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MediaWatch
The Scheme: Too close to home?

Under Constance care:
We quiz the ex-social worker turned Minister
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THE SASW Annual Members meeting in May provided an opportunity for members in Scotland to find out more about the College of Social Work developments in preparation for the BASW UK AGM later in the month.

The meeting was attended by about 40 members and an outline of developments was presented by the three Scottish Council Members - Ronnie Barnes, Graeme Rizza and John McGowan - and SASW Manager Ruth Stark.

A number of questions were raised from the floor including the impact of the development of a trade union in the context of our good working relationship with UNISON in Scotland, a relationship that has not been developed elsewhere in the UK.

One of the difficulties in England is that without trade union status some of our members are not being able to be represented by our Advice and Representation Service despite advice from ACAS that this should be possible with all employers. This is not a situation that we have experienced in Scotland.

Following the AGM, there has been a meeting between the co-chairs of the Interim Board and Scottish Government and another meeting of key stakeholders in Scotland to consider what might be appropriate links with a UK College of Social Work.

A survey will go to all registered social workers in Scotland, put together by these stakeholders and through the Scottish Social Services Council, so that everyone will be consulted to inform what we should be developing here to support a competent, confident workforce.

This should reach you some time in late August or early September and we will keep you informed through PSW and e-bulletins of progress on this issue. Your views will be vital in developing appropriate resources in Scotland and the future of SASW.

A constitutional Extraordinary General Meeting is planned for the beginning of November and it is very important to know what members want for SASW in the next five to 10 years - or even the next 40 years - so that your professional body meets your needs.

Members of the Scotland Committee, Tim Parkinson and myself can come to your place of work and discuss options with you so that when November comes your vote will influence the shape of your association.

Voting can be done by proxy if you cannot make it to Birmingham. This is your time to be involved so don’t miss out on shaping the future.

SASW and the College of Social Work

Ruth Stark

A SENIOR Social Worker based at Kirkcaldy in Fife has been removed from the social workers register for failing to manage and supervise his social workers appropriately.

Reginald Turk was struck off following a three-day hearing of the Scottish Social Services Council Conduct Sub-Committee held in May.

According to the judgement, problems had been reported with Turk’s supervision style. Although the sessions took place on a monthly basis, he did not pay enough attention to unallocated duty cases, the sub-committee found.

The judgement read: “By focusing his attention on allocated cases, and failing to pay sufficient attention to duty cases, allegedly due to inaccurate information held on the SWIFT system, the Registrant created a systemic risk that serious and problematic cases requiring further attention would be missed.

“The Registrant was insufficiently proactive in the management of his team and in overseeing their case work. The Registrant’s over-reliance on workers bringing matters to his attention created a systemic risk that serious and problematic cases requiring further attention would be missed.

“The Registrant failed to ensure that adequate systems were in place to manage case closures. He had responsibility for a significant backlog of cases requiring to be assessed for closure or allocation. Allowing case files to remain unassessed for lengthy periods without being read or closed or allocated by the responsible officer is, by his own admission, a dangerous practice.

“In many cases the Registrant did not read the full assessment or check profile notes for additional information; the Registrant confined his reading to the case summary. This is an unacceptable practice that may place service users at risk. “

As a result he did not have an “adequate oversight” of his team’s workload, the sub-committee concluded.

If you are affected by any of the issues raised in this judgement or if you have any views or comments, please send them to Tim Parkinson, SASW Development Worker,

Email: t.parkinson@basw.co.uk

The full judgement can be found at: www.sssc.uk.com
FOLLOWING the Scottish Parliament elections in May former social worker Angela Constance has been appointed as the new Minister for Children and Young People, with responsibility for social work. She takes over from Adam Ingram.

Ms Constance has been the SNP member for Almond Valley since 2007 and was previously the Minister for Skills and Lifelong Learning.

A qualified social worker, she has worked mostly in prison-based settings, firstly with Clackmannanshire Council at HMP Glenochil and then with Perth and Kinross Council at HMP Perth.

She also worked for six years as a Social Worker at The State Hospital, Carstairs, where she acted as both a mental health officer and practice teacher.

Falkirk West MSP Michael Matheson takes on a ministerial role for the first time by becoming Minister for Public Health, taking over from Shona Robison.

A qualified occupational therapist, Mr Matheson practised as a community occupational therapist with Stirling Council, Central Regional Council and Highland Regional Council before becoming an MSP. He also has a BA and a Diploma in Applied Social Sciences from the Open University.

Mr Matheson has had close links with SASW’s Forth Valley Branch and has spoken at branch meetings on several occasions.

Under Constance care - See Pages 12 - 13

Long standing SASW member Don Millar received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the BASW UK AGM held in Birmingham in May. Mr Millar has at various times chaired the association’s Children and Young People’s Committee and the Criminal Justice Committee.

A new commission has been set up by the Scottish Government to find more effective ways of dealing with women offenders. Chaired by former Lord Advocate Dame Elish Angiolini, it comes after the publication of a follow up report from HM Inspectorate of Prisons on Cornton Vale Prison and Young Offenders Institute.

David McKenna, Chief Executive of Victim Support Scotland, has been awarded an OBE in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List for services to disadvantaged people. Mr McKenna has a 26 year history of working in the field of victim and witness support and has been Chief Executive of VSS since 2001.

Two new documents have been published as part of Scotland’s first National Dementia Strategy. Standards of Care for Dementia will help people with dementia, their families and carers understand and assert their rights while the dementia skills framework Promoting Excellence will help ensure that the standards are met.

Kilmarnock MSP Willie Coffey has branded BBC Scotland’s The Scheme as “tabloid TV at its worst” during a debate. Mr Coffey said the programme had dangerously exposed people already at risk for public entertainment. Other MSPs said the programme had highlighted some important issues around drugs, alcohol and deprivation.

MediaWatch - See Pages 16 - 17
I STARTED my presidency of ADSW as all presidents do - with a conference. It took 10 months to plan and I called it “What is to be done?” after the title of a pamphlet written by Lenin, the purpose being to focus us on the elemental enquiry: How do we move forward in our current, difficult circumstances?

At the time of planning, the emphasis was very much on the integration agenda, giving people choice and control over the services they receive, those we provide and financial constraints within which we are all operating.

Those remain the big issues of the moment for me. But there is another that has bubbled to the surface on a number of fronts recently which is the reputation of social work and social care. We know that Scotland enjoys more public support than elsewhere in the UK but we also know that support can disappear rapidly.

The mystery around social work - what it is and what it does - has prevailed for years. Over the last three years ADSW has been very active in trying to raise awareness and combat negative publicity and prejudice surrounding the profession with some degree of success.

We have developed a successful press campaign “Social Work Changes Lives” and produced the Social Work Challenge, which invites participants to try their hand at keeping children safe by following a multiple choice questionnaire on a safeguarding scenario. But as ever “Events, dear boy...” as Harold Macmillan famously remarked, continue to intervene.

The current crisis in Southern Cross has led to renewed concern about the security of the care of older people in private nursing and care homes. ADSW has responded by getting involved, making local contingencies and working in partnership with Southern Cross, Scottish Government and COSLA to protect the interests of its residents in Scotland. Then there was the Panorama programme on Winterbourne View, the private secure hospital in Bristol, which appalled the country.

It took me back to the 1970s when I worked as a social worker to close such secure wards and develop community alternatives. So for me, while there is inevitably blame to attach for various criminal acts that have allegedly been committed, we must challenge the model of care and remind the public that there are other, better, more inclusive ways of caring for people with learning disabilities, complex needs and challenging behaviour.

Just as I write this, the Equality and Human Rights Commission has published an interim report on care at home in England. The commission says it has uncovered worrying cases of neglect and lack of respect for older people’s privacy and dignity.

