Inclusive leadership in social work and social care.

HAFFORD-LETCHFIELD, T., LAMBLEY, S., SPOLANDER, G. and COCKER, C.

2014

Introduction

Effective leadership and management are often cited as the key to successfully 'transforming services' in the context of policy developments both in the UK and internationally. Social work and social care has faced and continues to face an unprecedented period of challenge and uncertainty. There is an ongoing drive to realign its approach to delivering support in a way that offers choice, flexibility, is person-centred and innovative and enables service users to access services in a seamless and empowering way. This requires the development of leadership capabilities at every level of the workforce as well as in the community. This is by no means an easy statement to make as confidence in some areas of social work and social care has undermined trust and belief in the systems involved. Some critiques of current practice link poor management practice to poor outcomes for services users (DCSF, 2009, 2009a). Within the UK for example, a number of serious case reviews have cited management as a vital ingredient to the provision of safe and accountable outcomes of social work and social care services (Healthcare Commission and HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2008, Laming, 2009). Both occur within a context of emphasis on the role of leadership and management to ensure that social work and social care operates efficiently and effectively; is meeting 'consumer' needs; responds to the increasing marketisation of services and facilitates those engaged in delivering services to work across new organisational boundaries in transparent ways.

However, uncomfortable questions are sometimes left unanswered about the responsibilities of management for the effectiveness of front line practice and the well being of those they manage. Whilst particular criticisms are present about the 'downside' of leadership and management in social work through critique of neoliberal managerialism in care organisations; there is a paucity of empirical research relating to management and a relative silence on its role in the proactive development of practice. This book aims to interrogate some of these relatively unexplored areas in more depth. It will look more closely at the pivotal but challenging role leadership and management might play in improving organisational culture and thus practice. It aims to facilitate the voices of managers in how they go about establishing a more critical and realistic dialogue with staff and service users to promote genuine partnership. This book aims to explore how sound management and leadership practice can be seen as a catalyst by which individuals, groups, communities or organisational performance can be critically and realistically evaluated. Some commentators have referred to aspects of his approach as offering 'deep value' (Bell and Smerdon, 2011).

This term attempts to capture the value created when the human relationships between people delivering and people using public services are effective and the conditions are present that nourish confidence, inspire self-esteem, unlock potential, and erode inequality and so have the power to transform relationships and services.

There are now a number of public bodies working on strategies to develop leadership and management within integrated services (National Skills Academy for Social Care, 2011; The Kings Fund, 2011). Over the last decade, there has been a more concerted push for initiatives around leadership and management development within care services and particularly to secure greater provision of accredited education and training. The type of leadership or a coherent model of leadership for social work and social care has not yet been systematically identified, nurtured and promoted although this is at least now beginning to evolve. These trends call for a more diverse and informed knowledge base and literature focused specifically on the unique role of leaders and managers in social work and social care. The problem is that in most cases, these thoughts about leadership are not empirically derived but rather they are conceptual. It is in fact quite striking that what we know about leadership is on the whole is mainly derived from informed belief. Leadership is also one of those concepts that attract a lot of derision as well as optimistic rhetoric and thus there is an uneasy relationship with leadership in social work and social care given that it has been easier to lambast when things go wrong.

There is also a strong desire to ensure that any leadership and management education and training is firmly rooted in practice and work based learning. In relation to the content of management education, the roots of social care and social work remain important for many, as the sector has developed within a public welfare framework where management and leadership practice must reflect expected ethical and moral behaviours, as well being able to operate within a 'business' environment. This environment however is constantly in a state of flux so those managers leading people through change require good practical skills; able to engage in political discourse (personal and communal) as well acquire, develop and update their theoretical knowledge in the discipline of organisational and management theory. These essential knowledge and skills help to inform policy driven interventions as well as enabling managers to take on the role of mediators within relationships between government and its citizens. Genuine leadership will not only guide practice but will take on the challenge of

promoting diversity, equality and justice in the way services are developed and supported in the community at a time when there is a move towards more individualised care and support.

There have been an increasing number of quality texts published over recent years which seek to define and articulate the role of leadership and management in social work and social care. These have tended to contribute to the discourses about the difference in leadership and management and particularly the challenges for management in finding its own voice within a growing managerialist agenda. Whilst this book adds to this valuable collection, it also attempts to move beyond these debates by addressing some of the contemporary issues facing management which have not yet been fully developed. A particular feature of this book therefore, is the broadening of discussion to include perspectives from other social science disciplines. It explores what might be learnt as social work moves into several new and different phases and takes on new roles particularly within an integrated environment with changing professional roles and co-production at its core.

In light of these complexities, this book is structured around three main areas. The first explores the concept of leadership in social work; what it is and what it is not. Leadership remains a contested concept and has the potential to be generically applied and freely and uncritically cited. The first three chapters of the book will therefore take a critical look at leadership in its different guises going beyond the usual typologies offered. We have written on the basis that theories of leadership are not necessarily a bad thing and sometimes have inspired research to test them and commentators to critique them. We have started with an overview in chapter one and then looked outwards for cases of exceptional leadership in chapter two. Chapter three brings us back into focus by looking at the vital role of service users in leadership practice.

