



Social Work is Essential

## ELECTION 2021 HANDBOOK

Beyond Recovery  
to Transformation

This is a pivotal moment for Canada's future: COVID-19 has exposed critical issues with Canada's social supports, and the way these supports most egregiously fail certain groups.

At the same time, the public agrees that returning **'back to normal' is not good enough**, and support for robust social funding and services has never been stronger. And more powerfully than ever, Canadians are **demanding a transformed relationship with Indigenous people** and communities. These circumstances offer a unique opportunity for our future Government to make investments that will allow Canada **not just to recover, but to thrive.**

Even as the pandemic may begin to wane, Canada will remain in crisis if our government does not think beyond recovery toward a **just, bold, and novel future.**

This document is intended to **help social workers cross-reference CASW policy positions with commitments of the 4 major political parties** competing for your vote.

Please note this document does not represent all CASW's priorities and positions: to review all CASW's recent statements, [click here](#).

This handbook will be updated as the 4 major parties continue to unveil their platforms.

A

Commitments support CASW advocacy goals

B<sup>+</sup>

The commitments made mostly meet the advocacy goals of CASW

B

Commitments made will begin to move CASW advocacy goals forward

C

No substantial commitment made to move CASW advocacy goals forward

FAIL

Commitments are contrary to CASW advocacy goals or are absent





# CASW ELECTION PRIORITIES

## • A BOLD and JUST FUTURE



CASW is seeking commitments from all federal parties to **Reconciliation following the lead of Indigenous People, Communities, and Organizations** with **concrete commitments to actualizing the TRC Calls to Action and the MMIWG Calls for Justice**, and **fully realizing the articles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)**.

CASW also seeks commitments to **concrete anti-racism plans** and echoes the calls of Parliamentary Black Caucus that federal government must immediately lead in the **collection and stewardship of disaggregated race-based data**.

			
<p><b>The Conservative Party of Canada (CPC)</b> has committed to:</p> <p><a href="#">fund an investigation</a> into graves at all residential schools</p> <p>to develop a detailed and thorough set of resources to educate Canadians on history of residential schools in Canada.</p> <p>to build a national monument in Ottawa that honours residential school survivors</p> <p><i>There are no mentions of Black Canadians, racism, or antisemitism in the official platform</i></p>	<p><b>The Liberal Party of Canada's (LPC)</b> has committed to:</p> <p><a href="#">spend \$321 million</a> on a range of initiatives related to searches of residential school to support Indigenous communities conducting searches, and name an interlocutor to suggest new legal measures</p> <p>fully implement the Act respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Children, Youth and Families with long-term, predictable, and sufficient funding to support the full implementation of the Act</p> <p>Accelerate the implementation of the Federal Pathway to Address Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQIA+</p> <p>strengthen the Anti-Racism Strategy by doubling funding and improve the quality and amount of data collection Statistics Canada does regarding hate crimes</p> <p>Present a National Action Plan on Combating Hate by 2022 as part of a renewed Anti-Racism Strategy</p> <p>Develop a Black Canadians Justice Strategy to address anti-black racism and discrimination in the criminal justice system</p>	<p><b>The New Democratic Party of Canada's (NDP)</b> has committed to:</p> <p><a href="#">call for a special prosecutor</a> to investigate crimes committed within the residential school system</p> <p>establish through legislation a National Council for Reconciliation to provide oversight and accountability in the effort to fully implement all 94 TRC Calls to Action</p> <p>create a national action plan to dismantle far-right extremist organizations, including those that promote white supremacy and establish national standards for identifying and recording hate crimes</p> <p>work with the provinces to improve race-based data collection</p>	<p><b>The Green Party of Canada's (GPC)</b> has committed to:</p> <p><a href="#">recognize the</a> inherent sovereignty and title of Indigenous Peoples</p> <p>ensure that all First Nations are involved in the and design of UNDRIP implementation legislation and that Nations who do not support UNDRIP would not have it imposed upon them</p> <p>implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls</p> <p>ensure non-status First Nations' children living off reserve have access to Jordan's Principle</p> <p>Create a mandatory national database on the collection of police use of force data, disaggregated by race, ethnic background, national origin, age, and other identities to track victims of incidents of use-of-force by police and better understand the extent of systemic racism in Canadian policing</p>

**As a settler organization, the CASW is not positioned to grade this category.**

## LEARN MORE:

- [CASW Statement of Apology and Commitment to Reconciliation](#)
- [CASW Statement on the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#)
- [CASW Reconciliation Hub](#)
- [CASW Statement of Mourning, Solidarity and Call to Action](#)

## • MENTAL HEALTH

As members of the [Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health](#), CASW is seeking commitments from the federal parties [to legislate mental health parity to](#) ensure that all those who live in Canada have **access to mental health care on par with physical health care**.