The current debate around the future of adult care in Scotland has an implicit undertone of “NHS good; social work bad” about it. In the midst of this maelstrom of negativity about the profession and concern about the people we look after, as President of ADSW I want you to do two things: retain your sense of indignation at poor practice and do all you can to challenge it; and remember the good things that social work achieves every day. We help over 500,000 people in Scotland every year, we support them through crisis, we look at all their needs and we do what no other profession can or does do.

We also have a new Ministerial team in Government consisting of an ex-social worker in Angela Constance, Minister for Children and Young People, and an ex-occupational therapist in Michael Matheson, Minister for Public Health. That kind of experience, expertise and empathy in the Government can only be good for social work.

One thing is certain, throughout the UK the focus is on social work and social care. We all need to keep a steady eye on the people we serve and ensure that the standards we apply are those we would expect for our own family. They deserve nothing less.

**Charity reaches Lottery finals**

DEAN and Cauvin Trust, which helps support young people during their transition from care, has reached the finals of the National Lottery Awards 2011.

The trust, one of Edinburgh’s oldest charities, has fought off more than 1,000 entrants to become one of only three voluntary agency/charity finalists and the only one from Scotland.

The charity supports young people making the transition from being looked after and accommodated to living in the community. Its aftercare service supports young people as soon as they arrive in one of its residential units and receives significant funding from the National Lottery.

Voting for the finals - which will be open to the public - will run from 2 to 26 September. The winners will be announced live on television in November.

For information on how to vote, see: www.deanandcauvin.org.uk
Time for social work to make a stand

David Mitchell

NOW IS the time for social work to make its voice heard and to make a stand for social justice, according to Iain Ferguson, Senior Lecturer in Social Work at Stirling University.

Dr Ferguson was delivering the annual Morag Faulds Memorial Lecture at the University of the West of Scotland in Paisley.

He said: “Since its election in May 2010, the Conservative Liberal Democrat coalition has launched the most savage assault on the welfare state since its creation. We know that levels of mental ill health are on the increase and can see the fear of those who live in or whose relatives live in Southern Cross homes.

“So how do we move from being a quiet profession to being a social work of resistance? Social workers, of course, cannot do this on their own. But what we can do is link up with those who are trying to resist. If not now, when?”

In a paper entitled “Just do it! Social work, ethics and resistance”, Dr Ferguson argued that the spaces in which social workers could exercise choice and discretion had shrunk considerably over the past 20 years with implications for what had been traditionally understood as ethical practice.

He described the changes that had taken place in social work practice over the past two decades as being dominated by the concept of “managerialism”.

Firstly, there was the introduction in the 1990s of a regime of performance management, driven by targets and performance indicators, and underpinned by inspection, regulation and audit.

Then there was managerialism’s contribution to creating a “climate of fear” in many social work workplaces, a culture in which it felt very difficult for workers to speak out against what they saw as poor practice.

And finally there was the growing role of the market within social work and the increasing application of private sector priorities to social care.

“To be honest, our track record of collective response as a profession, and our involvement in political and collective campaigning, is not great,” he said.

“However, given the way in which the profession has been attacked and undermined by governments over the past 30 years, and given also the kind of workloads that many social workers are carrying, it’s not surprising that they’ve been quiet.”

Report backs lead commissioning

PLANS TO introduce “lead commissioning” in health and social care have been backed by a far-reaching report from the Christie Commission on reforming public services in Scotland.

The commission, led by former STUC General Secretary Campbell Christie, was set up in November to examine how Scotland’s public services could be better delivered in future.

Under lead commissioning, health boards and local authorities would contract services from one another to focus on need rather than traditional supply responsibilities.

The commission held talks with the partners involved current proposals for lead commissioning arrangements in the Highlands, as well as the integrated approach being followed by West Lothian Community Health and Care Partnership.

“We agree with the widely held view that this is an area in which both substantial savings and an improvement in outcomes can be secured by achieving greater integration of services for example, to reduce the number and cost of unplanned admissions of older people to hospital. It is right therefore that this area should be a priority for service reform,” the report says.

“We call on the Scottish Government and other partners to continue to take this work forward as a priority, with a view to developing arrangements which support the integrated provision of health and social care services, in particular for older people.”

The commission also says there is growing evidence personalisation is effective in meeting service users’ needs more directly. Self-directed support is one mechanism for making personalisation work.

“We believe that there is scope for further development of self-directed support, particularly in considering how funds interact with other welfare, health and social care budgets that may be available to an individual.”

Development matters

Tim Parkinson,
SASW Development Worker

“OH THE summer time is coming; and the trees are sweetly blooming…” It seems like we have had a long wait for summer and I’m spending much of it on the road visiting as many Scottish social workers as possible.

Why is that? Well, you will know by now that the proposals to move towards dissolving BASW and forming a new legal entity, incorporating what was the Interim Board of the College of Social Work, are developing at a pace following the overwhelming support for them at the BASW UK AGM.

So by the time we get to a Constitutional General Meeting in late autumn to effect that officially, we at SASW need to know exactly what Scottish social workers and SASW members want for Scotland in this new structure.

Clearly there needs to be a Scotland-based body, answerable to Scottish members and with the competence and experience to interact on their behalf with the Scottish Government, SSSC, SCSWIS, ADSW, academic institutions and the rest of the Scottish social work establishment.

But should that be an arm of a UK-wide college, a devolved or federated Scottish College, something in between, or something else? What would be the effects and implications of any option?

My mission over the summer is to try to get into team meetings, practitioners’ forums, workplace lunchtime meetings and short slots at in-house training events all over the country in order to raise awareness of these issues and gather views and opinions.

Of course, I also want to help social workers to realise the opportunity that now exists for their voice to be directly engaged in policy making and revision, through a fully functioning and recognised Scotland-focused professional association. Current developments and a genuine desire from the Scottish Government to work in partnership to make social work more effective offer us an opportunity unprecedented in the last 41 years.

The strength and status of a profession is proportional to the strength and status of the professional association which represents it. Therefore, your professional status and standing is tied to that of SASW, and vice versa. The most important thing social workers can do (especially at this time) is to join and get involved. Empower us to empower you.

During May and June I have been to meetings in parts of Highland, Dundee, Fife, Ayrshire, Clackmannanshire, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dumfries and Galloway, East Renfrewshire, Midlothian and more. I have also been to several of the universities. There are many more people to see, even in these same authorities.

Can I come and visit your team or workplace? Will you ask your team manager, or service manager? Why not show them this page and then email or ‘phone me?

I can provide a brief 15-minute slot at a team meeting if time is tight, or an hour and a half at other forums, depending on what suits your workplace.

I have been continuing to develop the forums and interest groups for students, independent social workers, and “creative middle management” (which recognises the pressures from all directions on seniors and team managers) so please contact me if you want to be included in information, news and developments about these groups.

We are also keen to support the continuance and development of the local practitioner forums, which SASW believes are an important aspect of reviewing and maintaining the consistency of professional standards and ethical practice.

However, at the moment the most important thing is consulting on the future of SASW after the College, and increasing membership to strengthen your influence in Scottish social work tomorrow. So please contact me to arrange a visit to your workplace.

Then hopefully in the words of the song: “And we’ll all go together…”

Contact: t.parkinson@basw.co.uk

• See Back Page

New body will tackle disease

A NEW voluntary organisation has been launched to help improve prevention, treatment and support for viral hepatitis.

Hepatitis Scotland will be managed by Scottish Drugs Forum under a £200,000 two-year contract awarded by the Scottish Government.