The second section is focussed on the concept of organisations. Organisational theory is often about trying to understanding phenomena such as strategy, structure and culture. These elements have become much more organic since the move towards integration and devolvement of policy implementation to a local level. There is increasing complexity impacting on governance and workforce planning particularly when we compare these with traditional and less fluid organisations. The first chapter in this section for example unusually considers the concept of design and design theory and how this might extend our thinking beyond more fixed notions of how we more traditionally view organisations. The

following two chapters explore the concept of workforce development and planning from both strategic and operation perspectives. These are integral to understanding how organisations function given that 'people' provide the majority of resources for social work and the provision of support and care. It is vital that leaders and managers can appreciate how the workforce addresses these tensions as we move towards more self-directed and preventative approaches to support as well as developing systems of care or a more integrated and holistic approach from the strategic perspective. The final chapter in this section explores some of the more 'tricky' issues and challenges for management and leadership. This examines the concept of power in organisations by exploring the phenomena of dignity within the context of organisational culture and leadership.

The final section of the book looks to more practical issues focussing on how individual managers might more effectively lead practice by exploring possibilities for making a difference. This involves a chapter which examines the challenges of how managers provide formal and informal support to staff and service users. It builds on specific case studies researched by the authors in the area of supervision, development of alternative communication structures such as more creative use of technology and effective user involvement strategies. The final chapter explores the notion of management 'skills' and how one learns to 'become' a manager. Building on theories of existentialism (Lawler, 2005) emotional intelligence and virtue ethics, readers will be encouraged to examine and reflect on their own leadership and management styles and those of others and to think more creatively about the type of manager they aspire to be. In summary, the diverse contributions by the authors of this book express our high hopes for leadership and a realistic appraisal of some of its pitfalls – as they say – "knowledge is power". We hope that you find the topic of leadership as intriguing and complex as we have attempted to present it.

PART ONE: Exploring critically, the concept of leadership in social work

Chapter one: What is leadership?

Introduction

As a general introduction this chapter will examine the phenomenon of leadership, with particular reference to how 'leadership' might serve our purpose in social work and social care. Any genuine discussion about leadership has to be informed by the context for practice and examined at many different levels, for example structural, organisational, professional and operational (Lymbery, 2001). Within social work and social care, leadership is described as being fundamental to achieving new paradigms of care which shape the way in which future services are subsequently designed and delivered (Zwanenberg, 2010). A cursory look through any government policy document impacting on care will also demonstrate that as a metaphor, leadership is already deeply embedded in discourse about care provision (DH, 2008a) b); Dfes, 2006, 2009a), b)). A more critical appraisal however, reveals the contested nature of leadership which merits further exploration. Leadership for example has been strongly associated with the operation of power and influence and within certain discourse; have led to models becoming highly privileged or preferred within care services. This chapter aims to uncover some of these critical perspectives, and to facilitate the development of alternative or more subjective viewpoints about how we theorise about leadership and its direct application to practice (Lawler and Ford, 2010).

Whilst we aim to give you a basic outline of more common or frequently discussed models of leadership, the main aim of this chapter is to give emphasis to its relational aspects which are crucial to our key purpose in social work and social care. Similarly, we assert that the role and purpose of social work itself is also highly contested and there is a need to explore the reasons behind this. For example, leadership needs to be purposeful, so that social workers needs to have a clear idea about the purpose of social work. Lawler and Bilson (2010) refer to the role of theory in shaping the way we perceive the task of social work and social care and the importance of acknowledging how theories shape (or not) the way in which we approach our work within the public and community sector. We can be neither neutral nor dispassionate as policy might imply but must focus on what motivates those working in care services and the associated values and ethics.   Being honest when reflecting on contextual and contributing factors and thinking about what we are aiming to achieve when analysing leadership and management in our own profession, is essential when imagining and constructing alternatives.

Why do we need leadership?

The language of leadership commonly refers to 'being led' and 'leading'. It draws upon and is posited on, the framing metaphor of an image, or symbol, of a relationship of guidance or direction giving, and is traditionally associated with hierarchical structures (Bass, 1990). The action of leading is seen essential to espousing vision and promoting the values of a particular government policy or aims of an organisation or profession. Within social work and social care, organisations continue to face relentless new pressures to adapt, learn, innovate and constantly improve performance. This includes keeping up with rapid technological and other opportunities, and threats, which require greater integration across a range of organisational boundaries through increased collaborative or integrated working (Hafford-Letchfield, 2010). The latter has been accompanied by increased complexity as organisations combine to promote new ways of organising service delivery, with raised expectations coming from a consumer culture and amongst a complex array of stakeholder involvement. Leadership has become associated with 'survival' in these competitive and progressive situations where single or small groups of specially gifted or positioned individuals leading through their moral, intellectual, interpersonal, material and political resources (Northouse, 2011). The type of leaders required in these scenarios are referred to as 'transformational'; 'charismatic' or 'situational' (Bass, 1990, Northouse, 2011). It is however well acknowledged that the person or people in such leadership positions should also be empowered by giving them sufficient room to manoeuvre or the authority to lead. This requires effort or commitment from those being led, and thus benefits for all those involved (Boehm, and Yoels, 2008).

