

Guest Editorial: Research Policy and Planning

Issue 25 ((1) of the SSRG Journal 'Research Policy and Planning' is currently with the Printers. The new editors, Greg Mantle and Andy Pithouse discuss their first venture.

This is our first editorial as editors of *Research, Policy and Planning* and so we would like to introduce ourselves and give an initial sense of our thinking about the present strengths and future development of the Journal, before introducing the issue's five articles.

Both of us have practised as social workers before moving into university-based teaching and research and we are each currently involved in pre- and post-qualifying social work training. We share a passion for properly designed and executed research and want to promote its employment across the full range of social work and social care activity.

We are delighted therefore to have been appointed as editors of RPP and we aim to maintain the primary focus of the journal on good applied research from relevant sources. Likewise, we will not neglect good theoretical and methodological papers that can inform and enhance practice and policy. We will also continue the Journal's tradition of encouraging papers from the broad constituency of



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social work and social care – practitioners, academics, service users, managers and policy makers. We aim, in the year ahead, to explore with our subscribers and readers how they wish to see the Journal develop in order that we can

respond as best we can to the ever-changing world of policy and practice.

Our first issue arrives not long after the somewhat mixed report by Dame Denise Platt into the state of adult social care in England in which it is claimed that social care seems to be neither well regarded nor well understood by a wider public. Whatever the merits of such claims it is the case that social care remains a complicated notion that resists simple definition and easy popularisation.

It is thus apt that our first issue begins with an exploration by Peter Huxley, Sherrill Evans and Tracey Maegusuku-Hewett into the respective advantages and disadvantages of both narrow and broad understandings of social care. They make an important and topical contribution to theoretical and professional debate about the state of social care in the wake of Dame Platt's account of services in England.

The four articles that follow are all concerned with ways to enhance adult care and, in their own way, each picks

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up issues raised by Huxley et al..

Vanessa Burholt and Gill Windle present research findings about older people's preferences for specialised housing and highlight implications for the planning of supported living environments.

Neal Holme and Susan Hart offer two different views of generic care work through their analyses of the experiences of a group of home carers, specially trained to work with end of life patients, and of a group of informal carers.

Susan Lambert, Lyn Gardner, Valerie Thomas and Shân Davies provide a detailed account of the use of EASY-Care, a standardised tool used to assess the care needs of older people: the authors argue the case for bespoke professional training for those undertaking assessments.

Peter Scourfield completes the quartet of articles with a research-based examination of the issues faced by older people at the interface of intermediate and social care.

The papers all have in common a clear commitment to advancing quality personalised care and demonstrate ways in

which improvements either have or can come about.

There is much that is good in social care across the UK and these papers capture something of the enthusiasm and motivation of those who deliver services and who research in a field that is all too easily cast as faltering or failing.

We commend these papers to you and hope you will think about writing for RPP too. Please do send any thoughts you have about the Journal to Sue Harrington at s.a.harrington@anglia.ac.uk - we look forward to hearing from you.

Andy Pithouse and Greg Mantle

Editors

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