It will support the work of voluntary sector groups towards:

• Preventing spread of the disease
• Increasing the numbers of people diagnosed
• Improving access to treatment and support
• Reducing the stigma.

Hepatitis C is a major health challenge in Scotland with an estimated one per cent of the population infected - double the rate in England. The disease causes inflammation of the liver and can lead to serious illness and death if untreated.

David Liddell, Director of Scottish Drugs Forum, said: “People must have easy access to a wide range of support to help them avoid contracting viral hepatitis, as well as if they do. Treatment can be gruelling so patients may need help for social needs while they are being treated.”

Contact: t.parkinson@basw.co.uk
Children’s hearings - the new Act

Ruth Stark

CHILDREN’S hearings are currently undergoing some significant changes in the way that they are run.

Many of the administrative tasks that were undertaken by local authorities have moved to a new national body and there will be some changes to the processes that children, young people and families experience as they come into and go through the system.

The implementation of the changes has now begun and we will be updating you through *Rostrum* when these are expected to happen.

Regular newsletters providing an update on these changes are also being issued by the Scottish Government and secondary legislation to enable the implementation of the Act is currently being prepared.

The implementation of the Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 will take some time to roll out as it will bring together the administrative functions from the 32 local authorities into the new national body and yet try to retain a local focus.

Bernadette Monaghan has been appointed National Convener of Children’s Hearings Scotland which will oversee appointment, training, monitoring and administration of Scotland’s 2,500 panel members. To support her work the new body will have a board chaired by Craig Spence and this will be responsible for the £4.5 million budget making sure our children are cared for and protected in our families and communities.

The new national structure will be divided up into support areas and the geographical boundaries have yet to be decided. This will have an impact on the organisation of Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration and how your local reporters and panel members are selected and administered. Carole Wilkinson is the Chair of SCRA and Neil Hunter is the new Principal Reporter.

The appointment and administration of safeguarders and legal representatives will also move to a national administrative body but as yet there are no details of how this will happen and it may take another two to three years.

In the last edition of *Rostrum* there was an article highlighting the new advocacy that will be available to children and again how this will work has not yet been fully decided. This is to make sure that children’s voices do not get drowned out by the adults present in a hearing.

One of the issues facing the system is how to achieve that discussion with children, young people and their families about what would help them change things in their lives — often with very personal and intimate details of their lives discussed around the table — while making sure that rights are protected and everyone is heard in the process. This has been why our system has been so successful in protecting children.

Retaining this discreet process with the addition of legal representatives, advocates, teachers, social workers, foster carers, relevant people and others will be at times a difficult task. Let us hope that in the implementation of this new legislation we do not lose what has been a unique and effective system for making sure children are properly looked after.

If you have views on how you think the system should be developing through the secondary legislation, now is the time to let us know so that we can be sure the views of the practitioners who have to implement the decisions of the hearings can be heard in this updating of the system that will affect many vulnerable children’s lives.

Craig Spence: Will chair Children’s Hearings Scotland
SCOTLAND’S Adoption Register has gone live and is now taking referrals.

Funded by the Scottish Government and operated by BAAF Scotland, the new register was set up to increase the number of children in Scotland who are placed for adoption and reduce the time that children wait for placement.

To help achieve this, the register will be working with local authorities and voluntary adoption agencies to co-ordinate a nationwide linking service to carry out the widest possible search of children and families who are waiting for placement across Scotland.

The register will also operate a data collection service which will provide an overview of adoption practice and activity in Scotland that has previously not been available.

Reports will be published and statistics made available on such topics as:
• The characteristics of children and families on referral
• How long children and families wait to be linked
• The likelihood of placement
• The number of placements.

The information gathered will be able to help agency recruitment as well as provide information for policy makers and academics.

The Scottish Government has asked all agencies to take part by sharing their information with the register so that it can provide as complete a picture as possible.

For more information: www.scottlandsadoptionregister.org.uk

Name: Frank Mullen (aka Frankie)  Age: 44  
Course: BA (Hons) in Social Work, Open University  

Why social work?
I lived in poverty when I was growing up and when I entered into the world of work I witnessed a lot of discrimination and inequality. Plus some of the jobs I have had were downright tedious and boring (not something you can say about social work). I just feel it is more rewarding to work directly in trying to help people face to face.

What area of social work interests you most?
I’m not sure really. There is something about criminal justice that appeals to me, I suppose it is the way that criminal justice social work is structured. However, I feel that if you have good social work values of treating people with respect, being honest and trustworthy, you can successfully work with any client group.

What did you do before social work training?
I left school with no qualifications and did mainly unskilled manual jobs such as labouring on building sites and production line work, and then I got a job with Glasgow City Council’s cleansing department. I worked there for six years and then transferred to social work, working six years in residential child care and for the last seven years in a community addiction team.

Favourite music?
I like all types of music from Bob Dylan to Eminem, U2, The Stereophonics, Bryan Ferry, The Charlatans and The Rolling Stones. Far too many to mention.

Favourite film?
This is difficult. I liked Carlito’s Way, The Godfather series and Kalifornia with an excellent performance from Brad Pitt. I think Trainspotting from Irvine Welsh’s novel was brilliant with its mix of dark humour and the real life horror of heroin addiction. The music was great too.

Favourite book?
Papillon, an autobiographical novel which is 1,000 times better than the film. I would highly recommend it.

Last book out of the library?
A Million Little Pieces by James Frey. Again an autobiography about a recovering drug addict. A bit gory when he describes his drug withdrawal with too much detail about losing body fluids.

How do you let off steam?
Lift the lid on a boiling pot of water... I probably drink too much. At least I recognise this, which means I can address it (after my studies are over I promise).

Have you been on placement yet and how do you feel about it?
Yes, I’m currently on my first placement in Glasgow in a youth justice setting based at the Newlands Centre, Parkhead, next to the Celtic football club stadium. It’s great now but I struggled to adapt at first. I get to combine children and families work with criminal justice, doing court and hearings reports.

Where do you hope to be in five years’ time?
The Bahamas would be nice... No, I guess it depends on if and when I qualify and where the local authority I work for utilises me. As I said, I would quite like to do criminal justice work, perhaps in one of Her Majesty’s establishments.

Message on your T-shirt?
You’re having a giraffe.
IT HAD been a busy time in both my work and home life since I had won the BASW Scotland Student Social Worker of the Year in March 2010. Winning the award had definitely got me off to a good start and had motivated me for the year ahead.

Working in a busy children and justice area team within South Lanarkshire Council has brought its challenges, and I’ve never learned so much in such a short period of time, but I am convinced more than ever that social work is the right career path for me.

So by the end of November last year, I was looking forward to bit of a break from my usual surroundings. As part of my prize for winning the award, BASW Scotland had kindly arranged for me to go on a break to a European city. I chose Berlin, the capital city of Germany.

I had never been before and wanted to use the opportunity to see a new and interesting place. Berlin is certainly a city full of history and culture as well as having reputation for fantastic nightlife. With my friend Louise Donoghue (we did the same course at Glasgow School of Social Work) I had planned to visit a number of attractions, including the famous Berlin Wall and the Brandenburg Gate.

However, as is common in the day to day activities of a social worker, the trip did not go quite as planned! As Louise and I made our way to Edinburgh Airport on 29 November, the country was almost at a standstill due to freak snow storms. Of course, when we finally arrived, the airport had been closed. Our flight was cancelled and the airport not able to reopen for some days. We were stranded…

So, as all good social workers do when faced with barriers, we put in place a new plan! We decided to make the most of the situation and arranged to spend two nights at the fabulous The Witchery by the Castle hotel.