No party has yet adopted the concept of *parity* through legislation, but short of this policy goal, **CASW also advocates for more mental health funding, better access to and reduced barriers** to care, and robust tracking and development of emerging and best practices.

Finally, CASW believes we must **better integrate mental health and ‘addiction’ in Canada**: CASW advocates for **collaboration and sharing between mental health systems and systems to address problematic substance use**.

			
<p><b>When last in power, the Conservative Party of Canada (CPC)</b> initiated the Mental Health Commission of Canada and introduced the first national mental health strategy.</p> <p>Their most recent platform pledges to:</p> <p><a href="#">introduce</a> a new mental health plan that will ensure an additional million Canadians can receive mental health care, encourage employers to add coverage to their plans through a tax credit, provide \$150 million to non-profits and charities to provide services, and create a national suicide prevention line</p> <p><a href="#">invest \$325</a> million over the next three years to create 1,000 residential drug treatment beds and build 50 recovery community centres across the country</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Some commitments present but shift responsibility to the private sector</p>	<p>The <b>Liberal Party of Canada (LPC)</b>:</p> <p><a href="#">Budget 2021</a> offered \$100 million over three years to the Public Health Agency of Canada to support projects for innovative mental health interventions for populations disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, including health care workers, front-line workers, youth, seniors, Indigenous people, and racialized and Black Canadians</p> <p>Their most recent platform pledges to:</p> <p><a href="#">Establish</a> a new federal transfer to provinces and territories—the Canada Mental Health Transfer—to assist jurisdictions to expand the delivery of high quality, accessible, and free mental health services, and help establish standards in each province and territory, so that Canadians can expect services that are timely, universal, and culturally competent</p> <p><a href="#">Introduce</a> a comprehensive strategy to address problematic substance use to end the opioids crisis with a variety of funding</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Many strong commitments consistent with CASW advocacy</p>	<p>The <b>New Democratic Party of Canada (NDP)</b> has committed to:</p> <p><a href="#">Introduce</a> mental health care for uninsured Canadians – ensuring that people with no coverage for mental health services could gain access to these supports</p> <p><a href="#">cover prescription medication</a> for mental health care will now be available free of cost to Canadians.</p> <p><a href="#">work with</a> the provinces and health professionals to create a safe supply of medically regulated alternatives to toxic street drugs, support overdose prevention sites and expand access to treatment on demand for people struggling with addiction</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Some strong commitments</p>	<p>The <b>Green Party of Canada’s (GPC)</b> has committed to:</p> <p><a href="#">Establish a national</a> mental health strategy and a suicide prevention strategy</p> <p>Negotiate the Canada Health Accord to prioritize expansion of mental health and rehabilitation services, and call for the inclusion of mental health services as medically necessary</p> <p>Allocate increased direct federal investment in community-based mental health care</p> <p>Establish robust accountability mechanisms to ensure the delivery of mental health care on par with physical health.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Many strong commitments consistent with CASW advocacy</p>

As members of the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health, CASW is seeking commitments from the federal parties [to legislate mental health parity](#) [to](#) ensure that all those who live in Canada have **access to mental health care on par with physical health care.**

No party has yet adopted the concept of *parity* through legislation, but short of this policy goal, **CASW also advocates for more mental health funding, better access and reduced barriers** to care, and robust tracking and development of emerging and best practices.








Finally, CASW believes we must **better integrate mental health and ‘addiction’ in Canada:** CASW advocates for **collaboration and sharing between mental health systems and systems to address problematic substance use.**

### LEARN MORE:

- [ACHIEVING PARITY IN ACCESS TO CARE Among Mental Health, Substance Use and Physical Health: The Case for a Mental Health and Substance Use Health Care for All Parity Act in Canada](#)
- [Mental Health Action Plan: Better access and system performance for mental health services in Canada](#)

## • CLIMATE CHANGE

As members of the [Canadian Coalition for Public Health in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century](#) (CCPH21), CASW is seeking commitments from the federal parties to take leadership in the development and implementation of an **effective, evidence-based climate action plan** that will help achieve the **emission reductions** needed to keep global warming below 1.5oC.

