

**Review: *Understanding Health and Social Care*, Jon Glasby, Bristol, Policy Press—  
University of Bristol, 2017, pp. xi + 220, ISBN 978 1 4473 31216**

Overall, the book is an accessible read, well structured and provides a strong analysis about the modern political context of health and social care in the UK. It offers an up-to-date perspective on how policy is affecting services and client groups in both a positive and a negative way. The main themes are historical and current social policy, the challenges of integrated care services and the effect that modern policy has on service users' and carer's lives.

The book is aimed at a broad audience of social policy, social science, social care and social work students and practitioners and gives a strong historical context of the origins of the NHS and social care. At the end of each chapter, it has sign posting to other reference sources and reflective exercises for the reader to complete; there are different exercises depending on the reader's background. For social work, the exercises encourage the practitioner to consider how the knowledge can in reality shape and affect their practice. It also asks them to consider the effect of policy on specified client groups. These exercises are a useful tool to reinforce learning of the material covered and to allow specific application/discussion to the reader's own practice or study.

The first two chapters give a comprehensive overview of the historical context of policy. This seems at times quite focused on the health sector, although, as the book progresses, its application to social care is more apparent. Chapter Three critically analyses how policy affects a range of client groups. Although this is brief, it begins a discussion and signposts the reader to other reference sources, which is good to see. The sources are comprehensive and include key journals, books, current government/NHS policies and voluntary organisation websites.

Chapter Four partnership working facilitates a critical discussion around the challenges of integrated services and how the lack of resources is the greatest challenge in the success of this model. This chapter is an informative read regardless of where you work in health and social care, as it encourages the reader to think about the working culture and practices and how these can affect integrated care. Through the use of case studies, it allows the reader to look at the challenges from a service user's perspective, which is always valuable.

Chapter Five focuses on independence and the social model of disability. Again, it takes a critical look at how policy affects a person's independence. It also looks at the recent changes to personal budgets and raises discussion around empowerment and choice that clients have; this is a key element to contemporary practice for all practitioners. It highlights how, with budget cuts, there will be a significant effect on those clients with long-term conditions and disabilities.

Although the book generally is appropriate for social work students and practitioners, Chapters Six, Seven and Eight are particularly pertinent to social work practice. Chapter Six addresses issues around discrimination and equality and how these can be challenged within services. It looks at institutional discrimination and ways in which this can be addressed. Case studies are utilised to highlight different forms of discrimination, encouraging the reader to consider their own professional attitudes and behaviours. Chapter Seven looks at the changing role of user involvement and issues around tokenism and how practitioners need to be challenged on their practice around user involvement. It looks at successes of user involvement and the essential role it plays on development of future services, again encouraging the practitioner to look at their own practices. Chapter Eight provides a clear overview of the complex subject of carer support, their rights and responsibilities. It challenges practitioners to consider the

essential role that informal carers play but also more recently how the carers have needs and rights also.

Throughout the book, there are relevant comparisons with how other countries use models and address some of the challenges around policy and integrated care.

Primary care models from the Netherlands and USA are compared to UK provision. Models of managing long-term social care needs are considered from countries such as Germany and Australia, with useful discussions around the financial management of the different models. The differences between England and Scotland are also addressed. This is extremely valuable, as it allows the reader to think about alternative models and consider other ways of working within policy guidelines.

Overall, this is a good up-to-date book, encouraging analysis and application to a student or practitioner's own work area.