The hotel consists of eight gothic-themed rooms and has been frequented by celebrities and Hollywood stars such as Jack Nicholson and Pierce Brosnan. My friend and I stayed in the Library themed suite, complete with antique books, Paisley covered walls and overlooking the Royal Mile.

Champagne on arrival and a continental breakfast in the room complemented things perfectly. Spending time in a snow covered capital city only added to the magical experience.

We spent time viewing the city landmarks, including the Castle, Royal Mile and Scott Monument, all under a blanket of snow. We were spooked after going on the underground ghost walk at Mary King’s Close and took in the atmosphere at the Elephant House Gourmet Tea and Coffee House and Restaurant, made famous as the place of inspiration for famous authors such as JK Rowling.

My time spent in Edinburgh courtesy of BASW Scotland was certainly an adventure - one that was unexpected, unplanned and yet magical and a once in a lifetime experience.

I would like to thank BASW for giving me this opportunity and my colleagues in South Lanarkshire Council for supporting me through my first year in social work. Who knows, one day I may make it to Berlin after all!
Under Constance care

The May elections saw former social worker Angela Constance take over as the new Minister for Children and Young People with responsibility for social work. We ask her about some of the profession’s key concerns.

**How will the Scottish Government continue to support social workers in promoting professional competence and confidence?**

Scotland needs a social services workforce which is competent, confident and valued. One which is capable of delivering personalised and flexible services which meet changing demands of working effectively with partners in the delivery of high quality, continually improving and user and carer-focused services. And that means delivering improved outcomes for people and communities.

*Changing Lives* provided an important platform on which to develop approaches and services fit to meet the needs of the future. It identified the need for social services to develop a learning culture to commit individuals and organisations to lifelong learning and development.

Its focus on early intervention and prevention, focusing on outcomes for people and having a confident, competent and valued workforce, remain at the heart of this administration’s aspirations for public services.

The Scottish Government continues to support a range of resources to support workforce and leadership development at all levels of the social services workforce. The social services workforce is linked to leadership development in the public sector through representation on the Public Sector Leadership Collaboration group. This has resulted in cross sectoral activity with police, health and other public bodies. We also support the ADSW in developing its capacity to more actively engage and lead on the leadership agenda - in particular with regard to personalisation of services - and also in supporting the roll out of local practitioner forums across the country.

We also sponsor the Scottish Social Services Council which, as the regulator of social workers in Scotland, supports the professionalism of the sector through registration. Social workers must not only achieve standards but continuously update and reflect them in their practice, which must be evidenced, to maintain their registration. SSSC will also take action where issues of misconduct have arisen.

Regulation brings a public confidence in the profession and to the profession itself. As the regulator of education and training to the sector, SSSC approves all social work degree courses in Scotland and conducts annual quality assurance programmes. Standards are high and feedback confirms that these programmes are delivering what employers and students need.

That is not to say that there is no room for improvement. The SSSC Engagement and Enhancement Strategy is a vital strand of activity aimed at ensuring that degrees continue to deliver high quality social work education in Scotland. The SSSC also promotes social work and social care as a positive career.

*Our student members tell us that they are struggling to find placements because of a lack of practice teachers and appropriate settings. What can the Scottish Government do to solve the crisis in providing student social work placements?*

As a former practice teacher myself, I know that quality placement experiences are critical for social work students. Ensuring that practice placements are delivered is the responsibility of those higher education institutions delivering the social work degree. However, this can only be achieved with full employer engagement and partnership. No one else can provide these placements across Scotland.

The profession - which consists of your members - needs to have practice teaching at the heart of its culture. Employers and current employees have a responsibility to train and support the future generations of social workers. There needs to be leadership and encouragement to support workers to view this as a vital part of their job. I will continue to take a close interest in this.
Joined up services also require joined up leadership at a political level. How will Ministers work together across departments when, for example, children of substance misusing parents are also affected by Justice policies, such as the roll out of Community Payback Orders, and those of Health?

I agree with this point. Scottish Ministers recognise the importance of ensuring that the requirement for better integration is reflected by national leadership that is joined up and focused on improving outcomes for service users.

The Scottish Government’s outcomes focus brings together areas of policy which impact on each other and there is a strong emphasis on collaborative working at all levels of government.

In terms of supporting children of substance misusing parents, for example, the Scottish Government leads a steering group - which includes representation from COSLA and the third sector - which co-ordinates a significant programme of activity across Government.

We are also making effective use of the newly appointed Chief Social Work Adviser who provides professional advice across the Scottish Government on all aspects of social work services, from the strategic to the operational, and across the portfolio areas of children, young people, health and criminal justice.

**As the Minister for Young People, what do you think can be done better to redirect young offenders? Are there any extra opportunities that can be taken for those in young offenders institutions before their identity and self-image is fully formed?**

We continue to be proactive in supporting and diverting young people away from offending behaviour. Through the partnership framework *Preventing Offending by Young People: A Framework for Action* we outlined the shared ambition of Government and key partners to prevent, divert, manage and change offending behaviour by children and young people.

The care and support of children and young people has long required a multi-agency, multi-disciplined approach with the child at the centre. By intervening early and putting in place streamlined and consistent planning, assessment and decision making processes for young people who offend, through such approaches as the Whole System and multi-agency early and effective intervention, we are committed to preventing young people from becoming offenders in the future.

Where young people do receive a custodial sentence, the Scottish Prison Service has developed a Strategy for Young People which, by working with partners, further supports young people to ensure age and stage appropriate service are provided which address attitudes and beliefs, helping to inform identity and self image of young people.

**As a former social worker, what is your view on the development of a College of Social Work across the UK and a possible devolved or federated Scottish college?**

I recognise that this is primarily a development set in train to deal with some challenging situations in England. The situation in Scotland is different and we have robust policy and processes already in place. We are however watching the development of the College with interest and, of course, if there are opportunities for Scotland arising from this work then we will wish to consider these.

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**As the College will be a membership organisation it is ultimately for individual social workers to decide if it provides added value for them and thus if they wish to become members.**

**ANGLA CONSTANCE** was born, raised and educated in West Lothian and was a local councillor before being elected MSP for Almond Valley (formerly Livingston) in May 2007.

She graduated with an MA in Social Science from Glasgow University and then worked for spells in a bank and housing association before gaining a Certificate in Welfare Studies at West Lothian College.

After qualifying with a DipSW and Masters in Social Science (Social Work) from Stirling University, she began her career as a prison-based Social Worker, firstly with Clackmannanshire Council at HMP Glenochil and then Perth and Kinross Council at HMP Perth.

She then spent six years as a Social Worker at The State Hospital, Carstairs, where she was a mental health officer and practice teacher, before becoming as MSP. She was previously Skills and Lifelong Learning Minister.

Married with one child, she enjoys jogging, fun runs and marathons.
“WHAT? The true face of carers? This is the theme of Carers Week? Listen, don’t ask. You don’t want to know. If you did have a clue what a carer’s true face is, it would frighten the pants off you!”

This is a quote from Hugh Marriott, a carer and author of The selfish pig’s guide to caring, about Carers Week which ran from 13 to 19 June. If you want to know if this is the truth then ask Crawford Fallon. I did and it is. For the last 10 years Crawford has been the sole carer for his wife Elizabeth, who was brain injured after being involved in a hit and run accident.

Elizabeth’s injury came after a night out. The couple were walking home when she was hit by a car. In an instant their lives changed. There was no warning, they were not consulted and the repercussions of that night have changed their lives completely.

Before the crash, Crawford and Elizabeth were happily married and living in their home town of Shotts in North Lanarkshire. Elizabeth was a nurse specialising in working with infectious diseases and Crawford was developing a career in the mining industry.