Until relatively recently social work practice was located within a 'bureau-professional paradigm', and although this is changing, leadership activity within social work remains largely shaped by this context. Contemporary leadership in both social work and social care also needs to respond in particular to outcome based policies; 'personalisation' policies in adult services (HMG, 2007) and 'risk management' and prevention within children and family services which are challenging the traditional practice paradigm (Munro, 2011). Social work leaders and managers are expected to take responsibility for leading these developments, and for managing social care markets within the sector. These responsibilities have to be supported by improved knowledge and practice skills relating to strategic planning, the commissioning of best value services and the delivery of high quality

specialised services (Hafford-Letchfield, 2010). Likewise on the provider side, leaders in social care need to be savvier with an increased range of skills (Gallop and Hafford-Letchfield, 2012). As stated earlier, this work has an added complexity brought about by partnership working which may require joint initiatives or indeed fully integrated agency working, and which require opportunities for leadership within a multi-agency context. As we shall see later on in this chapter, more recently emphasis has been given to adopting a systems approach to organisational and service development by moving away from command and control models towards adapting and developing learning cultures which can in turn influence the way professional frontline practitioners are managed and supported (Munro, 2010). Adopting a dispersed or distributed leadership style should give people within the service and its providers the confidence to challenge poor practice. Moving away from heroic leadership styles (The King's Fund, 2011) requires a focus on developing the organisation and across many organisations rather than individuals and on followership as well as leadership. Shared leadership is not however without its dilemmas – in particular, re-distributing leadership tasks throughout an organisation and promoting organisational learning requires cultural change. This presents a dilemma for formal leaders who are required to both disperse authority and act hierarchically (Williams and Sullivan, 2011).

The influence of public policy on leadership

Periods of unprecedented financial and quality challenges including radical reform of public services depends on a thorough assessment of how services can develop, which must be supported by continuing investment in leadership development at all levels. As implied earlier, this points to the increasing importance of leadership across systems of care as well as within individual organisations. Developing leadership likewise should have a national and even international focus as well as a local one. There has not been a substantive review of the administrative demands placed on care service for many years and much of the literature on managerialism highlights the essential rationalisation of these demands (Harris, 2003; Tsui, and Cheung, 2004). A number of government policy initiatives have had a complex impact on the management and administrative costs of care provision for example through Private Finance Initiatives (PFI), personalisation, the imperative towards social enterprise and the extensive outsourcing of a wider range of services all with complex contractual and management arrangements including regulation (Hafford-Letchfield, 2010). Whilst Connolly et al (2010) have demonstrated an association between higher management costs and better quality care, there have of course been a number of spectacular management failures in recent

years which have documented extremely poor care within institutions and people's own homes (CQC, 2011). Many public inquiries and serious case reviews have specifically highlighted failures in both management and leadership (Laming, 2003; 2009) and propose radical new approaches to meet these challenges. We will discuss these issues in more depth in chapter seven. The UK Coalition government's reforms, for example, have encouraged a significant number of staff to leave the mainstream organisation and sell its services back through various forms of mutual and social enterprise and the scale of these reforms makes the issues of leadership and management in social work and social care ever more important. There has been a move towards the commissioning of small independent private 'social work practices' the conception of which rests on three pillars. These are; consistency in corporate approaches via a more personal relationship between the service user/s and their social worker; the attraction of a 'professional partnership' to social workers demoralised by increasing bureaucracy and; the motivation for increased professional autonomy and owner-control of their partnership organization (Carey, 2010). Carey identifies three proposed models within children's services as examples: a 'professional practice' (social enterprise) run by a 'partnership' of social workers legally independent of the local authority, a 'third sector' (not for profit) model run by a voluntary organization, and a private sector (for profit) model (DCSF, 2008). This new entrepreneurial outlook seeks to relocate children's social work as a 'business' (Petrie, 2010) alongside 'opportunities for social workers to learn commercial and social enterprise skills' (DCSF, 2009: 11). It follows the increased commodification of services to vulnerable people and within the social work and social care labour market particularly in relation to the provision of senior management structures. These developments are underpinned by the governments' commitment to contesting Local Authority services and to remove barriers to other providers outside the sector and in scoping out potential for new markets for the purposes of delivering care services. The continuing denigration of any achievements in care so far further exploit themes of popular discontent with social work and its partner agencies.

Within social work and social care, the creation of a climate of fear in which workers feel unable to speak out against policies and practices which they know to be harmful to service users and the community has been one of the more insidious features of managerialism. We will be looking more closely at this phenomenon in chapter seven where we look at the concept of dignity in leading effective care services. Professional autonomy, like the right to speak out, has been described as a casualty of the managerial revolution which has sought –

on the basis of no real evidence – to portray social work as a 'failing profession' in need of reform (Lambley, 2011). By the mid 1990s that 'reform' had resulted in the replacement of a rich repertoire of social work methods by the single approach of care management. New Labour (post 1997), tackled some of these issues through the introduction of new forms of regulation and inspection which showed a similar distrust of professional social work and made a powerful case for a return to relationship-based social work, drawing on collective approaches and based on values of social justice (Ruch, 2009; Ferguson, 2009). More recently, Munro's inquiry into the state of safeguarding services in children's social work documented widely the impact of working conditions on practice (Munro, 2011) and the need to review several aspects of the system simultaneously to achieve systems change. Again, effective change in the 'system' is seen to be dependent on achieving skilled leadership at a local level where practical knowledge of how the organisation works can be aligned to change. This requires explicit attention to leadership education and development (and we will turn our attention to this in the last chapter of this book). In the UK, Munro's review for example found that most bureaucracy which limits the effectiveness of practice is generated and maintained at a local level including financial, procedural and personnel requirements. Like the earlier Laming report (Laming, 2009), the finger was pointed at local politicians and senior personnel whose behaviour and expectations must be focussed alongside resourcing of front line practice directly related to improving and supporting the frontline. Here leadership is seen to bind both leaders and followers (managers and practitioners) implying social commonality and commitment and thus a social responsibility (O'Reilly and Reed, 2010). It is implied that subsequent re-orientation of accountability through the types of networks and alliances between these two partners can be built through such collaboration.

