Social Work, 16 Kent Street, Birmingham, B5 6RD

**LIMITED PLACES ARE AVAILABLE SO PLEASE
APPLY EARLY TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT**

The Greater Manchester event is
presented in partnership with
Tameside Safeguarding Children Board



Social work student summit

Surviving and thriving as a student or newly qualified social worker in a time of austerity

Venue: **London, Camden Centre**
Date: **Tuesday 28th June 2011**
Time: **10.00am–4.00pm**

Key themes

Equipping you with tools, skills and knowledge to work with aggressive service users, to use supervision effectively, develop your emotional resilience and to learn about the role for social workers in community engagement.

Chair for the day

Ruth Cartwright, BASW/CoSW England Manager

Speakers:

Maurice Glasman – community activist, senior lecturer, and labour party advisor on the "Big Society".

Helen Donnellan – author of *The Survival Guide for Newly Qualified Child and Family Social Workers: Hitting the Ground Running*.

Claudia Megele – emotional intelligence and resilience in practice.

Jim Wild – trainer on working with service users who are aggressive – keeping safe.

First year of practice social worker **Winston Morson** on what is great about social work.

Social work student **Andrew Ellery** – use and develop your networks.

Dan Morton on the Social Work Action Network.

Marcia Lawrence-Russell BASW/CoSW Advice and Representation.

Delegate fees:

BASW/CoSW members– £15.00

Non-members – Students: £20.00 / NQSW: £25.00

(fees include lunch and refreshments)

This event is open to any staff in social work, social care and allied professions.

It is costed to enable students and newly qualified workers to attend.

Exhibitors: a range of recruitment agencies and councils will be present to discuss your employment needs (subject to confirmation).

To book for this event, please download and return the booking form at: www.basw.co.uk/events

Contact details: Tel: 0121 622 8411

Email: studentconference2011@basw.co.uk