Crawford had to give up his job and become a full time carer for Elizabeth. Elizabeth’s injury makes her unpredictable, she can become aggressive and can shout and swear. On occasion she has been violent and has hit Crawford. Elizabeth has hurt herself and talked of suicide. Initially, there were many offers of help from family and friends but these have all stopped. People are embarrassed by Elizabeth’s behaviour and don’t like being seen out with her.

Like many carers, Crawford attends to Elizabeth’s every needs. Over the years Crawford has kept an intimate diary detailing what he has done. He has developed a whole new range of skills, he is an expert and there is quite literally nothing that Crawford does not know about caring for Elizabeth.

Before Elizabeth’s accident Crawford had never cared for anyone, least of all someone with a brain injury, so he has had to learn. This has often been by trial and error. Crawford has made mistakes and each mistake has been costly, resulting in either his or Elizabeth’s distress - or both.

Crawford’s learning has been unsupported with little help. There have been no university tutors, practice educators, senior carers or colleagues to learn from. There has been no safe learning environment and no boundaries. Elizabeth’s personality can change seemingly without warning. But Crawford has become expert at reading the signs - he has to be.

Recently Crawford was visited by a social worker who was completing an assessment. Like all social workers he had a deadline, he had a caseload, he had to complete all the relevant paperwork and had to fill in all the computer screens. Crawford went out to make him a cup of coffee and on his return the social worker was asking Elizabeth how she would feel about someone coming in to help care for her.

Elizabeth became angry. This can happen and when it does Elizabeth can shout and swear or even become aggressive. Crawford knows this, he is the expert. If you read his diaries or ask him to share his expertise he will tell you. Crawford used all of his patience to explain to the social worker that working with Elizabeth requires skill and tact. Elizabeth does not understand the concept of a deadline, or of a report or the need to have your case notes updated.

Crawford has been here before with doctors who have offered diagnosis after diagnosis. He has been there with occupational therapists, dieticians, psychologists and psychiatrists. Amidst all of this Crawford is still engaged in a complex legal battle over the original injury. Losing this could put his home at risk as he and Elizabeth exist on state benefit. Crawford has to care and fight, and balancing both of these is becoming an ever more challenging task.

Crawford needs to be organised - for him this is the key - and his diaries help. He has by now experienced most of the challenges involved in caring for Elizabeth. There is not much he has not dealt with. He has dealt with tantrums, violence, tears, depression, anger and frustration, and understands all of these.

He understands all to well his
own burden. Fighting on all fronts is draining and he too is feeling the pressure. Caring for Elizabeth saps his energy and creativity. Like many carers he feels he is the only one who can care for Elizabeth.

He finds it easy to share his knowledge and expertise but hard to give up his role. He worries that someone else won’t care for Elizabeth properly. He worries that the progress they have made will reduce if someone else comes in. He worries that if someone else comes in he will lose his identity.

Crawford likes to keep fit. He finds solace in the solitary pursuit of running. He uses this time to refresh himself, to de-stress, to reflect on what has worked and what he might do differently. Crawford needs reassurance. He needs patience and understanding and he needs to be involved. Crawford needs to be recognised as the expert.

Crawford and Elizabeth need social workers to understand that their relationship is intimate, that amidst all the frustration and anger there is a bond that has been challenged and strengthened by adversity. Crawford and Elizabeth need each other and they need social workers to understand this.

For Crawford, the important thing is that each professional has an understanding not only of their role but of how all of them work together and understand each other. Co-ordination is the key. If professionals took the time to read up on Elizabeth before they visited her they would understand that change frightens Elizabeth and that when she is frightened the fight or flight instinct takes over. Trying to put together a package of support to have an impact won’t happen under these circumstances.

Crawford needs social workers to talk to him. He knows the Elizabeth’s behaviour can put people off. He also knows that this can be avoided. New ideas or changes need to move at Elizabeth’s pace, she needs to be consulted and her views sought. Crawford needs to be there to help Elizabeth to understand what is being suggested. After all of these years Elizabeth trusts Crawford implicitly. He knows and she knows he knows.

Crawford and Elizabeth were put in touch with Headway, a national charity for people affected by brain injury. Neither of them was aware that such a charity existed so both were enthusiastic. Elizabeth was able to access educational opportunities and play a role in educating others about the cause and effect of brain injury.

They attended Headway’s local support groups. These were often noisy and unpredictable as people with brain injuries find environments such as this to be difficult. Nevertheless, they were glad to find some support and both felt positive about their involvement.

Crawford relished becoming involved and became active in his local branch, organising events and developing the role of the charity locally and nationally. He found an avenue for his energy and used his management skills to develop a better financial infrastructure for the branch. He also worked to develop the range of opportunities and found himself involved in fundraising activities.

But despite their initial optimism, both realised that Headway offered them little that they did not already have - Crawford and Elizabeth are each other’s support. They have nothing against Headway and they parted on reasonable terms. But it is their interdependence that characterises their relationship. They struggle to project that into other settings and prefer managing their lives together.

In Crawford and Elizabeth’s world the professional pressure for social workers matters little. They are sympathetic. They know that social workers work in a busy and demanding environment, that they are often blamed and they get bad a press. All of this is relevant but not important. For Crawford and Elizabeth, these challenges are professional not personal.

“Crawford and Elizabeth need each other and they need social workers to understand this.”

Crawford and Elizabeth’s challenges are personal. Their lives are dominated by Elizabeth’s needs and Crawford’s desire to meet them as best as he can. He does so because he loves Elizabeth, their bond is deeply personal and goes beyond any challenge life has thrown at them.

Crawford has accrued knowledge and expertise. This has been developed in the most pressured and challenging environment and Crawford has retained all of this knowledge. He is desperate to share it. There are no issues of confidentiality - it is theirs and if it helps it is yours.

Yet in helping Elizabeth gain more independence there is a risk for Crawford. If Elizabeth gets the support she needs he needs to re-define himself and there is a risk here. Such a transition will prove difficult. While Crawford and Elizabeth want this, they know that getting it will mean another change. They know this but they still want it.

Crawford has aspirations and wants to go back to university. He sees a future but he needs to know that the present is safe. In order for this to happen, social workers need to listen to Crawford and to learn from him.

Social workers need to ask him about Elizabeth. They need to ask him about him. They need to ask them about them. Social workers need to talk to others such as psychiatrists and dieticians. Social workers need to value the uniqueness of his experiences and of his relationship with Elizabeth.

Carers do not feel connected to many of the organisational pressures for social workers. They want a service that meets their needs. The financial pressures of local authorities are not immediate to them. Why should they be? The pressures they are experiencing are just as great. They are personal pressures, everyday challenges to which there is no end in sight. Crawford and Elizabeth need social workers who can listen to and learn from them.

David McKendrick is a Lecturer in Social Work at Glasgow Caledonian University
IT’S ACHIEVED such cult status that “Where’s Bullet?”, “Happy as Larry” and “It’s a sit-in!” have quickly become popular catchphrases amongst many of its viewers.

Others watching it might casually wonder how Harry’s begonias triumphed in a deprived area like that. Or just maybe they might think a little deeper about the impact of poverty or addiction...

If you have seen The Scheme you will probably have thought of one if not all of these things. Initially a four-part fly on the wall type documentary based in north west Kilmarnock, the first two episodes were aired last year but they were halted for legal reasons. The rest of the series and an additional update, followed by a debate, were not aired until May this year.

The Scheme followed the lives of individuals such as: Marvin trying to kick a drug habit and make a better life with his girlfriend Dayna and dog Bullet; the Crees, a family trying to resurrect a derelict community centre; and single mum Kay and her two daughters Kendal and Candice, who is pregnant to the son of the Cunninghams, another family trying to make sure their children did not make the same mistakes they did.

