

Book review

Protecting Children and Young People Child Protection Reform Across the UK Edited by Anne Stafford, Sharon Vincent and Nigel Parton Dunedin Academic Press ISBN – 978-1-903765-97-5

Subject – Child Protection Reform

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The content of this book reflects upon recent child protection reform issues in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. The book draws on particular aspects of concern for children and young people exposed to child abuse within differing areas of the UK. It signifies the importance of children's rights and the responsibilities of implementing appropriate and well thought out policies.

The contributors are from a range of organisations, e.g. academics, Directors of social care agencies, NSPCC, along with researchers in the field of social work. The contributors offer their perspectives on a highly sensitive and complex area of social care and child protection.

In recent years there has been a much needed review of policies in relation to child protection across the whole of the United Kingdom. This book offers a range of issues that are significant for understanding the processes of change that have occurred and those that still need to be considered for a more appropriate and progressive approach to the reality of social work practice in 2010 and beyond.

The United Kingdom has had a number of inquiries undertaken with regard to child protection and the work that social workers have to deal with in relation to the outcomes of serious case reviews. This book highlights the need for continued debate in order to find 'best practice' for the implementation of policies. Indeed, the book explores some of the United Kingdom's most recent child deaths that have sparked a fundamental and much needed debate.

With the current climate of change, economically, within the whole of social work within the UK, this book helps students, academics and policy makers to identify with the complexities in a meaningful way.

Each chapter deals with the concerns from the differing areas of the UK – an important aspect for understanding risk of change, along with the need for such change in process and outcomes for a better child protection emphasis. The implementation of such change within child protection work has had its criticisms. However, further debate is needed, and this is identified within the book.

The book concludes with a chapter dedicated to the comparisons of the differing reform programmes which attempts to consider whether the reforms and policy can work together across the UK. Clearly there are difficulties within this field due to the very different nature of social work practice in these cross border countries. However, as the authors suggest,

‘policy makers and academics will (hopefully) continue to share their experiences and collaborate over issues that are common regardless of borders’.

This is an important book for European countries in order that there is a wider understanding of the themes that present themselves. This is true in order that students gain a wider perspective of child protection concerns and dilemmas.

As can often be the case, academics, students and policy makers often limit their thinking to reflect upon only the issues within their own countries. This book deals with areas of concern that are also relevant within Europe as a whole, to establish better understanding of the themes for the work within child protection. This can only be a positive directive and discussion towards learning from each country and recognising and comparing practice and policy to make a meaningful contribution to social work across Europe.