			
<p>The <b>CPC</b> has committed to:</p> <p><a href="#">Address climate</a> change through measures to incentivize green technology and mitigate emissions</p> <p>Develop a National Clean Energy Strategy</p> <p>Implement a national Personal Low Carbon Savings Account, a carbon-pricing scheme that would see Canadians paying a surcharge when they buy consumer fossil fuels, with the money going into a savings account earmarked for green purchases</p> <p>Supporting getting more zero emission vehicle on the road through a variety of incentives</p>	<p>The <b>LPC</b> has committed to:</p> <p><a href="#">Setting Canada’s new GHG</a> reduction target will be 40 to 45 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030</p> <p>Eliminate all plastic waste by 2030</p> <p>Cut pollution in heavy industry and make sure the oil and gas sector is net zero by 2050</p> <p>Require oil and gas companies to reduce methane emissions by at least 75% below 2012 levels by 2030 and work to reduce methane emissions across the broader economy and seek similar commitments from other major economies at the upcoming G20</p> <p>Requiring that at least half of all passenger vehicles sold in Canada are zero emission by 2030, and all are zero emission by 2035</p>	<p>The <b>NDP</b> has committed to:</p> <p><a href="#">Set a target of reducing</a> carbon emissions to 50 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030, getting there by eliminating fossil fuel subsidies, enacting carbon budgets on a national and sectoral basis and redrawing the mandate of the Bank of Canada, the Export Development Canada Act and the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board Act to align them with a net-zero target.</p> <p>Create a National Crisis Strategy to help communities—particularly vulnerable, remote and Indigenous ones—reduce and react to climate risks and extreme weather, with long-term funding for adaptation, disaster mitigation and climate-resilient infrastructure</p> <p>Create and fund a Climate Accountability Office to independently oversee federal climate progress, engage with the public and make recommendations on achieving targets</p>	<p>The <b>GPC</b> has committed to:</p> <p><a href="#">comprehensive environmental reforms</a> including around infrastructure, agriculture and water preservation.</p> <p>The GPC states that “Our only possible future is low-carbon. Greens have launched “Mission: Possible - The Green Climate Action Plan” to map a course to a post-carbon, prosperous and safe world,” which includes 14 concrete steps from reducing carbon emissions to green-retrofit incentives.</p> <p>End new pipeline construction, fracking and oil and gas exploration projects and use those funds to invest in the infrastructure and green sectors.</p>
 <p>Commitments’ philosophies contrary to CASW’s advocacy</p>	 <p>Many strong commitments</p>	 <p>Many strong commitments</p>	 <p>Many strong concrete commitments</p>



As proud members of the [Canadian Coalition for Public Health in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century](#) (CCPH21), CASW is seeking commitments from the federal parties to take leadership in the development and implementation of an **effective, evidence-based climate action plan** that will help achieve the **emission reductions needed to keep global warming below 1.5oC**.

### LEARN MORE:

- Read CASW's [Climate Change and Social Work](#)

As a profession founded in principles of social justice, CASW acknowledges the reality of climate change and encourages social workers to educate, advocate, and be the change they want to see in the world.









In Canada, the impacts of climate change are most prominent in what is taking shape in northern communities. Environmental changes affecting Inuit livelihood impact mental health and wellbeing requiring investment into the social determinants of health. Social workers have a very important role in humanizing climate change by highlighting the ways that it is intricately tied to social inequities and how that impacts individuals and communities at the most fundamental level – the right to be who you are.