As was evident from The Debate, I would not deny that the issues raised are very real indeed for every town in Scotland. However, I would also argue that this scheme and other communities across the country also have their positives and strengths, which were rarely portrayed in the final five-part documentary, especially amongst the young people of the community.

Despite how it may have been portrayed on the programme, not everyone from The Scheme has turned to violence, drugs and crime in a “dog eat dog world” situation as is boasted about by Marvin’s cousins in Episode One. How do I know this? Because I grew up in The Scheme. I lived there, I rode my bike there, went to school there and my mum still lives there. And when I have time off university I return there.

In my opinion, this programme irresponsibly exploited people in awful situations for entertainment purposes. It would be wrong for me to say that poverty, unemployment, addiction and violence do not exist in this area - they clearly do - after all it is all on camera. However, do I feel that Episodes One and Two were full of people pandering to the camera. Yes, completely! When does anyone show interest in an area of deprivation like this, and when do people ever feel recognised within such an area?

Whatever those individuals’ issues may be, of course they will play for the camera when given the chance to be centre stage and be heard. This detracted from some of the more pressing issues around poverty and crime, because even if it wasn’t the aim of the documentary makers those on the show became figures of entertainment. And this entertainment value gave The Scheme its cult viewing status.

Episodes Three and Four showed a darker and less comedic side to The Scheme which caused controversy, mostly for its scene involving drug misuse. I may add
that many within Kilmarnock tried to make sure that the final two episodes would not be aired due to their negative portrayal of the area.

Individuals in *The Scheme* know that their problems are not unique and they know that their behaviour will not often enhance their circumstances. But when there is no escape, no self efficacy and no support to change, then why would people want to? If *The Debate* highlighted anything, it was that it was easy to blame and label individuals for their circumstances, rather than find answers and solutions.

I do not hold any unique insights neither as a social work student nor as a (former) scheme resident as to why people find themselves facing these issues. But just like Nature v Nurture, Free Will or Determinism, Agency v Structure and in *The Debate*, there may never be one right or wrong answer.

I do believe though there is no arguing that in some situations people will thrive and others will not. But do the people that do not really need a TV camera following their difficulty? This programme not only damaged a large community which consists of a mixed economy of housing but also further undermined a town which was already beginning to struggle.

For me to give a balanced argument around the documentary, I would have to tackle many of the wider questions in society that most practitioners will find themselves wrestling with every day. Questions such as: How do you build resilience in adversity? Can people change? Or can the system?

At one point we see Steven, who struggles to cope with his brother’s substance misuse, openly state that he won’t be able to get a decent job himself because of his criminal record. However, others from the scheme felt prison was the only way of breaking a cycle of addiction and offending, at one point jail being described as “just a hospital for junkies”.

All these genuine human statements raise societal questions not just for social work but for society as a whole. So if I was to praise the programme at all it would be for bringing some of these issues into the spotlight. If we see anything from the final episode it is that human strength and positive relationships can overcome these issues. But in an area with such high deprivation, mistrust and low morale, how easy is it to sustain these relationships?

Of course, these are not new dilemmas for social work. The role of social work services was touched on in the programmes but not always explicit. Yet it felt that social work was being put under the spotlight in *The Debate* far more than it was in the actual programme.

During the debate, I felt very uncomfortable about the proposition of removing children from families similar to those shown in *The Scheme* as a solution. It would be a horrendous notion to think that a generation of children would have to be taken into care in order to make change and I was encouraged that this was quickly shot down. *The Scheme* is filled with children like Kendal, who have stable homes, if not slightly chaotic lives, and who are smart, loved and cared for.

Despite assumptions that I must have come into social work to work with “these people” - I didn’t. I did it because I was inspired to work with children with complex needs. I achieved this by “rebelling” and by rebelling I mean very early on decided I would not drink or take drugs because that’s what everyone else did. With the right encouragement and support, I spent all my energy working towards university. But I realise that not everyone is lucky enough to have these support networks and opportunities. I may not love where I came from but just like most of those shown on film I am not ashamed to say “I come fae the scheme!” What I am embarrassed by is the way it is shown on TV and the way its audiences seem to have decided that *The Scheme* is a rare place of hopelessness and despair. What they forget is that sometimes the begonias do grow!

Charlene Gay is a third year BA (Hons) Social Work student at Stirling University
MUCH OF my most recent interest has been concerned with what happens to adopted and fostered children when they become adults and the experiences of the birth parents from whom they are separated.

Shirley Jenkins and Elaine Norman’s *Filial Deprivation and Foster Care* is nearly 40 years old yet its insights into the experiences of parents who are separated from their children are as fresh today as ever, and as relevant given the dearth of writing on the subject.

Jenkins and Norman undertook a study of over 400 parents whose children had been taken into care. The rationale was that whilst: “...the effect of maternal deprivation on children has been a subject for major research investigation, the reciprocal aspect of the placement transaction, referred to here as filial deprivation, has not been similarly studied.”

They found that the immediate feelings of the parents on separation “ran the gamut from sadness to relief, from shame to anger, from bitterness to thankfulness”, the thankfulness related to an element of proactive volition on the part of the parents.

Overall, Jenkins and Norman found evidence of generalised attitudes of unworthiness or alienation and a sense of failure noting that “parenthood is a responsibility of our culture and placement (i.e. separation) tends to be an admission that individuals have failed as parents.” They suggested that there is a double sense of failure: a failure in responsibility, first as a parent and then as an individual.

Most of what we know in this field is concentrated on the child but given that these parents will either be involved in contact arrangements or - ironically - treated as resources once their child leaves care, it seems to me this study remains as instructive as ever.

The year after Jenkins and Norman’s publication, *In Search of Origins* brought to the fore the issue of the lifelong nature of adoption and in particular the identity needs of adopted people. John Triseliotis’ research drew attention to the fact that adopted children would one day grow up to be adults and may have a wish to know more about their origins, and this was not a product of any chip on the shoulder or “bad” adoption.

In the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, many adoption agencies encouraged adoptive parents to maintain “a blank and impenetrable wall between the identities of natural and adopting parents” or a “veil of secrecy” to be drawn over an adopted person’s origins. The consequences of this standpoint could be dismaying and debilitating.

Dismaying for the adoptive parents when it seemed as though their parenting had not been sufficient to “quell” their child’s curiosity about his or her origins - especially since they had been assured that in the words of one adoption manual from the late 1950s “instances of extreme curiosity and concern almost never happen” and debilitating for the adopted person because of a sense of betraying their parents by wishing to know of their birth family.

The result was often the maintenance of everyone’s (unhealthy) silence on the matter. This meant that either the adopted person suspended their wish to access their birth records until the death of their adoptive parents or was required to conceal their quest for information.

*In Search of Origins* (the work for which was conducted in Scotland where adopted people were allowed access to their birth record) pioneered widespread openness regarding adoption records and led directly to the provision to do so contained in the Children Act 1975 and the Adoption Act of 1976.

Forward over 30 years and although not strictly a social work text book, *A Boy Called Graham* is both a reminder of the consequences of when care fails and a record of a successful case that breached the secrecy surrounding care records.

From the time he came into local authority care in 1959, Graham Gaskin experienced many moves within foster care and had 14 different foster homes before the age of eight. During his 18 years in care he was sent to over 20 institutions - borstals, remand homes and prisons.

Gaskin repeatedly but unsuccessfully sought access to his records and eventually appealed to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. In 1989 the Court decided that Gaskin’s Article 8 right to have his private and family life respected by the state had been breached and that people in Gaskin’s position, who had been in public care as children, should not be obstructed from accessing their care records.