In short, it has been suggested that we are living with a deficit discourse about social work and social care and its collaborative partners, coming from a strong neo-liberal political ascendancy (Walker and Walker, 2011). The political function of this discourse tends to deflects attention away from fundamental causation of perceived failures of social work and the contributory factors such as financial deficits, managerialism and defensive practice. This begs the question as to what contribution should managers, practitioners and other professionals be making to build a case against the scale, speed and change seeking to further individualise services and meter out some very austere and radical policies which are not always in tune with the values and ethics of social work and social care. Leaders, managers and those they lead have close proximity to the end users of the welfare state and the

consequences of social, economic policies and political ideology. They observe firsthand the negative impact on poverty and inequality, and will need to work with these constructively by taking a defensive stance combined with the framing of progressive alternatives. Some of these issues will be discussed in chapter eight in relation to the strategies of developing leadership within the community and with service users. The universal subordination of social work and social policy to economic policy and critiques of its variants under neo-liberalism could form the basis for a more radical approach to leadership from a more central position by shifting power outwards and downwards. Much debate about social work and its stakeholders has focused on how we keep alive an alternative discourse on the purpose of care and advancing the case for social justice and making the case for the correlations between equality and well-being. We are told with certainty that cuts in the public sector will be compensated for by growth in the private sector alongside the development of a 'Big Society' with the same anti-state underpinnings (Cameron, 2010) but are yet to see the empirical evidence for this. Whilst the public sector is a crucial source of welfare and social justice, there has always been a growing critique that is also provides a source of injustice (Ferguson, 2007). Leaders and managers need to keep a sustained focus on the social consequences of Government policy particularly in relation to deficit reduction strategies, and to cross examine the assertion of 'fairness', particularly in acknowledgements that we are very much involved in making decisions about core services within a devolved administration and in determining priorities. One example concerns spending reviews over previous decades which have led to occasions where the voluntary and community sector are cited with a degree of certainty and optimism. Developing leadership through investment in the infrastructure, and utilising the mainstream partnerships that voluntary and community organisations have had to develop with the state in order to survive, has provided access to representing the needs and views of service users, many of whom are the most marginalised in our society.

What do traditional theories about leadership have to offer?

Traditionally the knowledge base in social work and social care has derived from a range of social science subjects, which are then applied eclectically to practice, which is also true of its leadership. *Social theory* informs our understanding of social problems; *social policy* enables us to define the role and 'policy purpose' of social work, and *management and leadership* provides an understanding of how the organisation, management and the leadership of practice occur. This framework is explored in relation to leadership practice in

social work. Lawler and Bilson (2009; 25) developed a framework for exploring management and leadership theories in social work using; *critical social policy;* the rationale behind leadership development in social work, and in particular, its relationship to managerialism. We have touched on some of these issues already. Similarly, so*cial theories* offer the 'value based' nature of social work and theories that inform this. *Social movements*: the role that service users and other stakeholders can play in defining and shaping leadership practice. Making sense of leadership through these conceptual frameworks can be helpful when examining one's own leadership practice. Scholarship also refers to three roles which involve leadership, management and administration which are interdependent. Yet in the public sector, politicians frequently refer to management, as a pejorative as well as denigrated term equated with bureaucracy and from which the public also takes its cue following anecdotes about the merits of management. Another emerging field of study has been found in 'neuro-leadership' which is focused on bringing neuroscientific knowledge into the areas of leadership and management development by seeking better understanding of how the human brain functions at individual, team and systemic levels. Many studies in this field identify the human brain as social organ where its physiological and neurological reactions are directly and profoundly shaped by social interaction (Rock, 2009). Therefore there are many debates about the nature and style of leadership, its definition and disputes about its impact. Table 1.1 below attempts to demonstrates some of the more popular of these and their key features.

Insert Table 1.1 about here

Leadership as discourse

So how useful are the above theories of leadership within our own sector? O'Reilly and Reed (2010) have suggested 'leaderism' as a discursive term to complement the evolution of neo liberal and new public management mechanisms and practices within public services.

"*The emerging discourse of 'leaderism' justifies the growing influence, not to say power, of an ideology in which a model of the 'rational consumer', rather than of the 'dependent client' or 'informed citizen', is mobilised within policy debates and discourses that have fateful consequences for mundane, but vital, issues to do with the managerial and administrative practices through which scarce resources are allocated and deployed within public service organisations*" (p 971).

The discourse of leadership they suggest, potentially contributes to three elements of policy reform being promoted (p 961). Firstly, leaders are construed as change agents associated with leading transformational, system-wide change through practice which enables and facilitates reforms that will radically reshape the nature and content of 'public services' and the manner in which they are provided and consumed. Secondly, leaders are expected to potentially alleviate and absorb the endemic and inherent tensions between politicians, managers, professionals and the public by playing a major role in drawing them together in a unifying discourse which emphasises collectivity. Thirdly, the delegation of leadership to a wide range of stakeholders such as frontline staff, service users and carers, innovative organisations, whose autonomy allows them to become authors of their own reforms.

The rolling out of the state has grappled with entrepreneurship, which prioritises devolved authority and service innovation within competitively designed environments. Emphasis on actively managing the culture of organisations seeks to align the beliefs and values of its members with those of policy-makers. According to O'Reilly and Reid (2010), the change of discourse to leadership attempts to re-define any tensions emerging from managerialism for the care sector by stressing the importance of establishing a passion for a common goal between leaders and those being led. Policy reform aims to achieve more customer focused public services through the principles of standards and accountability; devolution and delegation; flexibility and incentives and expanding choice (p 965). There is a strong presence of leadership discourse in how government represents reform. As a core lexical item in public service reform it is associated with personalisation of services; such as those seen in *Putting People First* (HMG, 2007) and the *Health and Social Care Act* (2012) making leadership of these reforms the primary contributing factor to successful performance management and associated with 'excellence'.