# CASW ELECTION PRIORITIES

## • THE CRIMINAL CODE and SOCIAL POLICY



CASW is seeking commitments from the federal parties to [ban so called “conversion therapy” through legislation](#) and foster better health, safety, and dignity for sex workers through the [decriminalization of sex work](#)

			
<p><b>The CPC</b> has committed to:</p> <p><a href="#">implement the ban</a> promised by the Trudeau Liberals” but will “clarify that the ban does not criminalize non-coercive conversations”</p> <p>There is no mention of sex work in the CPC platform.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>Commitment made but with potentially concerning caveat</p>	<p><b>The LPC</b> has committed to:</p> <p><a href="#">Re-introduce legislation</a> within the first 100 days in office, to eliminate the practice of conversion therapy for everyone, and extend coverage of the ban to include people over 18 years of age</p> <p>There is no mention of sex work in the LPC platform.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>Strong commitment but other aspects absent</p>	<p><b>The NDP</b> has committed to:</p> <p><a href="#">immediately legislate a ban</a> on conversion therapy in Canada, and work with provinces and territories to support eliminating this practice in all parts of the country</p> <p>There is no mention of sex work in the NDP platform.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>Strong commitment but some pieces missing</p>	<p><b>The GPC</b> has committed to:</p> <p><a href="#">Ban and condemn</a> the practice of conversion therapy, in all its forms</p> <p>Reform sex work laws in Canada with a clear focus on harm reduction, given the dangers that sex trade workers face</p> <p>They further state: “Legalising the industry will allow sex workers to access law enforcement and social services when needed”</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>Strong commitments but vague whether seeking decriminalization or full legalization of sex work – the latter is not a CASW position</p>

- **THE CRIMINAL CODE  
and SOCIAL POLICY page 2**

### LEARN MORE:

- **[ban so called “conversion therapy” through legislation](#)**









In 2018, CASW released a position statement strongly condemning all forms of conversion therapy, which can take many forms, but can be broadly defined as any therapy with the goal of changing or converting an individual’s sexual orientation or gender identity, regardless of age. Conversion therapy is not evidence based, widely discredited, and causes great harm.

- **[foster better health, safety, and dignity for sex workers through the decriminalization of sex work](#)**

It’s important to note that in *Decriminalization, Exit Strategies, and the Social Determinants of Health* linked above, CASW proposes decriminalizing consensual adult sex work: CASW vehemently condemns practices involving minors or trafficked persons. That said, while this paper is specifically on the topic of sex work, the recommendations proposed are also meant to address the issues of human trafficking, involuntary sex work, and any other forms of coercion. The same policies that will create more safety, health, and dignity for sex workers will also help create the kind of society in which people are robustly supported – a society in which minors and adults are better protected from trafficking, coercion, and survival sex work.

## • HOUSING

CASW is supportive of the National Housing Strategy, however certain aspects remain to be addressed, and as **proud members of the [Canadian Housing and Renewal Association](#)**, CASW is seeking commitments from the federal parties for the creation of a For Indigenous By Indigenous **dedicated Urban, Rural, and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy**, and recommends that the federal government **preserve the existing stock of community housing**, as well as **increase the supply of social and non profit housing**.

			
<p><b>The CPC</b> have historically focused on making homebuying more accessible.</p> <p>They further pledge to:</p> <p><u>Increase</u> the Home - Accessibility Tax Credit to \$10,000 per person</p> <p>Build a million homes in three years by switching 15 per cent of federal real estate to housing; incentivize the private sector to give land for affordable housing; require higher density near federally funded transit.</p> <p></p> <p>Some important commitments but shift responsibility to the private sector</p>	<p>The <b>LPC</b> has committed to:</p> <p><u>appoint a new</u> Federal Housing Advocate to ensure the federal government's work toward eliminating chronic homelessness and other housing commitments, are fulfilled.</p> <p>Build 20,000+ more units of new affordable rental housing, and ensuring 130,000 units are revitalized from a state critical disrepair</p> <p>co-develop an Urban, Rural, and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy supported by dedicated funding</p> <p>work with Indigenous partners to create a National Indigenous Housing Centre which will see Indigenous people overseeing federal Indigenous housing programs once fully realized.</p> <p></p> <p>Many strong commitments</p>	<p>The <b>NDP</b> has committed to:</p> <p><u>work toward</u> ending homelessness within a decade</p> <p>Spend \$14 billion building 500,000 units of affordable housing in the next 10 years—half of them in the next five.</p> <p>Establish “fast-start funds” to streamline the application process to stimulate the creation of more co-op and non-profit social housing</p> <p>remove federal tax on the building of new affordable housing</p> <p>implement an Indigenous housing strategy in the first 100 days of a NDP government and create a properly funded National Housing Center designed and run by Indigenous housing providers</p> <p></p> <p>Many strong commitments</p>	<p>The <b>GPC</b> has committed to:</p> <p><u>Guided by</u> First Nations, Inuit and Metis Nation, develop inclusive and culturally appropriate Urban Indigenous Housing Strategies - for Indigenous Peoples and by Indigenous Peoples</p> <p>Declare housing affordability and homelessness a national emergency</p> <p>Redefine affordable housing using a better, updated formula, that accounts for regional variations across the country</p> <p>Immediately appoint the Federal Housing Advocate, as established in the National Housing Strategy Act</p> <p></p> <p>Many strong commitments</p>

