

From: CollegeChair
Sent: 25 January 2011 14:29
To: 'f.fuller
Cc: h.dawson
Subject: A way forward
Attachments: IB open letter to BASW members 25.01.11.pdf; Letter to F Fuller cc BASW Council and H Dawson 25.01.11.pdf

Dear BASW Council

We attach two letters and look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes

on behalf of The College Of Social Work

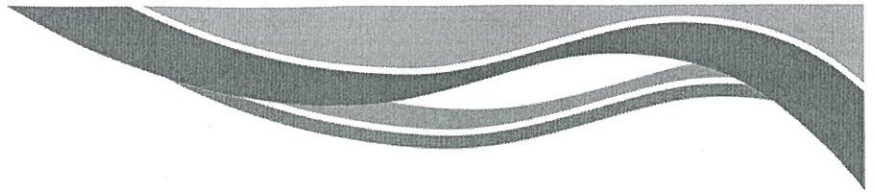
**THE COLLEGE OF
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THE COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK



The College of Social Work
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Fran Fuller
Chair
BASW
16 Kent Street
Birmingham
B5 6RD

25 January 2011

Dear Fran

We are writing to suggest that both our organisations request mediation so that we can resolve our disagreements and get back to the important negotiations that will lead to convergence and then merger once The College is a legal entity.

We have investigated independent sources of mediation for organisations, and the Centre for Disputes Resolution is a reputable organisation. They have quoted £6,500 for the service of an experienced mediator. This breaks down as £250 appointment fee + 5 hours prep and + 8 hours mediation @ £500/hour = £6750. The costs would be shared equally between us.

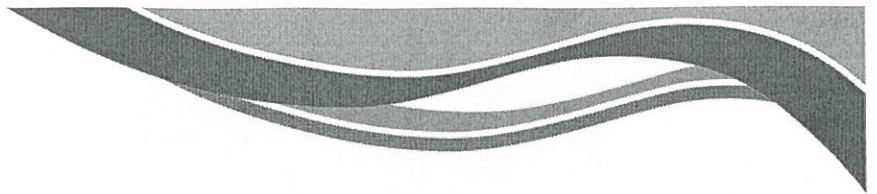
Please can you confirm your willingness to engage in the mediation process.

Best wishes

Professor Corinne May-Chahal and Maurice Bates
Interim Co-Chairs

Cc BASW Council Members and Hilton Dawson

THE COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK



AN OPEN LETTER TO BASW MEMBERS FROM THE INTERIM BOARD OF THE COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

Dear friends and colleagues,

We are taking the unusual step of writing an open letter to all BASW members to ask you to consider current developments and work with us to avoid dividing the profession at such a crucial time for social work, for the people who use social work services and their carers.

Members of the Interim Board are all qualified social workers except for one of us, a service user who also works in social work education. We were all recruited through an open recruitment process for the initial set up of The College of Social Work. Two of us are BASW members.

The Interim Board is tasked with guiding the development of The College as a body that will be led by, accountable to, and work for the social work profession. Our role is to get The College to the stage when it can open for subscribing members. Subscribing members will then elect the Board of The College, and determine its future direction.

We are building a College for the profession that will be sustainable through membership subscriptions, will provide strong leadership for the profession by the profession, and will ensure that the profession takes charge of its own destiny. We want to do this with BASW and remain committed to pursuing convergence talks with BASW, leading to merger once The College is established as a legal entity.

We are sure you will have a lot of questions for us, and we would be very pleased to meet with you or to respond in writing. We have also attached some questions and answers to those questions we can anticipate.

Please email questions or requests for meetings to collegechair@scie.org.uk

We look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,

Kate Arnett, Maurice Bates, Graham Brittain, Jo Cleary, Suzy Croft,
Professor Patricia Higham, Dave Hill, Joe Z Mairura, Professor Corinne May-Chahal,
Jamie Middleton, Andy O'Beirne, Professor Angus Skinner, Alison Tasker

Q&As

Q Why was SCIE asked to develop The College?

A SCIE is an independent charity. It has no vested interest in The College and it has a track record of supporting work to develop independent organisations. SCIE brought together a Development Group of key stakeholders, including BASW. The Development Group consulted widely with social workers and with people who use social work services and carers. The Development Group also established the process to recruit the Interim Chairs and Interim Board of The College.

Q What have you been doing? We've not noticed you being active and now BASW Council say they have no trust in you. Why should we listen to you?

A We have been through a proper process to build the initial stages of The College with the profession. We are adamant that we are building a membership organisation, so it would be inappropriate for us to speak out for the profession until we have social workers who are actively engaged with The College as prospective members.

The Development Group, which included BASW, put together a consultation paper about the proposed vision for The College, and organised a very thorough consultation on this vision between May and October 2010. This consultation involved 10 regional events with social workers, further regional events with people who use social work services, and an online questionnaire. The findings of these consultations are all available on our website, www.collegeofsocialwork.org as are all the minutes of the Development Group.

We also conducted an open process to recruit our Interim Chairs and Interim Board. BASW members took part in the selection process of the Interim Chairs.

