



## **PROFILE AND CURRICULUM VITAE OF NOMINEE**

### **IFSW Position to which you seek nomination**

**President – Europe region**

### **Candidate's Name and Country**

**Dr Ruth Allen – United Kingdom**

### **Social Work and Other Educational Qualifications (include institution and date)**

BA (Hons) Geography- University of Oxford - 1987

Master of Social Work and CQSW – University of Sussex – Distinction - 1994

Approved Social Worker (under Mental Health 1983) – CCETSW - 1997

PGDip Applied Systemic Theory – Tavistock and Portman/University of East London - 1999

SCIE Social Care Leadership Development Programme - 2006

Professional Doctorate University of Sussex - 2008

PGDip – Executive Coaching and Mentoring - 2021 – Present (in process)

### **Professional Affiliations**

Registered Social Worker in England 2003

Member Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations

Member of the British Association of Social Workers

Associate member – Association of Coaching

### **Professional Leadership Experience over the past decade**

#### **2007 – 2016: Director of Social Work in integrated National Health Service (NHS) and Social Care Mental Health Trust in South West London, UK.**

- Led and developed social work practice and professional improvement of a c.two hundred social workers in a large organisation serving a population of 1.2 million people. As a social worker of 13 years when I started, I further developed my social work skills and knowledge in diverse fields. I aimed to bring a unified, values-based social work perspective, challenging institutional practices, promoting personalization and self-determination.
- Supervised and developed social work leads across five local authorities and in specialist areas of practice within the NHS (e.g., forensic, children and adolescents, sensory impairment, learning disabilities, dementia)
- Coordinated large conferences for social workers, other professionals and people using services.
- Developed and led on strategy for coproduction with people with lived experience of services and their carers/families, championing a rights and self-determination, strengths-based approach across the Trust
- Led and managed rights-focused application of mental health law across the Trust
- Undertook a full range of senior executive tasks such as recruitment, performance reporting, use of data, investigations, handling complaints, presenting the Board etc.

During this period, I also fulfilled other social work leadership roles in the UK including:

**From 2012 – 2015** Mental health Faculty lead at the (then) College of Social Work for England. Author of *The Role of the Social Worker in Adult Mental Health Services* (2014) and ‘Social Work for Better Mental Health’ (2016)

**2014 – 2016** Part time Research Fellow at St Georges, University of London. Research into high instance of domestic violence amongst women inpatient psychiatric wards. (*Mantovani, N & Allen, R. (2017) – Improving Responses to domestic violence in secondary mental health services in Wandsworth. A mixed-methods study. London: WWCCG.*)

**2008 – Present** Professional trainer and learning event facilitator for social workers including in leadership skills, personality disorder, mental capacity, child protection and mental health, co-production and rights-based practice.

### **2016-Present Chief Executive Officer (CEO), British Association of Social Workers (BASW)**

I provide professional social work and organisational leadership for the association across the four nations of the UK. I cover a full range of CEO duties and am responsible for the seventy-five staff who are capably managed day to day by a team of nine senior leaders. Through this delegated structure, I lead BASW’s diverse activities:

- Advice and representation service for members and managing trade union representation staff on behalf of our partner, the Social Workers Union (UK)). I lead on the strategic relationship with the Union.
- Professional development and training
- Being the voice of social work in policy, political lobbying, media work etc.
- Research and partnerships with universities.
- Policy and position statement development – domestic and international
- Professional Social Work magazine - oversight
- Conferences for members and others and regular contributions
- Professional and academic publishing; including editorial board leadership on *British Journal of Social Work*
- Disbursement of International Development Fund for knowledge exchange and innovation across countries
- Developing better support for our diverse membership e.g., stages of career, types of work and identities
- Ensuring an effective association for each of the nations – Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales/Cymru, England,
- Ensuring BASW and social workers around the UK are aware of BASW’s role in IFSW e.g., celebrating World Social Work Day and providing bursaries for IFSW events.

Core business and management responsibilities in my role include: Budget management; performance and activity reporting to Council (the Board) for assurance; overseeing the UK risk register; ensuring an effective membership growth and retention strategy; effective human resource/people management and staff development;

BASW has a UK Chair and a Council (Board of Directors) elected from the membership. This is a crucial relationship and requires excellent governance. I work very closely with elected members to ensure they and staff are aligned in our priorities and ambitions for the association.

While being CEO of BASW is a demanding role, I am applying for the Presidency with the full support of BASW Council following restructuring our leadership team to ensure I have more capacity for external leadership activities.

