

Demands from staff to end the crisis in social work

Social workers, occupational therapists and para-professionals across Scotland work under stressful circumstances with increasing workloads, unfilled vacancies, and greater inequality and poverty in the community. This is compounded by poor IT systems, reduced access to training and management acceptance that staff will regularly work long hours.

There is an urgent need for additional funding for social work services across Scotland and the crisis will worsen unless issues impacting staff are addressed. These demands are the minimum that are required. With UNISON branches, we will raise these demands in local authorities and at a national level.

Our demands for safer and better social work rights-based profession and service

1. A review of social worker tasks within job evaluation structures recognising the additional legislative responsibilities that social workers have absorbed over recent years.
 2. Commit to meeting the Mandatory Supported Year provisions for newly qualified social workers (NQSW) including guaranteed protected caseloads in first year with review at end of first year.
 3. A clear and consistent career structure for frontline social workers, recognising post-qualification experience and further qualifications, with enhanced pay. (Branches should review the employer's current career structure and identify specific improvements, considering NQSW, social worker, senior practitioner, specialist posts and teams, front-line manager role, etc.)
 4. All social workers to be given the opportunity to pursue post graduate qualifications within 2 years of qualifying.
 5. In-house training programmes (C/P, Adult Support and Protection /Court Skills etc,) guaranteed for all social workers with regular refresher courses.
 6. 'Grow your own' schemes to provide a route for para-professionals to attain a social worker or occupational therapist qualification, with an agreed number of places available each year, including but limited by the Scottish Government's Graduate Apprenticeship Scheme.
 7. Agreed maximum caseloads and effective workload management to ensure caseloads are manageable within contracted hours and are balanced with preventative, relationship based cases, alongside complex and crisis work.
 8. A reduction in administrative tasks to enable social workers to spend more time with people.
 9. Reflective supervision from a qualified social worker every 2 months as a minimum, distinct from line manager case supervision.
 10. Protected time of at least 5 days/35hrs formal training each year.
 11. Flexible working that meets the needs of social workers and our communities.
 12. Paid overtime if social workers need to do more than their contracted hours, to keep people safe.
- We will also pursue support for these demands at national level including with CoSLA, the NSWA when established, the SSSC and the Scottish Government.**
- A nationally agreed salary for newly qualified social workers (for up to a year post qualifying) to be applied across all councils.
 - SSSC codes of practice for employers should include the above.
 - A set of standards for SW education that prepares social workers for practice in a human rights-based profession and service.