Editorial

We have six papers in this issue of *Social Work and Social Sciences Review*. We start with a paper from Donna Peacock, Stephen Macdonald, Wendy Podd and Faye Cosgrove. They have examined the issue of service user involvement in Appropriate Adult schemes. These schemes were developed to support vulnerable people during their time in police custody. Vulnerable adults may give the police 'inaccurate, unreliable or misleading' information. Appropriate Adults are there to provide support throughout the period of detention. The researchers surveyed the directors of Appropriate Adult schemes, with 43/93 responding. Some 30% of these schemes had no service user involvement. Only two services involved service users in their training. The researchers concluded there was little indication that many of the Appropriate Adult schemes have any meaningful involvement with service users.

The second paper looks at the involvement of Faith Based Organisations (FBOs), in the care of older adults in Vietnam. Hoang Thu Huong, Nguyen Thi Nhu Trang and Catherine Medina looked at secondary data sources, conducted semi-structured interviews and carried out field observations. FBOs provide community services in many countries. Interestingly in Vietnam they had non-restrictive admission criteria, even waiving hardship as a pre-requisite for care. They provided both short and long-term support. Short-term support included health checks, cash, and supplies. Buddhist organisations were more likely to provide cash assistance, whereas Catholic organisations were more likely to provide psychological and spiritual support. FBOs were more likely to support the most vulnerable, homeless, older adults. They were also found to be more flexible than the public sector.

The third paper looks at narratives of societal vulnerability and is written by Wilma Numans, Juliette Boog, Tine Van Regenmortel and Rene Schalk. They interviewed sixteen vulnerable people, eight with physical health conditions and eight with mental health problems. Respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their lack of self-determination, the lack of a positive and personal approach from services, as well as frustration with bureaucracy. Participants knew what rights benefits and services that were available to them, and how to access them. However, it proved very difficult to actually get them!

Alec Grant's paper is in praise of subjectivity and describes his long involvement with autoethnography, which was the focus of a special issue of this journal edited by Carson and Hurst (Social Work and Social Sciences Review, Volume 23, Number 2). Autoethnography is a qualitative method more concerned with feelings, meanings, and values, than numbers. Grant argues it fuses social sciences with humanities, literature, art, philosophy, drama, storytelling, and poetry. He cautions against people thinking it is just telling stories. He notes his own recovery from mental problems was down

to loyal friends and colleagues and even quite a bit of luck. He challenges the views of some who state that autoethnography is a 'narcissistic substitute for proper research.' He ends by suggesting there has never been a better time to embrace subjectivity and autoethnography. Get writing!

Paper 5 by Philip Archard and colleagues is on the use of Freedom of Information (FoI) requests in mental health research. The UK Freedom of Information Act enables members of the public to request information from public authorities at no cost to themselves. The authors have used FoI requests as a primary method of data collection. These requests have covered topics such as online therapies for common mental health problems to treatment provision for sex addiction. They have also been used to examine waiting times for child and adolescent mental health problems and to examine the session costs of the Improving Access to Psychological Therapy initiative. Not surprisingly the researchers have used FoIs for their own research into homelessness, PTSD and services for children and their families. This is not something I would ever have considered doing as part of my own research. The authors provide helpful advice on how best to frame such requests and also discuss ethical issues.

The final paper in this issue is by Sewanu Awhangansi, Michelle O'Reilly and Philip Archard, and looks at the importance of a social psychiatry perspective within child and adolescent mental health services. The authors start with an interesting statement that children are '…the most physically, economically and socially vulnerable population group…' They note that children and adolescents under the age of 18, form almost 50% of the population in the developing world and that one in six will have a mental health problem. Poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage have been linked with poor mental health and the persistence of problems into adulthood. Now there are additional concerns from digital risks such as online grooming as well as digital inequalities. The authors conclude with a set of recommendations such as placing greater emphasis on the social determinants of mental health in training courses and balancing the risks presented in digital environments against the opportunities these also provide.

So, six papers covering a diverse range of topics, all research based. Something for every reader I hope.

Professor Jerome Carson,
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