### **Current activities related to IFSW in my BASW role**

I am the main representative of BASW (Head of Delegation) to IFSW Europe and Global meetings, working alongside elected member representatives. I have diligently attended all European and Global delegates meetings since I took up my post in the association in 2016. I have recently been elected to the IFSW Europe Executive Committee and hosted the Executive in UK in January. I represent IFSW within the Council of Europe Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations (CINGO) and report on this to IFSW Europe delegates. BASW provide me with the time to do this. I liaise with colleagues in IFSW Europe frequently such as including IFSW colleagues in our UK conference 24 on Sustainability.

### **National Association and Leadership Experience over the past decade**

I have been a member of the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) for all my career. I have been committed

to the importance of a unifying professional association across the UK (indeed, across all nations), upholding the values and ethics of social work across all fields of practice, as a peer support community, as a powerful voice for the profession in government and with employers and as an advocate for human rights and social justice for the people we serve. In my previous work roles, I have promoted BASW and promoted IFSW and I see this advocacy for the importance of social work's collective and international identity as a leadership responsibility.

As described above, I have led the professional association on the Executive side for almost 8 years, working in tandem with successive Chairs, elected Council members and many more of our 22000 members. I am fully committed to the ongoing development of the national association and my involvement in IFSW has inspired and improved my leadership of the association.

### **Community/Volunteer and Leadership Experience over the past decade**

- Charity Trustee and professional advisor for 6 years on ThinkAhead, a social work education charity which has created new roles for social workers in the field of mental health
- Coordinator of the Social Care Strategic Network for Mental Health, hosting peer support forums including through Covid and now returning to organizing restorative leadership residencies and other events.
- I am the volunteer Vice Chair of the CINGO member committee on the Rights of the Child, representing social work and the committee (which is multidisciplinary) within the political bodies of Council of Europe.

Outside of social work, I have been involved in community campaigning for social justice over for many years. Between 2008 – 2018 and again more recently, I was substantially involved in leading a campaign to preserve a Latin American and diverse ethnic market in North London when people faced displacement from their source of income, destruction of heritage and negation of their ethnic and cultural identities and value to our neighbourhood. The campaign brought together a community coalition and led ultimately to legal action in our favour. Plans were dropped. A Community Trust has been formed to develop this key site in ways inclusive for the community.

**Are you aware of the description, role and responsibilities attached to the position you wish to have within the IFSW Executive? YES:**

**If the answer is YES, please respond to the following questions:**

#### **a) What are the three most important responsibilities towards IFSW:**

- To attend, contribute and provide regional reports to the IFSW (global) Executive Committee and General Meetings. *I aim to have a very good working relationship with Executive committee colleagues.*
- To contribute to the global aims of IFSW including the accomplishment of the IFSW global Action Plan goals, and to undertake activities on behalf of the global President and Executive, as appropriate and by agreement.
- To work within the IFSW Constitution and By Laws in respect of regional structure, operations, fiduciary responsibilities and good governance.

#### **b) What are the three most important responsibilities towards your Region?**

- To lead the development of the Regional structure and operations consistent with the IFSW Constitution and By Laws. *This includes managing finances very effectively and supporting growth in income.*
- To support and monitor individual member country activities with respect to:
  - Establishment of practices which encourage/enable ethical social work behaviour;
  - Human rights activities;
  - Promotion of excellence in social work education

*An enabler of this will be to become a respected, responsive and accessible leader who can facilitate, assist and empower member associations to develop and tackle issues in their countries*

- To provide leadership to encourage and support communication, exchange, collaboration and meetings between member organizations in the region. *This includes ensuring member associations in the region can contribute effectively and are able to demonstrate and use their talents and raise their issues.*

**c) What are the three most important responsibilities towards your national association?**

- To maintain strong communications about my IFSW activities within BASW optimize benefit to BASW.
- To identify early any potential conflicts of interest that may arise (e.g., a difference of policy position between IFSW Europe & BASW) enabling BASW and me to manage the situation.
- To ensure I maintain my obligations towards BASW and towards IFSW are in an effective balance.

**Please demonstrate:**

- **Commitment to the goals of IFSW as laid down in the Constitution**

I have read the Constitution and By-Laws which state the aims of IFSW to support social workers are to:

*make a unique, professional and critical contribution to society. They facilitate sustainable social outcomes that enable people and their communities to reach their potential for this and future generations.*

....through the following aims... (to which I provide a brief response below)

- *Partnerships: Proactively building internal and external partnerships with people who use social work ... etc*

I refer you to the evidence from my past and current work experience (see section on Director of Social Work and CEO of BASW roles) of championing strengths-base practices, self-determination and coproduction between practitioners and people using services, recognising people's expertise and contribution not only to exercise choice and control for themselves, but to develop and improve practice and services at macro levels. I refer you also to previous descriptions of my activism to promote inclusive communities.