### LEARN MORE:

- [Canadian Housing & Renewal Association – CHRA](#)









The Canadian Housing and Renewal Association lobbies federal decision-makers and achieve results on a range of issues impacting the social, non-profit and affordable housing sector in Canada. Advocacy efforts have resulted in significant [positive impacts for the sector.](#)

- [Vote Housing Election 2021 Campaign](#)

CHRA is proud to have partnered with the Co-Operative Housing Federation of Canada, the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness and the Canadian Lived Experience Leadership Network to shape what is expected to be the largest housing advocacy campaign in Canadian history—together, we aim to mobilize thousands of people across Canada to pledge to Vote Housing in the next federal election.

## • PALLIATIVE CARE

As proud members of the [Quality End of Life Care Coalition of Canada](#), CASW is seeking commitments from the federal parties to **embed palliative care in national long-term care standards, implement the Framework on Palliative Care in Canada, and swiftly implement Bill C-220 to extend bereavement leave and expand access**. Further, the Coalition believes that to achieve quality end-of-life care for all Canadians there must be a **well funded, sustainable national strategy for hospice palliative and end-of-life care**.

			
<p><b>The Conservative Party of Canada (CPC)</b> has committed to:</p> <p><a href="#">double</a> the direct federal investments in palliative care</p> <p></p> <p>A strong commitment, but other pieces absent</p>	<p><b>The Liberal Party of Canada's (LPC):</b></p> <p>The LPC platform does not include palliative care or bereavement leave.</p> <p><a href="#">Budget 2021 proposed</a> \$29.8 million over six years, starting in 2021-22, to Health Canada to advance the government's palliative care strategy and lay a better foundation for coordinated action on long-term and supportive care needs, improving access to quality palliative care. Initiatives could include: raising awareness of the importance of palliative care; providing public education on grief; improving palliative care skills and supports for health care providers, families, caregivers, and communities; enhancing data collection and research; and improving access to culturally sensitive palliative and end-of-life care</p> <p></p> <p>Some commitments absent</p>	<p><b>The New Democratic Party of Canada's (NDP)</b> has committed to:</p> <p><a href="#">work with</a> the provinces and territories to expand and improve access to palliative care across the country</p> <p>end private, for-profit long-term care and bring long-term care homes under the public umbrella</p> <p>work collaboratively with patients, caregivers, and provincial and territorial governments to develop national care standards for home care and long-term care, regulated by the same principles as the Canada Health Act. By doing so, a New Democrat government would legally protect access to home care and long-term care services, and ensure a consistent quality of care across the country</p> <p></p> <p>Some strong commitments adjacent to CASW advocacy priorities</p>	<p><b>The Green Party of Canada's (GPC):</b></p> <p>CASW was not able to locate palliative care or bereavement policies or statements</p> <p></p> <p>Commitment is absent</p>



As proud members of the [Quality End of Life Care Coalition of Canada](#), CASW is seeking commitments from the federal parties to:

- **Embed palliative care in national long-term care standards**

The annual mortality rate in LTC ranges from about 27% to 52%, with a median life expectancy of about two years. As Canada moves forward on improving long-term care, it is vital that the next government make embedding early integrated palliative care within the LTC sector a top priority.

- **Fully implement the Framework on Palliative Care in Canada**

The federal government must establish centralized and national coordination office, such as the Office of Palliative Care (OPC), to serve as a single focal point and knowledge centre for palliative care at the federal level, with sustainable funding.

- **Swiftly implement Bill C-220 to extend bereavement leave and expand access**









The Bill extends the period of bereavement leave to which an employee is entitled by five unpaid days. It also expands eligibility for the leave to include employees who, at the time a family member passes, are on compassionate care leave to help care for someone who is sick. Bill C-220 passed with unanimous support and received Royal Assent in June 2021 and we call upon all parties to commit to implementing the changes to bereavement leave – including a smooth transition for those receiving the Employment Insurance Compassionate Care Benefit to bereavement leave - as part of a commitment to support all Canadians during the challenging time following a loved one's passing.



