Editorial

With its smart new appearance, it is intended that *Social Work and Social Sciences Review* will be more catching to the eye. In addition to a re-vamped image, the journal has been available on-line, for over a year, and information for prospective readers or contributors can sought from its website (www.socialworkandsocialsciencesreview.co.uk). The Review has always been international in its scope, and online access is widening the circulation of the journal's content. We hope that this will encourage even more contributions from beyond national boundaries.

Reflecting this latter sentiment, this edition opens with a paper written by Terry Carrilio which focuses on support services provided to children and families in California. From a positivist perspective, three services have been evaluated and the findings are reported here. In her conclusion, Carrilio comments on the challenge presented by the methodological approach that was taken. As this journal tends to publish qualitative research or papers written from a constructionist or interpretivist tradition, this paper constitutes something of a contrast. Given the British Government's emphasis on the provision of community based support services such as Sure Start, together with their evaluation, in several different ways this paper, will interest academic, policy-makers and practitioners alike.

Holt and Lawler also write about services to children and families. Following on from the work of Glisson and Hemmelgarn (1998), they argue that organizational climate can have a significant impact on service delivery. If the organizational climate is undermined by poor physical conditions and stress, then the attitude of staff can be affected negatively and this has consequences for the quality of their work.

The next two papers comment upon services to adults. Taking into account the political influence of the disabled people's social movement, Glasby traces the history of the current policy and practice of direct payments. In keeping with the arguments of Sapey and Pearson (2004), he notes that many social workers remain unconvinced of the benefit of this approach. However, he argues that the increased independence of disabled people does not mean an end to the helping content of social work. On the contrary, facilitating independence is a crucial way in which today's social workers might be of help.

By focussing on the social model of disability and the political influence of service users, Beresford's paper follows comfortably on from Glasby's. Beresford is particularly interested in how the social model can be applied to the experience of 'madness and distress' as opposed to physical impairment. Furthermore, Beresford highlights the competing perspectives of those concerned with anti-oppressive social work.

Though not a major theme in each, all three of the papers emanating from the UK make reference to the low morale of social workers today and the difficulties experienced

by agencies in recruiting and retaining qualified staff (see Harlow, 2004; Jones, 2001; SCHWG, 2003). Beresford draws attention to the theoretically and ideologically conflicting context of practice as social work gives way to social care, and structural reorganization leads to the dominance of the medical model and the health-oriented professionals. In addition, the social model and service user movements challenge social work's more traditional approaches. Whilst for Beresford and Glasby the identity of social work is at issue, Holt and Lawler focus on the poor quality of the workspace offered to social workers and the lack of adequate supervision and appraisal. Clearly, there are tensions and difficulties facing social worker's and their managers in both adult and children's services within the UK. It would be interesting to discover whether these or similar issues are making an appearance beyond these islands.

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References

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