

## Editorial

The four papers that form the main content of this edition were first presented at the symposium 'Changing Social Work?' This event was hosted by the Review and Lancaster University in September 2004. Whilst evolutionary dynamism is therefore the interconnecting theme, each of the authors focuses on different aspects of social work. This leads to very different conclusions regarding the extent and value of change: change in social work may be evident or not evident enough. Movement and momentum in organization, management and practice may be calculated and intentional, but unintended consequences may also arise. Alternatively, change may occur in one area of the social work system, but development elsewhere may stagnate. Furthermore, the implementation of legislation and policies intended to create change may be more complex than imagined or subjected to overt and/or covert resistance. This intricate and nuanced experience of change is reflected in this collection of papers.

The first paper of this edition acknowledges the recent modernization of public services and some of the implications for social work. According to Smith the improved systems of audit have encouraged accountability and the potential for the growth of service user and public confidence. Whilst this change is positive, the emphasis on structures and systems of accountability has led to other important elements of practice being neglected. The inter-relational elements of practice that involve the moral motivation of the practitioner, care, sensitivity and kindness are essential in the development of trust. In short, trust as an important component of social work has been overshadowed in the effort to modernize and develop confidence. According to Smith, both confidence and trust are required for the success of the service.

Like Smith, Frost is also concerned with the modernization agenda. Joined-up thinking was an important concept within New Labour's manifesto on public services. In a desire to overcome fragmentation within service delivery, assumed to result from firm organizational and professional boundaries, recent legislation and policies have encouraged inter-agency developments and multi-professional practice. The impact of this policy on child care services has been evaluated by a team of researchers based at the University of Leeds, UK, who were funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. Frost's paper reports on the project, but focuses specifically on the implications for social work and social workers. In particular, attention is brought to the way in which working in a multi-professional setting can challenge professional hegemony and cause discomfort to the individuals involved. Implementing the concept in practice is more difficult than might have been first envisaged. At the same time, however, the research

showed that professionals can learn from their new work context and enjoy the benefits of re-figured approaches and fresh perspectives. It is concluded that the loss of a core social work identity is not inevitable.

Innovation in the delivery of welfare is also the topic of the paper authored by Froggett who explores the use of art in the Bromley by Bow Healthy Living Centre. With case study material, she illustrates how creative activity can enhance personal development, health and well-being. Froggett draws upon psychoanalytic theory to explain this phenomenon. In taking an holistic approach to human welfare and medicine, the healthy living movement is increasingly drawing upon the arts and humanities. This is in sharp contrast to the developments in social work that have relied upon managerialism and the competent achievement of tasks defined by performance targets. Whilst writing from very different perspectives, both Frost and Froggett agree that social work may be enhanced through learning from other disciplines and professions.

In the final paper, Sapey challenges social work for its failure to change. Citizenship, another important principle in New Labour's approach, has contributed to the system of direct payments introduced by the Community Care (Direct Payments) Act of 1996. There are indications, backed up by a small evaluative study, that social workers have not seen the potential benefits of direct payments for people with disabilities. They have been slow to facilitate take-up and in consequence, are failing to employ the principle of citizenship in their practice: instead, they perpetuate a version of professionalism that is entrenched in the kind of patriarchal and patronising thinking that has become outmoded. If social workers can not understand and relate to disabled people as citizens, do disabled people need social workers?

This particular collection of papers suggests that, although some consequences of the government's modernization agenda have been unwelcome, some initiatives have provided opportunities for the positive development of social work. Whilst changed legislation and policy can hinder important components of social work, practitioners also have the potential to learn new ways of working that might bring new and unexpected benefits to all concerned.

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