## • POVERTY

CASW urges the federal government to [implement a universal basic income guarantee](#) (uBIG) to end poverty in Canada.

Further, to bring the kind of **accountability and transparency** necessary for the success of critical projects such as the new *National Poverty Reduction Strategy*, CASW urges the creation of a new [Social Care Act for Canada](#). Though no party has adopted the concept of a *Social Care Act*, CASW is seeking policies and practices that bring increased accountability and cooperative federalism to our country, and robustly support the social determinants of health.

			
<p><b>The CPC <a href="#">states that</a>:</b></p> <p>“Canada’s Conservatives believe that job creation is the best antidote to poverty”</p> <p>And pledge to:</p> <p><a href="#">Increase the</a> disability supplement from \$744 to \$1,500</p> <p>convert the Child Care Expense deduction into a refundable tax credit covering up to 75% of the cost of child care for lower income families</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Commitments contrary to CASW advocacy</b></p> </div>	<p><b>The LPC <a href="#">introduced</a></b> increases to the Canada Child Benefit during their mandate and introduced the historic National Poverty Reduction Strategy, which legislates a poverty line in Canada for the first time and created the National Advisory Council on Poverty comprised of people with lived experience</p> <p>They pledge to:</p> <p><a href="#">Introduce a</a> Disability Benefit direct monthly payment for low-income Canadians with disabilities to reduce poverty in the same manner as the Guaranteed Income Supplement and the Canada Child Benefit</p> <p>boost the Old Age Security benefit by 10% for those 75+ over starting in July 2022 and increase the Guaranteed Income Supplement by \$500 a year for single seniors and \$750 for couples, starting at age 65</p> <p>establish a national \$10-a-day childcare system by 2026</p> <p>deduct health transfers from provinces who enable extra billing for publicly insured services to protect the integrity of our universal public health care system</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Some strong commitments toward CASW advocacy goals</b></p> </div>	<p>The <b>NDP</b> has committed to:</p> <p><a href="#">begin work</a> to expand income security programs, beginning with seniors and people living with disabilities, to build towards a future where all individuals residing in Canada have access to a guaranteed livable basic income</p> <p>immediately work with the provinces to build a universal, \$10 a day child-care system</p> <p>Make the Canada Caregiver Tax Credit refundable so that low-income recipients benefit</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Strong commitments toward CASW advocacy goals</b></p> </div>	<p>The <b>GPC</b> has committed to:</p> <p><a href="#">Create a comprehensive</a> and equitable Guaranteed Livable Income for every person in Canada: building on the Market Basket Measure, payment would be set at a “livable” level for different regions and the federal government would provide an initial base level subsidy across the country, and an intergovernmental body would determine and administer the necessary supplemental amounts</p> <p>Dedicate additional resources to making a universal, affordable, early learning and child-care (ELCC) system a reality</p> <p>Immediately begin to ramp up federal child care funding to achieve the international benchmark of at least one per cent of GDP annually.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Strong commitments toward CASW advocacy goals</b></p> </div>



CASW is seeking commitments from the federal parties to:

- [implement a universal basic income guarantee \(uBIG\)](#) to end poverty in Canada

The cost of current income support programs in Canada is close to \$200 billion per year, but are piece-meal, often stigmatizing, vary from province to province, and are ultimately unsuccessful at ending poverty. uBIG builds on ideas already enshrined in our national laws and identity, such universal health care, the Canada Child Benefit, and Old Age Security: the foundation has already been laid and we're ready for the next step forward.

- **introduce a new [Social Care Act for Canada](#)**





This act is needed to bring the kind of **accountability and transparency** necessary for the success of critical projects such as the new *National Poverty Reduction Strategy*. Though no party has adopted the concept of a *Social Care Act*, CASW is seeking policies and practices that bring increased accountability and cooperative federalism to our country.

# CASW ELECTION PRIORITIES

## • THE CRIMINAL CODE and SUBSTANCE USE



CASW recommends the following actions and practices to promote a public health approach to well-being in Canada: the [decriminalization of all psychoactive substances](#), [harm reduction approaches](#) to problematic substance use, and [removal of mandatory minimum penalties](#).