Q But BASW is a membership body. Why can't we build The College?

A We can't tell BASW what you can and can't do, or should or should not do. BASW had the idea of a college which it took to the Social Work Task Force. The Task Force made this one of its recommendations. Government asked SCIE to nurture The College into existence, with the support of all stakeholders. We have always wanted to work with BASW and to work towards convergence, and merger once The College is a legal entity. There have been some serious glitches along the way, for example when BASW held a referendum and appeared to be setting up a separate College. But from July, BASW has talked about convergence, and we endorsed our commitment to this at our meeting in November following a presentation by BASW officers. The offer to work towards convergence leading to merger once The College is a legal entity remains open.

Q Why is The College focussing on membership services and not on professional issues?

A The College must build a membership base in order that it can speak up for the profession. In order to get a membership base it is vital to provide a level of membership benefits/services that social workers will be willing to pay for. Our extensive consultation indicated that social workers would not pay a lot, and would not

pay for more than one subscription. Hence we are building a model that includes a subcontract to UNISON for trade union services and our continued belief that we should also converge with BASW. We know 40,000 social workers do want trade union services as they belong to UNISON.

Q Why not develop as a trade union yourselves like BASW is planning to do?

A This would take a considerable length of time and could also be costly. The trade union would be in competition with existing trade unions who have hard won negotiation rights with employers. Previous attempts to set up separate unions for social workers have failed and we do not want to direct energy away from the main task.

Q But why UNISON? What about social workers who belong to other unions?

A UNISON is the trade union with negotiation rights that has the largest number of social workers in membership. We have asked UNISON to look into providing gateway deals to other trade unions, including UCU, as part of the work to develop a Service Level Agreement with UNISON. The College of Occupational Therapists has a deal with UNISON that works well.

Q UNISON doesn't represent professionals. How will the deal provide the level of representation that we need?

A UNISON does represent professionals as well as a very wide range of other employees. We will encourage and support social workers in membership of The College to become shop stewards, and to act as expert witnesses for social work colleagues. If convergence and then merger with BASW do happen, there would be scope to use BASW's Advice and Representation service to advise shop stewards and to represent Independent Social Workers. Such a combination of the strengths of UNISON and BASW would build a very powerful College; that is what the profession wants.

Q BASW Council say that the deal with UNISON is illegal

A We are advised that it is not. It is possible that the BASW Council are misinformed about the nature of the deal. At the moment we are developing a formal agreement that will cover issues around sharing information about members, access to other unions and safeguards to protect the independent policy positions of The College and of UNISON.

BASW were part of the process of setting out a specification of requirements from a trade union – this work was done during the Development Group phase. BASW raised some concerns most of which were accommodated by the Interim Board.

Q You are saying you will provide a similar range of services to those provided by BASW. This is unfair competition. Surely it is wasteful?

A We have listed a range of services that all colleges for other professions provide, and that social workers have told us during the consultations that they want. We want to converge with BASW, and this would avoid any duplication.

The College of Social Work will also do work that BASW has not done and does not seem to be planning to do.

- It will provide a professional public engagement service, providing positive stories to the media about the difference that social work makes, providing spokespeople from its membership when things go wrong to speak up for social work, and liaising and advising to employers.
- It will take forward the work of the Social Work Reform Board on standards to make sure these are embedded in how employers support social workers, and in how social workers are educated and developed at every stage of our careers.

Q You've got money from the government. Are you independent?

A We have been given start up funds. These have gone to SCIE, which is an independent charity. The Interim Board is accountable via SCIE for the use of these funds to develop The College. Once The College is an independent legal entity, almost all its income will come from membership subscriptions.

Q You have not been defending social workers. You haven't spoken out about the cuts. How will you provide leadership when you don't speak up?

A We need to build our membership base before we can speak for social workers. We need to make sure that it is our social work members who speak up, not simply the Interim Board or our very small temporary staff team. That's why we are recruiting prospective members now. We hope you will join us.

Q BASW Council says we need a potent college with a statutory role. Why don't you want to be statutory?

A Colleges for other professions do not have a statutory role. We are therefore not sure it is necessary, and may, in fact, jeopardise the future sustainability of the College as the law could be changed at any time. We also know that it is very time consuming to acquire such a role unless it is already government policy which it is not.

Q You don't cover the UK. BASW voted for a UK College.

A At the moment our remit covers England. If we were to converge with BASW this would enable UK coverage, in time. If each of the countries of the UK wants its own College, a federated structure could then be developed.

Q Why has The College appointed people to jobs without any transparent process?

A The College has made no permanent staff appointments. In this set up phase, all staff are temporary/interim, and are appointed by SCIE. Recruitment to the posts that do exist has been a mix of using SCIE's network of approved consultants, existing SCIE staff with relevant expertise to support the college, and proper recruitment processes with interview panels. We have a mix of social workers and specialist expertise, including business development in the not-for-profit sector, and communications. Functions such as finance, HR and communications require specialist skills. In due course, when The College moves out of its start up phase, it will recruit its first Chief Executive, who in turn will recruit a staff team. All recruitment will be open and college membership will be actively involved with recruitment of senior positions.