

BASW UK summary position statement on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



Date of adoption of statement:
July 26th 2021

Review date: By 30 July 2022

Statement owner: Policy Ethics and Human Rights Committee



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Why are we putting this statement out?

BASW celebrates the richness and diversity of social workers and the societies we serve across the UK. We recognise that diversity of thought and widening the membership of the social work profession - and BASW - enrich our profession and enable social work to support the needs, expectations and potentials of the diverse communities we serve.

For this to be more than words, BASW must be open, relevant and welcoming to social workers of all backgrounds and identities - and a credible leader in the promotion of inclusive social work practice across the UK.

Fundamental to this is setting, promoting and embedding common principles of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) across all our work. This statement commits BASW to challenge oppression, exclusion and discrimination within the association within social work and within social work education. It also commits us to raising social work's voice, perspectives and influence on issues of EDI and oppression across wider society.

This statement lays out common principles for BASW as a UK body. Each nation will also have its own action plan to tackle the challenges and celebrate the distinctive diversity of each society.

Our EDI, anti-oppression and universal rights-based commitment laid out in this statement in relation to social work also inform our work to promote human rights and challenge injustice and inequality more widely, across the UK and internationally.

An embracing approach to Equality Diversity and Inclusion

BASW's approach to EDI is all embracing, recognising the need for actions against all forms of oppression and breaches of human rights experienced by people of diverse identities and protected characteristics.

BASW UK complies with the legal provisions and definitions within the Equality Act 2010¹ and exceeds these² in our ethical and practice guidance for social work and social workers. Our position reflects the widened definitions of characteristics within the ethical principles of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) which are now embedded in our updated Code of Ethics (2021) (<https://www.basw.co.uk/about-basw/code-ethics>)

Social workers have a responsibility to challenge oppression on any basis, including (but not limited to) age, capacity, civil status, class, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, gender identity, language, nationality (or lack of), political beliefs, poverty, race, relationship status, religion, sex, sexual orientation or spiritual beliefs.

(BASW Code of Ethics 2021 section 2.2 Social Justice (1) Challenging Oppression)

Intersectionality

BASW will seek to make long-lasting progress in our EDI work by adopting an intersectional approach.

Intersectionality recognises the multiple levels and ways in which discrimination and inequalities operate and are experienced. A person or group may be affected by overlapping and interdependent systems and actions of discrimination or disadvantage. Intersectionality also acknowledges that everyone has their own, unique experiences of discrimination and oppression and as social workers, we seek to understand and to act in response to that experience.

Social workers working to the BASW Code of Ethics embed anti-discriminatory and anti-oppression approaches in their practice. They identify and address the interconnected factors that may disadvantage and marginalise individuals and groups. They use advocacy, personalised support and strengths-based approaches to enable people to access their rights, overcome and/or seek redress for injustice.

Priority actions 2021/22

We recognize that statements are not enough and that it is imperative for all of us in BASW, individually and collectively, to bring about change. We urge members and partner organisations in social work to take direct action and stand in solidarity with those that are oppressed, and we will continue to provide ways for social workers to engage in action.

BASW has adopted an ambitious EDI project action plan July 2021 – June 2022 which also covers our aims for impact on social work and on wider society. The project plan includes detailed actions under the following objectives:

¹ The Equality Act 2010 applies to Great Britain and not in Northern Ireland which has less extensive protections. BASW UK works to the provisions of the GB Equality Act as its minimum (legal requirement)

² BASW exceeds the provisions of the Equality Act in relation to social work practice and ethical expectations and conforms to a) the wider definition of protected characteristics in the International Federation of Social Workers ethical global principles, and b) to the principle of indivisible human rights as embodied in the European Convention of Human Rights and the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

- *BASW's governance structures will represent and serve the diversity of our membership.*
- *BASW's services will be inclusive and meet the needs of our diverse membership.*
- *BASW will have an open and safe staff culture that recognises the value of diversity in the characteristics and contributions of all staff.*
- *BASW will act effectively and show leadership to make social work practice across the UK more inclusive and anti-oppressive.*
- *BASW will shape and influence social work education to make it more inclusive and anti-oppressive.*
- *BASW will show consistent, strong 'thought leadership' and influence on EDI issues for members and beyond, promoted through diverse writing, social media, other digital reach and publishing.*
- *BASW will promote and support the development of anti-oppressive, inclusive leadership across social work and act as a role model for the sector.*
- *BASW will work with partners and allies to bring about change and progress within BASW and across the sector.*
- *BASW will identify and run and/or collaborate on priority campaigns for change for inclusive and anti-oppressive social work and a better society.*

An update on all of BASW UK's EDI actions can be found on the BASW EDI web page (to be published July 2021).

Specific and amplifying statements

BASW will issue statements about specific oppressions as we develop our EDI work and deepen activities in all areas.

In addition, statements of amplification from BASW's national standing committees and teams may set priorities and emphases within country contexts and respond to country members' experiences and expectations.

Members can send comments on this statement to comms@basw.co.uk