Graham Gaskin’s case was a milestone victory and led directly to the provisions in the Data Protection Act 1998 enabling access to social services records by people who had been in public care. Graham Gaskin died aged 46 in 2005.

All of these texts remain on my shelf well-thumbed.

Gary Clapton is a Senior Lecturer in Social Work at Edinburgh University
This is an update of the first edition published in 2003. It is written for an English audience with the usual cursory nod at other parts of the UK. The authors set issues of assessment and intervention firmly in the context of up to date legislation and policy so that these core social work roles are explored in a holistic way.

This is helpful, given the pressure that can be felt by front line workers to consider assessment to be the completion of a form and a fixed task. Intervention can so easily be considered simply as something for which we don’t have adequate resources can.

The book is divided into chapters grouped under Principles; Challenges and Dilemmas; and Synthesising, Integrating and Developing Practice. This structure is congruent with the authors’ mission to locate assessment and intervention within the entire profession of social work, rather than examine them as separate tasks.

That works reasonably well in the first part where different areas of assessment and then models of intervention are considered. This is done by presenting a résumé of the area of work or model and then a note of its disadvantages. That is helpful in being a crib sheet for models of intervention and areas of practice. The source of its helpfulness is also a reason why this book feels fragmented. In an effort to simultaneously break down the discussion of assessment and intervention and to locate it within the broader arena that is social work, it falls between those two stools.

The formatting of the book into two columns on each page adds to this sense of fragmentation and I found it difficult to see where the book was heading. Part Two works better than the rest because it addresses overarching issues such as rationing of services and thresholds of need which are particularly pertinent in the “Big Society” of today.

There is much that is useful in this book but it is not easy to access because it does not seem to be sure of whom it is addressing and what it is trying to achieve. Its heart is in the right place but I did not find it easy to follow or particularly helpful.

Early Professional Development for Social Workers
Edited by Raymond Taylor, Malcolm Hill and Fergus McNeill
Venture Press, 2011
ISBN 978-1-86178-084-3, £24.95
Reviewed by Ronnie Barnes, formerly Service Development Officer, Adults and Older People’s Services, West Lothian Council

This WEIGHTY tome began life as a collection of presentations to Glasgow School of Social Work and has evolved into this appraisal of the post qualifying world of social work that awaits the newly graduated social worker.

In fact, the book has been compiled for that very audience to assist their transition from the academic world of professional qualification to the more challenging environment of day to day practice. It also takes account of the requirement for professional registration and the need for post registration training and learning.

The book is divided into four main parts:
- Context of Early Professional Development
- Themes and Issues in Child and Family Social Work
- Themes and Issues in Community Care
- Themes and Issues in Criminal Justice

The first part is particularly welcome as it sets the context of contemporary social work by reflecting on, among other themes, the impact of degree level training, the management of risk in a risk averse society and management and leadership in social work (this chapter should be required reading for existing supervisors and managers).

The book then moves on to the child and family secton and sets out the relatively current policy on child poverty and how it impacts on practice and again sets the context for social work practice in this area. Other chapters look at protecting children, residential care, assessment methods and the rise of independent fostering.

The section on community care covers all the expected bases of older people, mental health, learning disability, adult protection, substance misuse, partnership working and the use of technology. The final main section concerns criminal justice and considers electronic monitoring, comparable criminal justice in three countries and what works for women offenders.

The book is particularly helpful in putting the different legislative frameworks across the UK into the individual contexts and doesn’t assume that the readership will be from only one of the four nations. It also helps to understand different frameworks and has good cross-referencing with the source material used by the authors.

While this book may appear at first glance to be a disparate collection of quasi-academic papers, that would be doing this important publication a disservice. The topics are relevant, written in a (mostly) readable and easy to digest style and in lengths that allow for dipping in and out. It’s unlikely to be read from cover to cover but will have something for everyone, including experienced practitioners and managers.

In the concluding chapter, the editors try to sum up the various themes which have emerged. This is helpful as it does round off the book by looking at the cross-cutting nature of client groupings and settings and how social work skills are essentially transferable. It also concludes that learning is lifelong and as such this book is a welcome addition to the furtherance of that learning.
THIS IS a well presented book which takes the reader through an eclectic mix of practice situations wherein a risk assessment is necessary or where risk assessment predicates good practice, staff or client safety. The reader is guided through general risk situations to client group specific approaches and the need to know how risk is assessed.

For example, defensive practice is a construct facing most practitioners in the face of moral panic and a blame culture. They tease out how to move away from covering your own back towards enabling clients to benefit from ascribed risk taking.

Another useful idea is the construct of positive risk taking, where clients can be helped towards growth. The notion that risk is a social construction is pre-eminent. This is beneficial when interwoven with the developments of direct payments and personalisation which are prominent in modern thinking.

There are useful diagrams and charts which point the reader in the direction of some form of actuarial approach, whereby the measurement of risk can be justified. Client specific risk assessments for young people, those with a mental disorder or couples are useful and relevant to most people’s practice.

The authors provide tools which can be utilised to ensure that an eclectic assessment of causal factors and options can be considered and readily identified while not bogging the reader down in academic literature, which can often be seen as too far removed from the front line decision making process where risk is an ever present issue.

They take us through all encompassing aspects of modern practice from defensible practice, where our decisions must be justified, situations where clients can be enabled via risk taking to learn and develop, into client group specific situations with young people and mental health issues, the latter two probably where societal demands are highest.

This book is well laid out and readable, enabling the practitioner or manager to quickly assimilate salient facts and approaches which can be applied readily. As a manager and practice teacher, I see many uses for it in both day to day decision making and in helping students develop an awareness of the multifarious nature of risk, risk assessment and risk management processes. Overall, it is a very useful resource for social workers across the spectrum of practice.

Social control and the use of power in social work with children and families
Edited by Toyin Okitikpi
Russell House Publishing, 2011
ISBN 978-1-90554-171-3, £18.95
Reviewed by Lorraine Prentice, Children and Families Team Leader, Argyll and Bute Council

THIS BOOK is well laid out with a very informative Introduction including a paragraph summarising each of the 10 chapters to follow. As each of the chapters is written by a different contributor, there is also a section containing information about each writer and also about the editor.

The central question raised by this book asks: “Is it possible to positively embrace the powers vested in the profession and still maintain all the attributes about working in partnership and building a positive relationship with children/young people and their families?”

With the scene now set, the opening chapter explores social policy and social control, which is explained as being the processes by which individual and group behaviour is regulated according to prevailing social norms, rules or laws.

Chapter Two is my personal favourite, entitled Legal Literacy in Practice with Children and Families and written by Michael Preston-Shoot. Here he explores the nature and extent of practitioners’ powers. He also provides an analysis of various dualities and tensions within social work such as care verses control, needs versus resources, and professional autonomy versus employer direction.

This highlights the fact that whatever area of work we are engaged in with children and families, the law is clearly one source of a social worker’s power. Yet the writer refers to Lord Laming’s 2009 report which found that front line staff are not well equipped in relation to the legislation, policy guidance and practice guidance that underpins their practice. This reinforces my opinion that there is much food for thought in not only this chapter but the book as a whole.

Other chapters consider ethics and power; child deaths; social work in schools; social workers in court, and youth justice. Chapter Six is interesting as the writer tries to explore social workers’ use of power from a lay perspective. She correctly concludes that often social workers are placed in a “no win” situation and in child protection do not make decisions alone but in conjunction with other agencies.

She does form other views that I found myself unable to agree with. But one insightful observation is to suggest that risk assessment policies be standardised nationally rather than set at a local level, something that is currently a work in progress.