			
<p><b>The CPC's</b> have been historically against supervised consumption sites, as well as the decriminalization of drugs.</p> <p>The last time the CPC formed government, they passed Bill C-10, which strengthened the use of mandatory minimums in Canada.</p> <p>In their most recent platform, the CPC is silent on mandatory minimums for substance related offenses but advocates for strengthening them in many other areas.</p> <p><a href="#">They state</a> they will “reorient the Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy towards ensuring that everyone suffering from addiction has the opportunity to recover and to lead a drug-free life”</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> </div> <p style="text-align: center; color: red;">Commitments contrary to CASW advocacy</p>	<p><b>The LPC:</b></p> <p>During their previous mandate, the LPC passed legislation to facilitate the opening of new safe injection sites and shifted the responsibility of federal drug policy under the purview of the Minister of Health – away from Justice.</p> <p>Further, the LPC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>decriminalized cannabis during their previous mandate</li> <li><a href="#">pledge</a> to invest \$500 million to support the provinces and territories in providing access to a full-range of evidence-based treatment, recognizing that successful treatment is not determined by long-term abstinence</li> <li>within the first 100 days of a new mandate, reform the Criminal Code to repeal relevant mandatory minimum penalties and requiring police and Crown prosecutors to consider diverting individuals out of the criminal justice system</li> </ul> <div style="text-align: center;"> </div> <p style="text-align: center; color: red;">Some strong commitments</p>	<p><b>The NDP</b> has committed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">end the criminalization</a> and stigma of drug addiction to work with the provinces to support overdose prevention sites, and expand access to treatment on demand for people struggling with addiction</li> <li>restore the independence of the judiciary by reducing reliance on mandatory minimums and allowing trial judges to have greater discretion in sentencing</li> <li>ensure that Gladue principles are consistently applied in court proceedings, and uphold the importance of community-based and restorative justice approaches</li> </ul> <div style="text-align: center;"> </div> <p style="text-align: center; color: red;">Some strong commitments</p>	<p>The <b>GPC</b> has committed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Decriminalize possession</a> of illicit drugs for personal use</li> <li>Create a legal and policy environment that funds and advances evidence-based programmes, in order to facilitate the development and scaling up of harm reduction services across all of Canada, including in rural communities and prisons</li> <li>Eliminate mandatory minimum sentences and enable courts to determine appropriate sentences based on the circumstances of each individual case and established sentencing laws and principles</li> <li>Take steps to ensure that, where some form of incarceration is necessary, individuals are, as quickly as possible, held close to their community to allow for more effective reintegration and rehabilitation</li> </ul> <div style="text-align: center;"> </div> <p style="text-align: center; color: red;">Very strong commitments</p>

- **THE CRIMINAL CODE  
and SUBSTANCE USE page 2**

**CASW is seeking commitments from the federal parties on the following actions and practices to promote a public health approach to well-being in Canada:**









- the [decriminalization of all psychoactive substances](#):  
Our current system is not only ineffective at reducing drug use, but it has also created the crisis we are in now: we require a paradigm shift to take immediate action. The evidence is there – a public health, harm reduction approach to drugs saves lives – we just need to take the step into full implementation of what the previous federal government has already begun.
- [harm reduction approaches](#) to problematic substance use  
Legislative changes that facilitate the opening of new safe injection sites, the renewal of harm reduction as a pillar in the Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy, and the adoption of the Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act are all positive steps towards saving lives in Canada, but more can be done.
- [removal of mandatory minimum penalties](#)  
CASW has actively advocated against mandatory minimums specific to drug offences. CASW has consistently advocated for the elimination of mandatory minimums as the next step in this Government’s public health approach to addressing our nation’s most challenging health, economic and social issues.

