Adult Day Services and Social Inclusion: Better Days
Clark, C. (ed) (2001) London: Jessica Kingsley (Research Highlights 39), £15.99, paperback, 240pp.

Day services for adults in the UK have been relatively marginalized by the focus on domiciliary based services as an alternative to residential care in the 1990s, and more recently by the explicit focus on the development of intermediate care services designed primarily to relieve pressure on the acute sector of the NHS. Nevertheless, they remain an important provider of services to a range of people, including older people, people with learning disabilities, people with dementia and carers. Despite this, there is a glaring lack of a systematic research foundation upon which to base reviews of services or for managers, policy makers and social workers to develop services.

The authors in this edited volume freely admit that, despite it appearing in a series entitled 'Research Highlights', they have not contributed significantly to overcoming this gap in research. What the volume does instead is draw together the views and experiences of providers and academics working in and reviewing a range of day services (the editor is careful to avoid using the term 'day care'). It is intended as a guide to the effective provision of day services, and is deliberately upbeat about the possibilities offered, at least for some groups of service users, by some of the innovative practices described.

The volume is split into two parts. In the first, the authors look at the existing policy in the UK concerning day services. Clark discusses the way in which day services have been transformed since their inception and points out that the subsequent authors all make powerful arguments that there are considerable changes that need to take place in day services if they are going to come anywhere near providing social inclusion for their users. Tester looks critically at the policy aspects of day services for older people, particularly since the implementation of the 1990 NHS and Community Care Act. She makes the point, echoed by other writers throughout the volume and never satisfactorily answered, that day services, no matter how well-intentioned, often serve the interests of providers rather than users. Stalker, in one of the more robust and well researched chapters, tackles the issue of day services for adults with learning disabilities, providing a useful introduction to some of the conceptual debates in this area. Basing much of her critique on her analysis of users' own views (who repeatedly say they do not want services which are divisive, provided on the basis of 'client group' rather than aiming towards providing users with access to the education, skills, work and leisure opportunities that would enable them to participate socially) she points out the conflicting policy aims between, for example, assisted employment and benefits schemes that work against the interests of adults with learning disabilities. In her chapter on services for adults with mental health problems, Connor looks at a range of service models designed to facilitate a return to 'normal' work after an episode of mental illness. She focuses on supported employment as a means of breaking away from traditional patterns of day service provision. In the final 'policy' chapter Cooper looks at a service sector traditionally dominated by third sector, rather than statutory sector, provision: services for homeless people (although she recognises that the term can have limited usefulness), and discusses the difficulties associated with developing effective services when reliant on short-term, marginal funding.

The second part concentrates on case studies that illustrate the ways in which the policies discussed in part one have been played out in practice – this section will be of particular interest to managers and service commissioners. Moriarty looks at services that are provided for older people, and gives interesting examples of services that have tried to be innovative in breaking away from traditional patterns of provision that are 'buildings bound'. She makes the point, echoed by other authors but never really resolved properly, that there is a conflict between providing services that meet the needs of users and those that are designed to relieve the pressure on carers. The following chapter by Hunter and Watt also look at case studies of

services for older people. They show how services need to move from being service-led to being 'person-centred', but really fail to tackle the disempowerment and social exclusion of older people, and the systematic failure to involve them in a meaningful way in designing and commissioning services which has contributed to the way in which services have failed to meet users' needs. Ridley's chapter is one of the few that give the reader a wider flavour of the conceptual debates and possibilities around supportive employment projects for people with learning disabilities, showing how difficult it is to put innovative ideas into practice, particularly when the philosophical basis for those ideas is complex and sometimes contradictory. Lloyd and Cole give a practice-based account of the trials and tribulations involved in trying to break away from traditional methods of providing day services to promote the social inclusion of adults with learning disabilities, and show how often the development of such services rely upon the resilience and commitment of key project staff. In the final chapter, Grove and Membrey address some of the research gaps around what constitutes the provision of effective mental health day services, again centring around supported employment and alternatives to employment, showing how social values play a part in limiting the service options available to people with mental health problems.