The biggest disappointment I have with this book is that it is written wholly from the perspective of legislation and practice in England and Wales, without any reference to Scotland which is very different in both areas. Nevertheless, there are enough common issues around social policy and social control to make it worthwhile for social workers across the UK and I recommend it on this basis.
Children’s services at the crossroads: A critical evaluation of contemporary policy for practice
Edited by Patrick Ayre and Michael Preston-Shoot
Russell House Publishing, 2010
ISBN 978-1-90554-164-5, £19.95
Reviewed by Anne Black, Independent Social Work Consultant

I FOUND this a challenging and thought-provoking read. The thread tying the sections together is the impact of a high volume of government changes in policy on services for children and families. Many contributors saw a focus on the attaining statistical targets as eclipsing the needs of the individual child and family.

Processes and targets have become over-emphasised and children’s services workers are in danger of losing the sense of what really matters. One young person reinforces this: “it seems like they (social workers) have to do all this form filling... but it makes them forget about us.”

The book is split into three areas: Policy Context; Service Delivery; and Research Evidence on Services. The Policy Context includes an excellent paper from Brigid Daniel and Norma Baldwin on the Scottish perspective on safeguarding children.

They highlight the raft of policies, procedures and frameworks which workers need to consider. The drive towards integrated services is covered and several projects aimed at improvement are described. The message is that practitioners should be released from current bureaucratically perfect - literally no one is to blame and humanly it is a nightmare.”

Ayre and Calder set out the stark dilemmas faced by practitioners and proposes actions which could “reverse the descent”. The three strands for change are: enhancing the desirability of safeguarding as a career; rebuilding the confidence and competence of the workforce; and creating an operating environment which supports the first two.

The final section considers Research Evidence in Services with Donald Forrester challenging the social work profession to articulate and defend a vision of what social work is all about. In his view, evidence-based practice offers many opportunities to social work as it is all about careful observation of the interactions of workers with service users, measuring the impact of that interaction and from those observations developing better practice. So simple yet so complicated, he concludes.

That sums up this book - the simplicity of some of the ideas and their apparent transferability to a number of settings yet complicated by a climate of many targets, a hostile environment and high expectations.

Maybe policy makers at all levels will take note of the strong message that if managerialism, performance measures and procedures continue to be given priority, it will diminish the valuing of the direct skilled and sensitive social work required by vulnerable children and families.

Publications for review

The following have been received by the Editor and are available for review in Rostrum.

From Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Fiona Macbeth and Nic Fine with Jo Broadwood, Carey Haslam and Nik Pitcher, 2011

Human Givens Therapy with Adolescents: A Practical Guide for Professionals
Yvonne Yates, 2011

From Russell House Publishing

Personal development matters: A guide and step-by-step educational workbook for helping young people aged roughly 11-16 with complex needs to get to know themselves better
Kathryn Plant, 2011
ISBN 978-1-90554-169-0, 224 pages, £29.95

From the British Association for Adoption & Fostering

Permanence and adoption for children: A guide to the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007
Alexandra Plumtree, 2011
ISBN 978-1-90758-509-8, 96 pages, £9.95

Ten Top Tips for Identifying Neglect
Pat Beesley, 2011
ISBN 978-1 90758-518-0, 142 pages, £7.95

Foster carer reviews: Process, practicalities and best practice
Helen Cosis Brown, 2011

A review copy will be sent to anyone interested. Reviews for the next edition to be received by 1 September 2011

Contact: SASW Office,
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Email: j.grant@basw.co.uk
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New publication from Venture Press

Early Professional Development for Social Workers
Edited by Raymond Taylor, Malcolm Hill and Fergus McNeill

Discounted Price: £24.95
£17.47 + £2.50 p&p

The central focus of this book is on the early professional development needs of social workers. It has been compiled by editors with extensive experience of social work practice, education and research. The collection examines the radical changes that have taken place in social work over the last decade within the wider context of welfare policy and practice change within the United Kingdom. The editors have brought together a broad range of experts to provide a contemporary perspective on a wide spectrum of social work issues, taking account of legal and policy differences between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Each country within the UK faces similar challenges and there is much learning to be gleaned from exploring the range of social work interventions that have been developed and applied in different parts of the United Kingdom in recent years.

The book will be an important reference for social workers, managers, practitioners and social work educators, and for all those with an interest in raising standards of social work practice.

Other titles available include

When the going gets tough – are you tough enough?
Edited by Helen Ogilvy, Anne Sambidge and Gail C. Tucker

Discounted price: £15.00
£10.50 + £2.50 p&p

Rural Social Work Practice in Scotland
Colin Turbett

Discounted price: £16.95
£11.17 + £2.50 p&p

Rural Social Work Practice in Scotland brings international approaches to rural social work into a modern Scottish context.

From Fear to Freedom: Masculinity, Control and Change – A Workbook for Men
Edited by Dave Morran

Discounted price: £19.95
£13.97 + £2.50 p&p

The aim of this book is to speak directly to men who, through their controlling beliefs and behaviour, are causing worry and harm to their families, partners and children, and not least, to themselves.

An invaluable guide to the challenges of going it alone as an independent social worker and coping in a difficult economic climate.

Forth Valley Branch News

ROBIN DUNCAN, Branch Treasurer, and I attended the SASW Annual Members Meeting where there was much concern about the implications for SASW if the motions at the BASW UK AGM were passed. Robin also attended the UK AGM.

I hope that the branch, with your assistance, can focus on some of the major issues of concern for us and for service users, for example:

• The impact of spending cuts on services
• The rising number of kinship carers
• The treatment of female offenders
• The potential crisis in residential and nursing care for older people.

I would be pleased to hear from any of you who could contribute to any of the above topics.

With good wishes,
Kate Pryde, Branch Chair,
Email: kate.pryde@tiscali.co.uk

BASW Committees

August 17
Rostrum Editorial Group

September 7
Scotland Committee

September 8
Staff Meeting, Wales

September 13
Finance and Human Resources, Birmingham

September 21
Council, Birmingham

SASW Office

Office Closed

August 29 - Bank Holiday
September 19 - September Weekend

Next Rostrum


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Kia ora Kiwis!

DR LIZ BEDDOE, a social work educator and researcher from Auckland University in New Zealand will be in Scotland from late September to early November. Liz is very keen to meet New Zealand-trained social workers for a study of the key professional issues experienced by those now practising in Scotland, Ireland and England.

Liz will be based at Edinburgh University. For more information about the study or to take part in this research, please email Liz at: e.beddoe@auckland.ac.nz
Dear Colleagues

You will have probably heard something of the “College of Social Work” developments in England and with BASW over the course of the last few months.

It is going to have a great impact on the way that governments communicate and engage with social workers in the future.

Because of this as well as increasing differences under devolution and a distinct Scottish model, there is an increasing necessity and desire amongst social workers, employers, the Scottish Government and the associated social care establishment to have a strong Scottish professional association in Scotland to engage with.

This needs to be an association which is representative and has validity and credibility with the establishment, policy makers and agencies.

SASW recognises the opportunity this represents, and we need to raise social workers’ awareness of the potential to increase their own and social work’s professional reputation and standing.

If you would like me to meet with groups of social workers or students to brief and discuss around the current “College” developments in England, and the consequential implications and opportunities for the profession and a professional association in Scotland, I would be very happy to do so. Team meetings are an ideal size, and possibly cause least disruption to routines.

We only have a very short time in which to consult on, and shape our future, before the “College” is implemented next April, so I am happy to fill my diary with appointments for meetings large or small, both for us to gather views and opinions, and also to ensure there is reasonable awareness of what is happening.

I really need to be able to present Scottish views to the UK association in time to be written into the new constitution documents in late autumn this year.

Many thanks and I look forward to meeting with you.

Tim Parkinson
National Development Officer