

SPEAKING OUT

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

No 'disgrace' in BASW adopting IUSW motion voted by members

We were bemused to read the letter from Judi Lyons in PSW, May/June 2026: 'Work with, not against Israeli social workers.' This expresses disappointment at "the motion passed at BASW's AGM", without saying what motion is being referred to, or when it was passed. The motion, which welcomed the censure of the Israeli Union of Social Workers (IUSW) by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), and resolved that BASW would call for the expulsion of the Israeli Union from IFSW, was actually passed by members at BASW's Policy GM in May 2025.

As the outcome of this meeting was not reported in PSW at the time, nor fully reported on BASW's website, and this letter complaining about how members voted was published a year later, PSW readers may well be confused.

The writer says the motion emphasises the one-sidedness of the debate and implies that it calls into question whether BASW is an independent professional body. This makes no sense at all. As

with all motions at BASW's general meetings, all BASW members were able to debate and vote on this motion, thereby influencing BASW's policy.

As the members at the meeting voted for the motion, it is not a disgrace that it became BASW policy to call within the IFSW for the Israeli Union to be expelled, contrary to the writer's view. What would have been a disgrace was if BASW had ignored its members' wishes and not made this its policy.

It is a disgrace that another motion on Israel/Palestine, passed by members at the 2023 AGM, has not been fully actioned. Members were informed at the 2025 Policy GM that the position paper on Israeli apartheid called for by the motion would be published imminently, but it is still yet to appear.

We call for members' wishes to be respected and for the immediate publication by BASW of this important paper.

Guy Shennan (proposer, 2023 motion; second, 2025 motion)

Abyd Quinn Aziz (second, 2023 motion)

Motion motivated by principles

The motion placed before BASW to move that IFSW seek the expulsion of the Israeli Union of social workers (IUSW) was not motivated by anti-Israeli sentiments, but by social work principles. It was precipitated by fidelity to our international code of social work ethics.

It was not intended to condemn any specific practitioner, which we are not qualified to do.

Rather, IUSW, having been

censured twice by the IFSW, has failed to make any representation to their government regarding the deployment of social workers in any form of military service.

I would refer the writer to IFSW Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles 2018 Section 9 (Professional integrity) sub section 9.3 regarding militarism and the use of weapons.

This is not a discretionary clause, and it is our collective

duty as members of a global professional community to take every step to ensure that all principles are seen to be honoured and upheld, otherwise we risk having our collective professional integrity being diminished.

As our professional association, BASW is clearly the conduit to take this forward into the global social work community.

David Harrop

Bill risks criminalising parents

The bill to ban conversion therapy sounds entirely reasonable. No enlightened person wants to convert gay and lesbian people into heterosexual people and any practices that do so should be banned.

But does this actually go on, and if it does isn't it already illegal? The answer to the first is rarely, and the second yes.

The only reason this bill has been presented is to insist on an affirmative model for children presenting with gender difficulties. In other words, there should be no questioning if a child says she is a boy when she is a biological girl.

Therapists will be given minimal protection if the child is in therapy, but not so parents. If they challenge they put themselves at risk of an investigation leading to possible criminal charges.

Even if there are no criminal charges, the investigation itself will be devastating. Surely this puts social workers in a very difficult position?

The bill mentions gender identity as if it is a real thing for everyone. If you believe it is then you must believe a child can be born in the wrong body.

Many people like myself do not have a gender identity. I am simply a biologically female and I have yet to find anyone who can explain what gender identity is without lapsing into stereotypes.

Kay Beaumont

HAVE YOUR SAY

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