Within this discourse, the representation of different people taking up leadership services serves to locate accountability with them, rather than at the political level. The role taken by politicians then is one which enables them to set objectives and steer those implementing them from a distance. In this scenario, the majority of leadership will follow a functionalist line and adopting critical perspectives enables us to develop alternative or more subjective viewpoints on how we theorise about leadership and its application to practice (Ford and Lawler, 2007). One might conclude that the rhetoric of 'leaders at all levels' in current

organisations, implicitly relates the role of leadership to positions of hierarchical authority, or those nominated. Some of these dynamics are embodies in the relationships between leaders and followers in Table 1.1 earlier. For example, Ford and Lawler (2007) assert that the leadership aspect of a relationship is not necessarily recognised from the outset but might only be defined as such in or after the process or as an emergent process as opposed to an individualised phenomenon. The essence of this relationship may be experienced subjectively and therefore not easily articulated. Ford and Lawler further identify that the regular conflation of management and leadership in the literature make it more difficult to describe the relational aspects of leadership and how this might develop beyond the confines of management relationships. They thus introduce the concepts of existentialist and social constructionist thinking into the leadership debate, both of which encourage an analysis of the ongoing and relational acts between people which enable and give consideration to ways in which certain aspects of leadership are produced and reproduced between leaders and followers:

"Existential and constructionist approaches then, form the basis of a quest for a shift in focus away from the myth of leadership and its potential alienation, deskilling and reification of organisational forms, towards the dynamics of 'leadership' as a social process. Through this, individuals and organisational members are encouraged to interrelate in ways that encompass new forms of intellectual and emotional meaning, to experiment with new paradigms and behaviours and to discover more meaningful and constructive ways of relating and working together" (Ford and Lawler, 2007, p.415).

We can conclude here that leadership cannot be discussed outside of its relational aspects and cannot be understood without a greater appreciation of followers. Likewise, if we are to think about leadership development as we do in the following section, we cannot focus purely on technical competences but must give attention to our ability to create climates in which individuals themselves can act to improve services.

Giving attention to leadership development

The rise and spread of leadership development provision and programmes have come from consultancy, professional associations, academic and government bodies (Skills for Care, 2008, Scottish Executive, 2006; DH, 2010). These have emphasised that 'strong' or 'good' leadership as a core skill which can be taught or learnt or it may be seen as a technique and a

skill for arousing passion within staff and the public to achieve positive changes in services. However, until relatively recently there has been limited training opportunities for people in social work and social care to study leadership with even less opportunities for those in non-statutory services such as in the Third Sector or by those outside management roles. Leadership development programmes need to be based on fostering the qualities, characteristics and approaches that leaders utilise and principles of how leaders should operate within organisations. Leaders in different organisations have generic qualities and then there are sector-specific dimensions. We also require different leadership styles for specific circumstances and clarity about what leadership ought to look like. The provision of leadership programmes tend to be strongly linked to career development and succession planning and seek to accredit and signpost learning which is then relied on to inform us about the relative return on investment of leadership and management development. Evaluations of the different leadership development programmes have suggested that the features that support successful leadership development include: models that support distributed leadership such as the utilisation of networks; the use of action learning sets or communities fostered and supported for a sustained period of time (McAllan and MacRae, 2010). Investment in leadership development activities should be explicitly linked to improvements or changes needed and supported by senior managers and aligned with organisational goals and objectives. Some evaluations found that leadership development activities are not always seen as beneficial. Tourish et al., (2007) for example found a lack of support from senior management, partly due to an inability to prove a direct impact on organisational performance for leadership development activities and a perceived lack of time to meaningfully participate. Likewise, in their evaluation of the use of a multi-source feedback tool in a training programme (Hafford-Letchfield and Bourn, 2011) found that effective development requires recognition of the complex interplay between knowledge, skill, experiential practice and critical reflection embedded in everyday practice. Their evaluation suggested that it is crucial to support management learning by organisational culture and infrastructure that offers opportunities for learning.

In England and Scotland, the registration and regulatory bodies for social work education and lead bodies for developing a national leadership and management strategy have defined a range of national standards to which leaders and managers in social care are expected to perform (GSCC, 2007; Skills for Care, 2008; Hartle et al., 2009) together with 10 key principles. More internationally, indigenous approaches to organisation and management

such as in New Zealand (Webster, 2010) have viewed management development as a distinct discipline integrated with overarching whole systems change management approaches. Whatever strategic architecture is used, the empirical evidence about the effectiveness of leadership and management development, its prescribed curriculum and outcomes, is not strong. This calls for the identification and acquisition of concrete tools that managers can use to promote their own learning. There is also a need for purposive fostering of organisational cultures and environments given the increasing complexity of services within which self-managed learning can thrive (Bourne and Hafford-Letchfield, 2011).

Leadership and management

No discussion about leadership development would be complete without acknowledging the strong links made between leadership and management, or indeed the role of the 'leader-manager' which:

"..demands a mix of analytic and personal skills in order to set out a clear vision of the future and defining a strategy to get there. It requires communicating that to others and ensuring that the skills are assembled to achieve it. It also involves handling and balancing the conflicts of interests that will inevitably arise, both within the organisation and outside it where ..... a wide variety of stakeholders will have a legitimate interest" (The King's Fund, 2011, p 12).