Whilst all the authors in varying degrees attempt to draw on research or practice that is driven by users' views, a fundamental weakness in the volume is the lack of a strong user voice. All the practice examples discussed skirt the thorny issue of the relative powerlessness users have in designing and commissioning services that reflect their needs. The reader is left with the nagging feeling that some of the fundamental issues surrounding day services have remained unanswered. Can services designed and run by service providers rather than users offer real scope for social inclusion? It is notable that the one user group who have managed to successfully challenge the dominance of the social work and other therapeutic professions' hold over the provision of services is physically disabled adults, and they are the one group for whom the provision of these types of services are no longer seen as tenable. If older adults, adults with learning disabilities, those suffering homelessness and mental health problems had anything approaching a powerful voice in the provision of services, would day services disappear altogether?

Nevertheless, this is a well-written and valuable volume which does go some way towards addressing the huge gap in research-based evidence for the provision of effective day services, and it will be of interest to many managers concerned with the commissioning and provision of these services.

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Anti-Discriminatory Practice (Third Edition)
Thompson, N. (2001) Basingstoke: Palgrave, £13.99, Paperback, 208 pp.

The task of marrying theoretically cogent and informed discussions of oppression and discrimination in contemporary societies with a focus on the practice issues in anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive strategy and policy is incredibly difficult to do. Translating conceptual strategies for equality, rights and justice into 'lifeworld' ideas and practices involves a clarity of understanding of the relationship between structural social determinants, the contested field of cultural representations and the subjective experience of social process, institutions and orthodoxies. Neil Thompson's work, principally both this text - in its third edition - and his *Promoting Equality*, is an exceptional example of how this is done well. Thompson is quite simply essential and required reading for any academic, student or worker in the areas of public services and social care (1).

This text is probably his most directly accessible to practitioners, though its academic value is considerable. In the first chapter, he identifies and cogently presents the complexity of multiple oppressions that impact upon people's 'lifeworld' experience and requires an understanding of the need to develop a generic but subject sensitive model for understanding oppression and building anti-oppressive strategy. Usefully, he begins his discussion by arguing with clarity and eloquence that a concern with anti-oppressive strategy is not a segmented product of ideological and ethical commitment but intrinsic to good practice in the work-place and with those public services and social care seek to support and enable.

Chapter Two outlines his PCS (Personal, Cultural, Structural) model for understanding oppression and discrimination. This model recognises the inextricable yet often dislocated relationship between personal 'lifeworlds' and political discourse, and argues the necessity of their integration, with special emphasis upon cultural practices in everyday work and social contexts, and the use of language, representations and discourse to develop anti-oppressive practice. The strength of this model is that it also allows Thompson to directly address the 'hearts and minds' issues of transition from oppressive to anti-discriminatory environments and relationships.

The remainder of the book focuses on separate chapters on gender, race, ageism and disability, with a more general chapter looking at oppression on the basis of difference, using examples of religious belief, sexuality and mental illness as areas where anti-discriminatory practice can be engaged. Finally, there is a concluding chapter which provides a summary of the main themes of the text, reinforcing both the principles of anti-discriminatory practice and the problems of engaging in anti-discriminatory practice.

The text is never less than clear and lucid, with case studies interspersed within the narrative to make real the issues raised. The academic content is represented with clarity, but without losing its sophistication. It is an extraordinarily readable text, and a text that can form the basis of informed and intelligent discussions of the scope and limits of anti-discriminatory practice, and how principles are translated into strategy and practice.

It is common for reviewers to seek to interpret the need for a balanced appraisal of a text to involve finding points of weakness, oversight and error. For what this book does and says, this reviewer would rather recommend that it is read by every person who is interested in a less discriminatory world, who suffers discrimination and wants it to stop, or who sees it happening and wants to be active against it. It is an extraordinarily valuable resource and an excellent beginning to the task of thinking about and participating in the struggle for a non-discriminatory world.

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(1) Thompson, N. (1998) *Promoting Equality: Challenging Discrimination and Oppression in the Human Services,* Basingstoke: Macmillan