



# MODERNISING SOCIAL WORK: Critical considerations

*John Harris, Vicky White*

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New Labour's modernisation agenda has produced an avalanche of change that has posed formidable challenges for everyone involved in social work, whether as service users, practitioners or managers.

"Modernising Social Work" provides a radical appraisal of the far-reaching changes in their theoretical, historical and policy contexts. The book is organised into three sections that consider: the inter-relationship of modernisation and managerialism, modernisation's impact on service users and the ways in which social workers and front-line managers seek to exercise professional discretion for the benefit of service users within a workplace culture of intensified scrutiny and control. Analysis of a range of key developments in all three areas reveals the modernisation agenda as complex and contested.

The book's three sections cover the main issues of the modernisation agenda, making it ideal for teaching. Locating the issues in their theoretical, historical and policy contexts meets the needs of student readers and experienced social workers will appreciate the emphasis on empirical research as well as practice experience.

John Harris is a Professor in the School of Health and Social Studies at the University of Warwick. He previously worked for many years as a social worker and a manager in social services. His teaching and research interests include managerialism, citizenship and the history of social work and he has published widely.

Vicky White is an Associate Professor in the School of Health and Social Studies at the University of Warwick. She was previously a social worker in field and residential settings in the statutory sector and has explored developments in practice in a number of publications.

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