

Welcome to the first edition of Volume 27 of *Research, Policy and Planning*. Each of the contributions to this edition engages with issues that, in their way, are highly topical. The personalisation agenda is an ambitious project that seeks to transform the adult social care system. Hampshire County Council has been in the forefront of implementing this agenda in England. As the Research Manager for that local authority, it is therefore timely to have Rachel Dittrich's perspective on progress being made. She highlights and discusses several key issues that need to be worked through to ensure the successful implementation of this agenda. Such issues include funding, remodelling the workforce and achieving culture change.

Personalisation, together with the *National Carers' Strategy*, provides the context for the article by Sue O'Halloran and Michelle Cornes. Here the emphasis is on supporting rural carers. Whilst the need to support informal carers is probably more important now than ever before, the authors' study alerts us to the fact that there is still much to be done to ensure that the strategy for carers becomes a reality. The authors highlight the important role that the voluntary sector can play in this respect.

The article by Katherine Twamley and colleagues focuses on an altogether different set of current issues. It is based on a research study in Inner London involving ethnic minority women who had given birth in the previous twelve months. The authors express concern that such studies need to both reflect and represent the ethnic diversity of participants, but that achieving this is problematic. They discuss various recruitment techniques that aim to be as inclusive as possible.

In contrast again, Julie Maguire's article focuses on 'the effects of parental deployment to a war zone on adolescent psycho-social development'. Readers will be aware of the topicality of subject matter here. The article suggests that the repercussions for children when their parents 'go to war' are complex and that further research is needed, not only to discover more about the impact but also about the effectiveness of coping mechanisms. Maguire points out that, whilst such issues are becoming better understood within military circles, this is not necessarily the case for the social work profession.

Tricia Capes provides a brief report on research carried out by the 'Why Not' Older People's Research Group in Essex using 'secret citizen' techniques. Details of how to access the full report are provided. This is highly relevant to the last article in which Melanie Boyce and colleagues from Anglia Ruskin University discuss critically the whole issue of involving older people in research. Finding that often the rhetoric of involvement does not always match the reality, they discuss ways in which a broader range of older people can be encouraged to participate in research activities.

There are five book reviews penned by practitioners and academics. The books encompass a pleasingly broad range of topics relevant to the readership. They are: learning disability; narrative approaches in play with children, child protection, understanding immigration and refugee policy and the phenomenon described as the 'McDonaldization of Social Work'. As book reviews editor, I would like to invite readers to consider taking a book to review for the Journal and, of course, hope that you enjoy this issue of the Journal.

Peter Scourfield
Book Reviews Editor