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From the Editor
SHAHID NAQVI



A quiet battle for the soul of social work?

The relationship between social work and government can be tricky at times, particularly when ministers pursue policies that conflict with the values of social workers – or make it harder for them to do their job.

The current gloomy economic climate and looming threats of cuts to services is a case in point.

There's also the power imbalance, a sense at times of being done to by government rather than with, something good social work tries to minimise in practice.

Power is at the heart of the current disquiet in some quarters of the profession towards Social Work England.

Whether imagined or not, there is a sense among some of a 'power grab' by the regulator over the profession's education and its voice.

This is explored in our features section, with a response from the regulator.

Whatever the reality, it's not hard to understand the profession's paranoia. The last decade or more has seen attempts by Westminster to control and define social work into a more practical role focused on just helping individuals, rather than being concerned with politics and things like structural inequality and social injustice.

But the truth is that the two are connected. For without the latter, the former is just sticking plaster on old wounds.

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