Leadership also clearly requires considerable management skills such as marshalling the human and technical resources needed to achieve the organisation's goals – and ensuring the administration needed is in place including administration not needed. How we actually measure skill itself and its associated knowledge and values is likewise an under-researched and under-documented area (Gould, 2000; Cree and Macaulay, 2001; Crisp et al., 2003). Unlike leadership, management is essentially a practical activity and managers use a range of knowledge and skills within their practice. This integrative task involves achieving synergy, balance and perspective. Most management activity is undertaken through complex webs of social and political interaction involving a continuous process of adaptation to changing pressures and opportunities (Hafford-Letchfield, 2009). The development of management skills and the acquisition of insight into self, others and the process of evaluation of learning stems from many different stimuli. Determining an ideal structure for defining and measuring learning outcomes is challenging and requires testing the romantic notion that 'all is required

is a brilliant manager' (Tsui and Cheung, 2004, p. 441) to solve what are essentially very complex issues impacting on contemporary organisations delivering care services. Placing the management of services within clear fiscal and governance frameworks will inevitably have a significant impact on which specialist areas of practice and knowledge are deemed most valid for social work management and, consequently, what should be included in the leadership and management educational curriculum (Galpin, 2009). There is a danger of overemphasising technical knowledge and skills and dependency on which specialist areas of practice and knowledge are prioritised. Galpin (2009) considers that this potentially overlooks broader structural issues for which skills are required to work with issues such as discrimination, oppression and inequality within communities, more associated with particular styles of leadership. Ideally, the leadership and management curriculum should offer learner-managers a complex mix of intellectual discipline and practice development from which they are more able to critically analyse the structures, cultures, discourses and priorities within their environment. From here they can further develop their leadership and management competencies and skills and their abilities to critically reflect on their own practice, values and ethics. Management education should equip managers to make sense of the complexity and conflict inherent in the management task to enable greater responsiveness, innovation and challenges in delivering and improving services as opposed to an unquestioning acceptance of the status quo.

Aspirations towards more humanist or existential management (Lawler, 2005) are embedded in aforementioned underpinning social work management principles which reflect its professional value base (GSCC, 2007). The content of leadership and management programmes should include personal and strong democratic elements, essential to retain the professional nature of the work and the values inherent in management and social work practice. A significant shift in the power and status of service users and carers, from recipients of professional wisdom and judgements to one of co-producers and co-providers of care, requires a significant shift in power and status (Beresford et al., 2006; Carr, 2007; Galpin, 2009). To support staff and stakeholders to engage in these changing relationships, managers need appropriate engagement and negotiating skills (Gallop and Hafford-Letchfield, 2012). A survey of public sector managers done by the Institute of Leadership and Management (2010), demonstrated that those most dissatisfied with the public sector, around half (48%) put this down to poor or unsupportive management or leadership and other competence issues. A further quarter of respondents, cited the failure to deal effectively with

underperforming staff as a major cause of their dissatisfaction, alongside a perceived inability to motivate staff and inadequate senior management skills where interaction was poor coupled with lack of understanding about the functions and responsibilities of other teams (ILM, 2010). Whilst this study highlighted public sector managers support for target setting, there was dissatisfaction about the lack of empowerment in setting realistic localised targets for their teams rather than having uniform targets imposed without consultation.

Managers often acquire responsibility for managing others, without the benefits of formal management training, utilising fundamental life skills combined with professional expertise combined with practice 'know-how' (Eraut, 1985). They need knowledge and skills for accurate problem definition, effective communication, conflict resolution, negotiation and the development of practical strategies. Getting the basics right, converting key concepts and principles into effective action and mastering these in practice as well as theory is required before considering and identifying advanced professional development needs in the management and leadership role. The potential scope of managerial responsibility and role is so broad, however, that there are inevitably common core features as well as highly specialist ones (Hales, 1993). Key elements of the approach to management learning in social work are those that recognise the positive relationship between management development and organisational performance in the unique environment of care. Another essential element is the employment of critical reflective techniques in order to make sense of current complexities and to retain sufficient flexibility to be able to respond to unknown future developments (Fook and Askeland, 2007; Lawler and Bilson, 2009).

Not all leadership emerges as a result of training and education. At an operational level, it is possible to gain benefit from good leadership even if an integrated approach to leadership at strategic level is not present. By engaging staff, and nurturing simple actions that can be taken by leaders day-to-day can cost very little but make a real difference to performance and contribute to a culture where further improvements are likely (Roebuck, 2011). Research by Baker (2011) highlighted that long-serving leaders at the top of an organisation help to maintain strategic direction and ease transition where there is high turnover of executive staff.

Leadership in integrated or multi-organisational environments
The ability to work across boundaries and persuade others over the right course of action has become more important than the cavalry charge on behalf of a single institution or

organisations, by creating a cadre of leaders to address multiple or single needs. This post heroic model of leadership involves multiple actors who take up leadership roles both formally and informally and importantly share leadership by working collaboratively. The focus therefore goes beyond personal behavioural style or competencies but is on organisational relations, connectedness, interventions into the organisation system, changing organisation practices and processes (Turnball and James, 2011). Complicated relationships in multi-disciplinary environments and integrated services require the negotiating of authority between professionals and managers from different professional backgrounds. The literature on collaborative leadership can be applied to both intra and inter-organisational settings. It reflects the interdependence and connectivity in public management, and counters the limitations of traditional approaches to leadership, particularly those based on the primacy of hierarchy and heroic leadership. It involves managing power relationships and generating consensus (Williams and Sullivan, 2011).