I have worked in wide ranging partnerships both within social work and across professions and sectors and as my work testimony shows. I have committed myself to this. My work within IFSW Europe delegates meetings and now in the Executive, as a representative and elected Standing Committee member in CINGO and other activities, demonstrate my commitment to international collaboration and solidarity.

- *Action: Facilitating international and regional cooperation for shared learning and joint action.*

This is one of my main motivations in running for President now and previously was the reason for becoming CINGO representative for IFSW. I want to be more of a part of IFSW Europe and Global's unique role in bringing social workers together for support and knowledge sharing across nations - through academic research, practice wisdom, indigenous knowledge and expertise from lived experience of services. I am dedicated to working humbly and with great curiosity with colleagues across the world, to share, listen and promote cooperation. I am particularly keen to play an active part in decolonizing social work education and the western, post-colonial practice models and norms that persist. New ways of knowing and practicing need more recognition in all contemporary societies. This is an active area of work for me in BASW and in CINGO.

- *Policy: Developing ethical statements and policies that enhance best social work practice.*

All the policy work in BASW that I oversee is aligned with BASW's Code of Ethics which is turn are founded in IFSW ethical principles. We also promote international principles of social work ethics to others. For instance, during Covid we drew extensively on these ethical principles when working with governments and employers on difficult policy choices affecting social work and society. One of the main purposes of a member organisation within IFSW is to promote and create statements of ethics and to promote practice that is imbued with our shared values. I am committed to this approach to social work practice and as President I will contribute as needed to policy development and drafting.

- *Advocacy: Advocating at global, regional and national levels for social justice, and individual, group, civic and cultural human rights. Advocating professional social work values, standards, ethics, human rights, recognition, training and working conditions.*

I have advocated for these values throughout my career in UK context. I now have the opportunity to do the same internationally through my work in IFSW and CINGO/Council of Europe. The latter years has widened my knowledge of human rights advocacy across Europe, given me many contacts and allies, and together with the knowledge and partnerships in IFSW, I believe I can turn my commitment to advocacy of social work values and ethics into more effective promotion and influence at European and global levels.

- **Possession of language(s) capabilities (preferably bilingual)**

I am a native speaker/writer of English and have capabilities in academic writing to Doctoral/post-Doctoral level, and capabilities in writing for diverse audiences and types of media

I speak and read French at upper intermediate level and continue to study to improve my conversational and written French which will continue. I am able to use French for general and professional communication.

(Je parle et utilise le français à un niveau intermédiaire supérieur. J'étudie le français à l'écrit et à l'oral. Je peux utiliser français pour communication générale et professionnelle.)

- **Identification with the region you represent, mainly by residence, work experiences, and knowledge of the main language(s) spoken in the region**

I have lived UK all my life, but I also have residency in France if I wish to stay there. My identity, work experience, knowledge of languages is European.

- **Practical wisdom and objective interest in international affairs**

I have had a strong interest in international affairs and inequality in global development including the impact of colonialism since I was a student and I have developed it to the present day, I studied inter-country relations across cultures in my first degree in geography having spent most of the year before university working within a community development project in Kenya. I have maintained and applied that interest throughout my social work career including through promoting culturally competent and anti-racist practice in all my roles. I am very up to date on both global and European political affairs. My recent work experience and professional development has made me more confident in international relations activities whilst I always remember the limits of my knowledge and seek to understand, listen and strive for shared perspectives. I strongly adhere to our ethical principles and values and will bring these forward in discussion but appreciate the nuance in understanding and application in different contexts.

- **Willingness and capacity to devote time to assume work responsibilities in the Executive or Regional Committee**

As stated above, I have the full backing of BASW, have agreed time for this role and am fully committed to using my own voluntary time as required.

- **Ability, in so far as possible, to attend Executive or Regional Committee meetings**

I am able to travel with few restrictions and would aim to be present at all meetings wherever possible.

- **Participation, so far as possible, as delegate of the General Meeting or attendance at IFSW Conferences**

As above, I aim to attend all General Meetings and IFSW conferences.



**Signature and Date**

**Ruth Allen 9<sup>th</sup> February 2024**