

Witness Name: Samantha Baron

Statement No.:1

Exhibits: 0

Dated: 24 September 2025

UK COVID-19 INQUIRY

WITNESS STATEMENT OF Samantha Baron on behalf of the British Association of Social Workers

I, Professor Samantha Baron, of the British Association of Social Workers (BASW), Wellesley House, 37 Waterloo Street, Birmingham, B2 5PP, will say as follows: -

1. I am the Interim Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the British Association of Social Workers (BASW)
2. I was appointed as Interim CEO of BASW on 15 September 2025 following the departure of the previous CEO, Dr Ruth Allen, on 5 September 2025. As Interim CEO, I am responsible to the Board for all aspects of the organisation. I make this statement on behalf of BASW, and I confirm that I am duly authorised to do so.
3. I am an Emeritus Professor in Social Work with considerable experience as a social worker, having qualified more than 40 years ago. Initially practising within the criminal justice system as a probation officer, I then moved to work in statutory mental health services as Head of Service at a north-west local authority, before joining academia, where I held a number of positions including the roles of Professor of Social Work at Manchester Metropolitan University and then at The Open University from 2013 to 2022. As a knowledge exchange Professor, I was a key advisor to the Department of Health and Social Care ("DHSC") in establishing the social work regulator (England). I was also a confidential advisor to the Chief Social Worker for Adults, and I advised on the policy-practice-evidence interface, as well as on the establishment of structures and processes necessary for practice excellence.

4. I served as Vice Chair and then Chair of the Joint University Council of Applied Social Sciences from 2013 until January 2020. The Joint University Council is an independent body that advises government on matters relating to social work and social work education. As part of those roles, I was a member of the following: the DfE Stakeholder Group, the DfE Stakeholder Management Group for the development and implementation of the post-qualifying framework for children and families social work and the DfE Stakeholder Management Group for the implementation of the workforce regulator now known as Social Work England. All three groups focused on the development of social work for children and families and were not in any way connected to children and families' experiences of social work during the Covid-19 pandemic
5. As Chair of the Joint University Council from 2017 until 2020, I regularly advised Whitehall and Westminster, through informal mechanisms, in respect of calls for evidence and provision of evidence at All Party Groups and Select Committees. I am the author of the DHSC Practice Framework for Strengths Based Practice published in 2015. After leaving academia, I returned to practice as Director of Quality & Improvement, for a large English local authority, focusing on supporting practitioners in their everyday work and developing practice models. I then joined BASW in October 2023 as National Director of BASW Cymru. I held this role until my current appointment as Interim CEO.
6. I confirm that I have considered the witness statement submitted by my predecessor, Dr Ruth Allen, for Module 8 of the UK Covid-19 Inquiry on Children and Young People. The witness statement is based on the records of the organisation, consisting of public statements by BASW, materials such as guidance produced by BASW, correspondence, emails, contemporaneous notes and member surveys.
7. I adopt the contents of the statement in their entirety and confirm that I have no further information or observations to add to the witness statement of Dr Allen. The facts and matters contained within that statement, derived from both BASW and external sources, are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.
8. As outlined in my professional background, I have worked with DHSC and stakeholders in Wales. My involvement with these organisations covered the relevant

period of the pandemic and I was involved in work on adult social services over this time. I can confirm that this has not impacted my views about social work and children's social services decision-making during the pandemic.

9. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the social workers who undertook their duties to the public throughout this period of the pandemic.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that proceedings may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief in its truth.

Personal Data

Signed: _____

Dated: _____ 24 September 2025