# CASW ELECTION PRIORITIES

## • SUPPORTING SOCIAL WORKERS for BETTER OUTCOMES



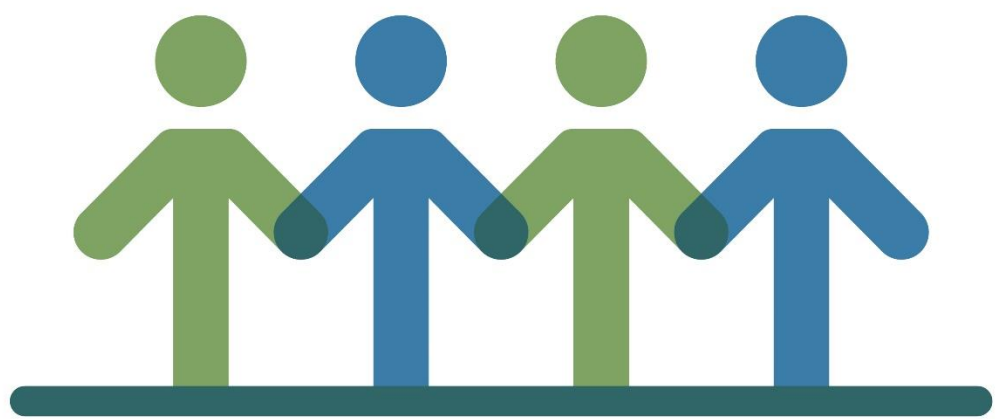
CASW is seeking commitments from the federal parties to introduce [student loan forgiveness for social workers](#) that practice in rural and remote communities and immediately Fund a nation-wide [Child Welfare Caseload Study](#). CASW is also seeking policies that will support better data collection on the social and health workforce.

			
<p><b>The CPC:</b></p> <p>There is no mention of student loans or tuition in the CPC platform.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">   <b>FAIL</b> </p> <p style="text-align: center;">No commitments present</p>	<p><b>The LPC has committed to:</b></p> <p><a href="#">Include social workers</a> in the Canada Student Loan forgiveness program</p> <p>Increase the maximum debt relief available through the program by 50% (from \$40,000 up to \$60,000 over 5 years)</p> <p>Offer health care professionals, who are just starting out in their careers, a one-time income tax deduction of up to \$15,000 over their first 3 years of practice to help with the costs of setting up a practice</p> <p>Permanently eliminate the federal interest on Canada Student Loans</p> <p style="text-align: center;">   <b>A</b> </p> <p style="text-align: center;">Strong commitments toward CASW advocacy goals</p>	<p><b>The NDP has committed to:</b></p> <p><a href="#">remove interest</a> from federal student loans, and introduce a targeted debt forgiveness program for graduates that will forgive up to \$20,000 in student debt</p> <p>permanently double non-repayable Canada Student Grants</p> <p>work with the provinces and territories to cap and reduce tuition fees</p> <p>remain vigilant especially against the creeping threat of privatization and user fees</p> <p>work with universities and health professionals to make sure that public research on critical health issues continues to flourish</p> <p style="text-align: center;">   <b>B</b> </p> <p style="text-align: center;">Some commitments toward CASW advocacy goals but sometimes vague</p>	<p><b>The GPC has committed to:</b></p> <p><a href="#">abolish student tuition</a> and forgive all federally held student debt</p> <p style="text-align: center;">   <b>A</b> </p> <p style="text-align: center;">Very strong commitment</p>

# • SUPPORTING SOCIAL WORKERS for BETTER OUTCOMES page 2

### LEARN MORE:

- **Introduce [student loan forgiveness for social workers](#) that practice in rural and remote communities**  
to increase equitable care, decrease wait times, attract, and retain social workers in these communities. Given the gap between urban and rural areas in the availability of health services, including mental health, and the resulting wait times and correlated harms, CASW advocates the inclusion of social workers in the Canada Student Loan Reimbursement Waiver Program, which currently applies to other professions, including nursing.
- **Immediately Fund a nation-wide [Child Welfare Caseload Study](#)**  
When social workers are prevented from remaining in their positions or developing relationships with communities, children and families suffer – resulting, in turn, in more kids in care and more families in crisis. In 2018, CASW completed [a major research project](#) assessing the state of social workers in child welfare and discovered that excessive workload and caseload are a critical issue. Currently, there are no national standards governing caseloads in child welfare practice.
- **Fund a [comprehensive social work sector study](#) to understand the workforce, identify gaps, and meet future needs**  
Currently, we have little understanding of the number of social workers, or proportion of social workers in different practice areas, working across Canada and, crucially, whether this workforce has the capacity to meet current or projected needs of Canadians: we lack key demographic, labour market and education/training information. The last such study, In Critical Demand, was completed in 2000. A comprehensive sector study is required for the profession to support recruitment and retention, education/training realities and projections, and provide the basis for strategies to ensure a strong social work workforce moving forward.



**CASW ACTS**

Canadian Association of Social Workers      Association canadienne des travailleuses et travailleurs sociaux