Editorial

As we write this Editorial, we reflect upon the busy time ahead in the development of the Journal. We have previously reported how we are preparing the ground for new Editors and attending to important processes as part of this transition. We are pleased to say that our new Editorial Board members and book review Editors joined us at our July Board meeting and we are following this up with another ‘in-between’ board meeting. This meeting will enable us to attend to a number of strategic and operational actions. For some time now, we have been aware of the need to reconsider the way in which we liaise with peer reviewers and re-energise our extensive list of peer reviewers. So, if you have been peer reviewing for the Journal, and we greatly appreciate that, we will be touch about the outcomes of our discussions. This meeting will also be an opportunity to shape the advice we give to authors and reviewers to ensure a good flow of quality submissions to the British Journal of Social Work.

One of the features of the British Journal of Social Work during our time as Editors is its popularity—it continues to be a journal of choice, not just for UK academics and practitioners, but internationally. The high volume of high-quality submissions allows us occasionally to publish larger-than-normal issues, thereby reducing the number of papers in Advanced Access. So, for this and the next issue, we are pleased to present over twenty papers that we believe will satisfy the diverse interests of our readership. These contributions reflect a breadth of topics and research methodologies, as well as theorising that reaches across client groups and a variety of countries and settings. Thus, we have groups of papers that focus on children and child-care services and a range of adult-care settings. The issue also includes contributions on social exclusion, the theorising of social work policy and practice, and social work education.

Nigel Parton, in ‘Social work, child protection and politics: Some critical and constructive reflections’, this issue’s ‘Editor’s Choice’, provides a specially commissioned Critical Commentary reviewing shifts in policy and practice reflected in his influential publishing career to date. Two other child-care papers, ‘A marriage made in hell: Early intervention meets child protection’ by Brid Featherstone, Kate Morris and Sue White and ‘The swing to early intervention and prevention and its implications for social work’ by Mel Gray, explore the implications of taking very different approaches to provision for children and families. The context of one aspect of family and children’s services is taken up by Clive Sellick in ‘Foster-care commissioning in an age of austerity: The experiences and views of the independent provider
sector in one English region’. The views of social workers are explored by Louise O’Connor and Kate Leonard in ‘Decision making in children and families social work: The practitioner’s voice’. This is nicely contrasted with other papers that are focused on the voices of children and young people. Two of these, ‘Why do young people offend in children’s homes? Research, theory and practice’ by Julie Shaw and ‘Food and feelings in residential childcare’ by Ruth Emond, Ian McIntosh and Samantha Punch, examine experiences of residential care. The theme of food and hunger is taken up by Ephrat Huss, Roni Kaufman and Avril Siboni in their paper ‘Children’s drawings and social change: Food insecurity and hunger among Israeli Bedouin children’. Dharman Jeyasingham’s ‘The production of space in children’s social work: Insights from Henri Lefebvre’s spatial dialectics’ is the first of two theory papers in this issue.

A number of papers explore particular social and psychological problems associated with the delivery of adult services: Sue Peckover in ‘Domestic abuse, safeguarding children and public health: Towards an analysis of discursive forms and surveillant techniques in contemporary UK policy and practice’; Sarah Galvani, Aisha Hutchinson and Cherilyn Dance in ‘Identifying and assessing substance use: Findings from a national survey of social work and social care professionals’; and Haijing Dai in ‘Care for whom: Diverse institutional orientations of non-governmental elder homes in contemporary China’.

Five papers attend to the role of social workers and agencies in addressing sites of power and discrimination. Two of these examine these experiences in different international contexts: ‘Enduring professional dislocation: Migrant social workers’ perceptions of their professional roles’ by Christa Fouchez, Liz Beddoe, Allen Bartley and Irene de Haan and “That I live, that’s because of her”: Intersectionality as framework for unaccompanied refugee mothers’ by Marianne Vervliet, Jan De Mol, Eric Broekaert and Ilse Derluyn. Thomas Maeseele, Rudi Roose, Maria Bouverne-De Bie and Griet Roets, in their paper ‘From vagrancy to homelessness: The value of a welfare approach to homelessness’, and Louise Hardwick, in ‘Advocacy versus social work: What the setting-up of an advocacy rights hub reveals about social work’s ability to promote social inclusion’, highlight ways in which practitioners can challenge injustices. Paul Michael Garrett, in ‘Confronting the “work society”: New conceptual tools for social work’, proposes new critical perspectives for social work in dealing with a range of social problems that affect clients and social workers in the twenty-first century.

The papers on social work education in this issue reveal the complex, situated nature of this important area of social work research, often envisaged differently, dependent upon regional and national contexts. Siobhan E. Laird carries out a three-nation, comparative analysis of educational approaches in her paper ‘Training social workers to effectively manage aggressive parental behaviour in child protection in Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom’. This notion of comparison and contrast is
also raised by Susan Mlcek in ‘Are we doing enough to develop cross-cultural competencies for social work?’ whilst Anat Zeira and Miriam Schiff, in their paper ‘Field education: A comparison of students’ and novice social workers’ perspectives’, explore this important moment of professional development in Israel. This notion of transition is also followed by Michael Sheppard and Marian Charles in ‘Critical thinking and interpersonal dispositions in those commencing social work training’. Issues of diversity and disadvantage in social work education in England are raised by Claudia Bernard, Anna Fairtlough, Joan Fletcher and Akile Ahmet in ‘A qualitative study of marginalised social work students’ views of social work education and learning’. This issue of the Journal is completed with ‘Response to Taylor and Bogo, “Perfect opportunity—perfect storm”’, which is a brief reply by Hilary Burgess, Claire Barcham and Patricia Kearney to a paper we published in our last issue. That continues a longstanding tradition of encouraging constructive, critical dialogues between our authors and the wider Journal readership.

Jim Campbell and John Pinkerton
Co-Editors