The emphasis on working collaboratively offers the prospect of delivering outcomes and achieving synergy around social issues that are beyond the capabilities of single organisations. Leadership has been named as a one of the determinants of effective collaborative practice (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002). Learning about our partners – how they frame reality, what their roles and ambitions are, how far they are prepared to cede power, and for what purposes – is important in the search for collective action. According to Williams and Sullivan (2011), this leads to learning with others in pursuit of joint solutions to complex problems, particularly the premium of inter-sectoral learning and the development of new models of public service delivery in an economic climate of financial restraint. They suggest that organisational learning is linked to structural conditions such as cultures, power, relationships, norms and rules which mediate that process which are linked to leadership style and interpretive approaches to learning which focus on this socialisation. The use of formal power in shaping and transferring organisational learning through different structures, systems and people also needs delicate and refined qualities to manage interpersonal relationships, based on individual qualities such as perception, empathy, discretion, subtlety, flexibility and decisiveness. Leaders are required to evidence high quality conflict management and interpersonal skills. Trust is important in promoting collaborative working requiring leaders to have an open attitude, emphasise long-term relationships and respect partners' autonomy. In general, shared and distributed models have much value in collaborative arenas, particularly because of their rejection of hierarchical imperatives, their

appreciation of dispersed power particularly in groups, and their emphasis on mutual learning, experimentation and reflective practice. Paradoxically, strong hierarchical leadership may be required in particular circumstances at particular stages of the collaborative process to achieve change by demonstrating considerable persistence to implement and embed strategic actions. There is an argument in favour of encouraging employees not to think in terms of success or failure, but in terms of learning and experience (Farson and Keynes, 2002).

Leading in a crisis

Some recent examples in social work and social care have highlighted expectations around effective crisis leadership which according to Boin et al, (2008) requires political and administrative skills. Effective crisis leadership entails recognising emerging threats, initiating efforts to mitigate them and deal with their consequences (Boin et al, 2010). In the wake of crisis, the public, the media and political opponents tend to examine the crisis management skills. Once an acute crisis period has passed, re-establishing a sense of normalcy and communicating the issues to a public demanding to reassured and is usually marked by intense politicisation. Whilst the crisis is still unfolding, the drama of accountability and blaming begins either for causing the crisis, failing to prevent it, or for an inadequate response. Surprisingly little has been written about the wider political leadership challenges generated by these destabilising events. There are already a number of public inquiries and serious case reviews in social work and social care that regularly gain public attention. Of interest could be whether leadership style can help explain the dynamics and outcome of these periods (Boin et al, 2010). A crisis opens up opportunities for challenging and changing the status quo. Leaders can push for change, reforms or defend the status quo and their might be a battle about how the crisis is an indicator of structural failure.

Boin et al, (2009; 2010) identify two factors in determining the outcome of post-crisis blame games. Firstly, the extent to which blame for the mismanagement of a crisis is attributed to leaders and governments (by Inquiries, the press, legislators). Secondly, the political astuteness of the blame management behaviour of leaders during and in response to crisis Inquiries and the strategies developed to manage the impact and interact with those involved such as stonewalling or co-operating. Leaders have to negotiate a deeply entrenched tension by consolidating, restoring and showing faith in the security and validity of pre-existing social, institutional and political arrangements whilst simultaneously facing pressure to

criticise and reform these same arrangements. Ducking, diffusing and deflecting responsibility are much more likely initial responses than taking responsibility and absorbing the blame that comes with it. Several tactics can be deployed to defuse criticism, by arguing for continuity and announcing measures to show that they have got the message (Boin et al, 2010, p 710). According to Boin et al (2010) navigating this difficult pathway between an:

"open, reflective, responsibility-accepting stance that encourages policy-oriented learning but may leave them politically vulnerable, and a defensive responsibility-denying stance that may deflect blame at the price of undermining learning" (p708).

These approaches may erode a leader's long-term legitimacy requiring a mixture of agency, policy and presentational strategies in response. Psychological leadership research shows that political leaders, who display distinct and comparatively stable leadership styles, are a function of their more deep-seated personality structures and professional socialisation. Two dimensions of leadership style have been shown especially relevant in understanding leadership during crises: a leader's need for control and a leader's sensitivity to context (Hermann and Preston, 1994). The need for personal control or involvement in the policy-making process varies, leading some to be more hands on and involved whilst others depend more upon subordinates and their bureaucracies. This degree of control or personal involvement appears to be related to an individual's needs for power where high power needs involves direct control and setting of agendas for followers and with minimal delegation. Visibility, however also makes it harder to avoid blame. In contrast, leaders with less control needs focus mostly on critical decisions and leave the implementation of these to hand-picked subordinates whom they trust and rely upon. Public perception is crucial to the style adopted. Being seen as 'less engaged' is more likely to lead to bureau-political conflict and to deflect blame. A leader's sensitivity to context is an important dimension as high complexity leaders will be more sensitive to external or multiple policy perspectives on a particular issue and able to seek out alternative views, policy options and contingencies. On the other hand, this may lead to less decisiveness during crises.

Towards creative leadership – making a difference

What we have discussed so far in this introductory chapter leads us to question how a repositioning of professionals and service users as leaders within our current structure and culture and direction of travel. It has potentially destabilising consequences for prevailing

relationships, practices and routines, but how can these be mediated and legitimated? In short, are traditional leadership approaches likely to be appropriate for our purpose and more specifically, do the emerging models of leadership offer any better solutions?

