

## Call for Papers

### Special issue on 'Social Work, Religion and Spirituality'

#### Guest Editors

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In the early twenty-first century, in many countries, social work is practised in richly diverse, multi-ethnic and multi-faith societies; societies in which religious and spiritual beliefs are of crucial importance to many and play some role in shaping the worldview of most (Furness and Gilligan, 2010; Crisp, 2011). In such contexts, there are many reasons why all social workers need to develop a working knowledge and understanding of the religious beliefs and spiritual practices of service users, regardless of specialism or setting. Without such knowledge and understanding they cannot adequately perform their statutory duties or meet their professional responsibilities; they cannot begin to claim that their work is culturally competent. Social work needs to recognise the likely, but not always obvious, significance of religion, belief and spirituality to many service users and colleagues.

To fully deliver on their responsibility “to protect the rights and to promote the interests of service users and carers”, whilst “treating each person as an individual”, and “respecting diversity and different cultures and values.” (GSCC, 2002:14 - 15), individual social workers need to include questions about religion, belief and spirituality within their practice and within their reflections on and in action (Schön, 1983). They need to be ready and open to explore these subjects directly and to recognise that religion, belief and spirituality may be significant sources of personal values, of serious dilemmas, of motivation and support and of anxiety in relation to issues very relevant to day-to-day social work practice. They need to develop religious and spiritual literacy. However, there is evidence that many social workers are not ready or open to such challenges and that they have not yet been provided with sufficient resources to meet them (Crompton, 1998; Furness, 2003; Gilligan, 2003; Gilligan and Furness, 2006; Gilligan, 2009).

We are looking for approximately 8 quality articles of up to 4,000 words (no more than 5,000 words including references) relating to any of the following themes:

- The relevance and impact of religion, belief and spirituality on the lives of service users, carers and practitioners of social work

- The relationships between both religious and non-religious 'spirituality' and social work.
- The extent to which social work (in its practices, policies and professional training) takes account of such beliefs in its pursuit of culturally sensitive and competent practice.
- Comparative studies of approaches adopted in different countries with regard to religious or spiritually sensitive interventions.
- The identification of specific issues, settings, communities and stages in the life course which require social workers to give particular attention to issues of religion, belief and spirituality in the context of their professional practice
- The ability to achieve 'spiritually-competent' social work practice.
- The development of frameworks for reflective practice which will assist social workers to respond more appropriately to issues of religion, belief and spirituality in the context of their professional practice.
- Ethical dilemmas arising from practitioners' own religious or cultural beliefs or from those of service users, carers or other practitioners.

Authors should follow the guidelines for writing articles for the ISW (to view these guidelines, please [click here](#)).

Each article will be peer refereed by two reviewers. If more than 8 articles are viewed as suitable for publication, some articles may be published at a later date in a general issue of ISW, subject to the decision of the Editors of the journal.

Timescales

Submission deadline for papers – **February 2012** (earlier submission will be welcomed).

Proposed publication date – May 2013.