The concept of power is inherent to discussions about leadership and its capacity to influence others. Organisations typically exhibit power through the position or status that individuals or groups hold particularly within its hierarchy. Power is exercised legitimately, as well as through the ability to reward or coerce (French and Raven, 1986). Personal power may stem from one's knowledge, expertise, competence and personal characteristics which is recognised in relationships. Creativity is the process of generating something new or original and most interpretations view creativity as bringing together existing ideas to develop something new and of value (Steele and Hampton, 2005). Thinking about problems afresh from first principles may help to discover common threads, to experiment, rewrite rules, visualise future scenarios and to work at the edge of one's competence combined with the application of imagination, are all features of innovative leadership (Steele and Hampton, 2005). Creative people tend to re-interpret and apply their learning in new contexts and communicate their ideas in novel ways as well as keeping their options open. They are more able to learn to cope with uncertainty and to trust their intuition. The contribution of innovation in public services is essential for public value as well as for efficiency and benefits for individuals (Hartley, 2005). Creativity in high pressured environments is possible if the pressure is interpreted as meaningful urgency rather than arbitrary deadline or management pressure. In social work and social care, the value of creativity depends on the extent to which it contributes to intended outcomes such as improved quality of life, sustainable communities, and improved relationships involving trust and participation, increased user involvement and economic value (Steele and Hampton, 2005).

The third sector has long regarded creativity and innovation as important characteristics of their organisations and responses to social problems. Unconstrained by political direction and control imposed on statutory sector, they come from the position of being free independent bodies, to develop new ways of working. In practice however, constraints and disincentives through the market mechanisms, overly prescriptive contracting arrangements and risk-averse decisions because of fragility has limited potential for radical innovation. Likewise, changes in social norms, affected by ideology, culture, developments in the economy and advances in technology, have had an impact on the way 'public value' has been

defined. Changes in demography, diversity and social relationships have also made definitions of the 'public interest' complex (Steele and Hampton, 2005). Services therefore need to constantly review their objectives, strategies and purposes in light of these changes and to guard against complacency or service provision being on a 'good enough' basis.

Rittel and Webber (1973) introduced the concept of 'wicked issues' which has been used to describe a problem that is difficult or impossible to solve because of incomplete, contradictory, and changing requirements that are often difficult to recognize. Moreover, because of complex interdependencies, the effort to solve one aspect of a wicked problem may reveal or create other problems. It can be understood in many different ways and may be inseparable from other problems and demands creative solutions. Classic examples are economic, environment or political issues:

"*The search for scientific bases for confronting problems of social policy is bound to fail because of the nature of these problems...Policy problems cannot be definitively described. Moreover, in a pluralistic society there is nothing like the indisputable public good; there is no objective definition of equity; policies that respond to social problems cannot be meaningfully correct or false; and it makes no sense to talk about 'optimal solutions' to these problems...Even worse, there are no solutions in the sense of definitive answers*." (Rittel and Webber, 1973, p 155).

Prompts for creativity include a crisis or severe problem, a search for improvement, new emerging needs or opportunities, changes in the wider system of public policy. It also requires confidence and stamina to act beyond one's own remit. According to Steele and Hampton (2005, p35) leaders need not, and should not, feel responsible themselves for providing the creativity their organisations need but they do have a role in fostering the essential ingredients and an environment in which the creative process is understood and supported. Leading by example by demonstrating their own curiosity about the causes of problems and alternative approaches and by maintaining a focus on outcomes and service improvement, they must exemplify an active approach to risk management, which supports innovation. Senior staff usually have a role in screening or filtering ideas. Celebrating the success even of a few small innovations can encourage a positive attitude for developing new ideas. Creative teams also have networks that extend beyond the internal workforce drawing on different sources of expertise and leaders can make time for discussions that encompass

both operational and policy staff and bypass any turf wars as well as bringing in different perspectives and experiences of what needs to change. Developing external relationships particularly around some of the wicked issues help to stimulate thinking and establish the climate for supporting proposed innovations that require inter-agency co-operation.

Chapter summary

This chapter has given you a broad and wide ranging introduction to what we consider to be 'leadership' in social work and social care. By drawing on a wider source of literature and its diverse knowledge base, we can already see how very complex the concepts associated with leadership confront us with. There are so many wide ranging debates about its true meaning and usefulness in achieving a vision for those we work with particularly in relation to the fast moving socio-economic and public policy environment. This chapter has aimed to set the scene for some of the issues which will be discussed in more detail within subsequent chapters. Suffice to say, being a leader in social work and social care requires those taking up the role to stay with the courage of their convictions. These have been referred to by Hafford-Letchfield and Lawler (2010) as "the emperor's new clothes". Having a good knowledge and understanding about leadership and management theory also enables us to develop sight of what is directing or stimulating leadership. Sight becomes insight and in turn, prompts action. The folklore tale of the emperor's new clothes is suggested therefore as one which resonates with many contemporary issues within care environments. Whilst neoliberalism and new public management has continued to have an immense impact on the trajectory of professionals working in social work and social care, the unique skills, knowledge and values held by the professions form a key element of their specific approach which can give rise to innovatory and critically reflective action. The other chapters in this book will go on to examine specific issues within leadership and management practice. We leave you to read on with a specific question in mind – are we just a witness to those changes going on around us or are we able to initiate and move towards genuine change, a distinct and material, so to speak, set of clothes?