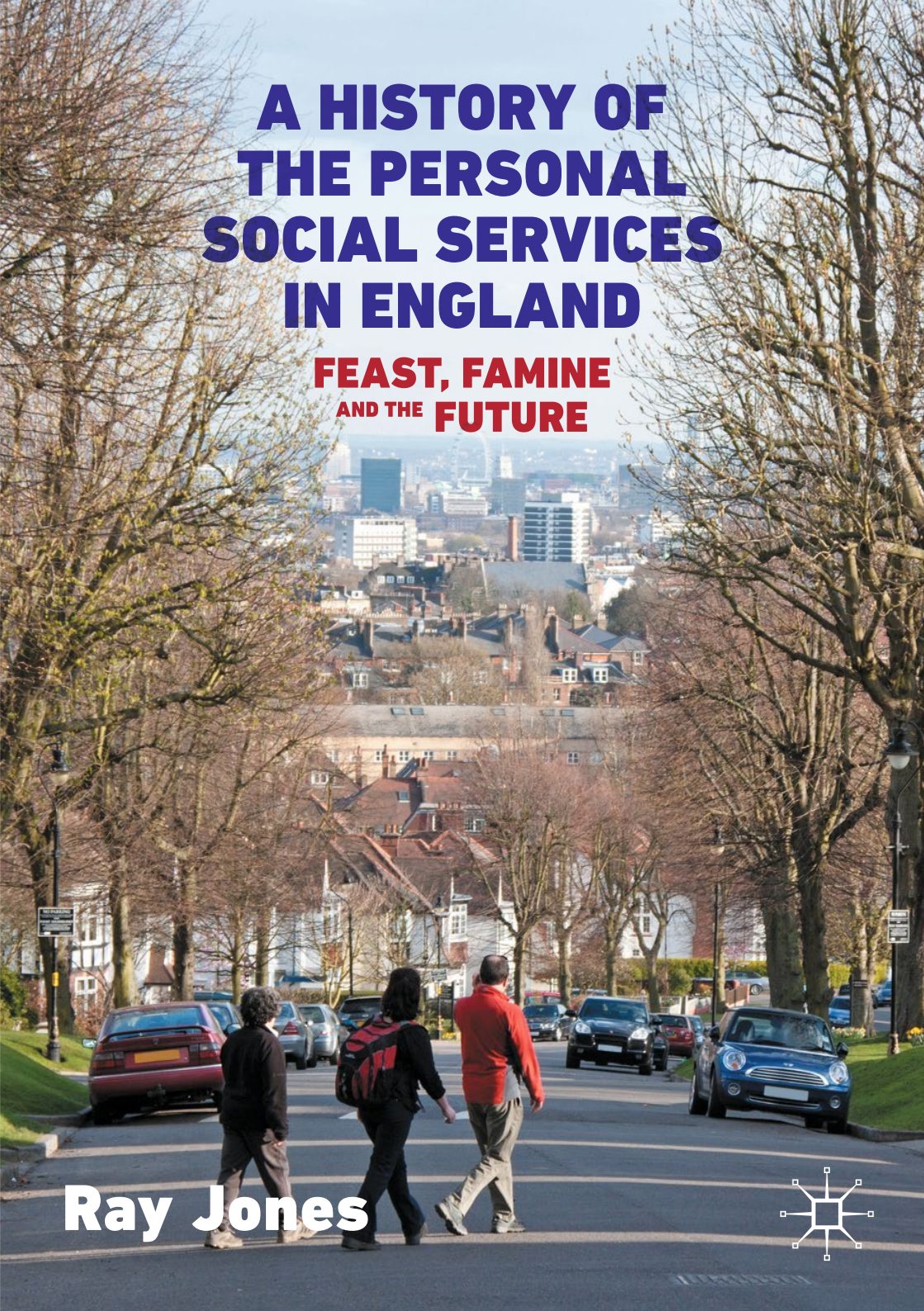
A HISTORY OF THE PERSONAL SOCIAL SERVICES IN ENGLAND

FEAST, FAMINE AND THE FUTURE



Ray Jones

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Feast, Famine and the Future

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Ray Jones
Kingston University
Kingston, Surrey, UK

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Contents

1

Introduction: History and Hints

This book is published in 2020 at a time of the 50th anniversary of the creation of unified local authority personal social services in the UK and of a UK-wide unified profession of social work. Different UK national administrations have increasingly diverged in the shaping of their personal social services during the past half century, and especially since the pace of devolution has accelerated, and this text focuses on the developments in England and, for much of this time, Wales.

From 1970 until 2004 care and protection services for children, families, and disabled and older people were primarily planned, provided and purchased in England and Wales through local authority social services departments. These personal social services were largely shaped and defined by legislation set by the national government, and it was funding from national government that mainly determined the extent of these services. As funding ebbed and flowed so did the services which had a major impact on the life experiences, and quality of life, of children and families in difficulty and of disabled and older people needing assistance.

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Prior to 1970, and since 2004, local councils personal social services responsibilities were and are now spread between different departments, with in particular a separation of social care services for children and for adults. How and why have these changes occurred are explored in this book. But the significance of this story is greater than just a reflection on the personal social services for as Vaclav Havel noted 'the basic measure of the general state decency is how a society cares for its children, its sick, its elderly, and its helpless. In other words how it looks after its own' [1].

I am a social worker, not a professional historian. This account of the history of the personal social services is heavily influenced by my own participation and observation of an unfolding history over the past 50 years as a social work practitioner, manager and academic, and by personal experiences within my family and community of the use of personal social services. This is not *THE* history of the personal social services. It is *A* history determined by a view which at any one time has inevitably had a constricted horizon and a restricted vision.

It is also a view shaped by personal values which themselves are built on personal and professional experience over time and by a selective recalling and understanding of the past. It is, therefore, a personal history as much as a history of politics, policy and practice, and the people who shaped them, within the personal social services. As such, occasionally memories and anecdotes are shared from my personal and professional experience over more than 50 years, but this sharing is as much to locate my own perceptions as to illustrate a more general commentary.

This history is, however, not only informed by my own experiences and recollection. It draws on and quotes from what were then contemporary records and writings prepared and published at or close to the time practice and policies were developing and changing. Importantly, the book is heavily influenced, illuminated and illustrated by interviews with key players within the history of the personal social services over the past 40–50 years. More than 30 interviews have been undertaken with key politicians, policy makers, academics, senior managers and professional leaders. They have had influence and often been at the centre of the changes which have occurred within the personal social services. They give an insider's perspective about what has happened and why and how. Their quotations bring to life in the here-and-now the then-and-when.

They have provided a richness of recollection which enlivens the story now to be told.

Those interviewed, for example, range from a member of the Seebohm Committee in 1967 and others who were active in campaigning for the implementation of the Committee's recommendations, to the chief inspectors of the personal social services from the 1970s onwards, key civil servants who were in the midst of the shaping of the landmark 1989 Children Act and 1990 NHS and Community Care Act, leaders in the disability movement, those who have given professional leadership within social work, and politicians and others who have shaped the personal social services during the 2000s. Some of those I have interviewed over the past ten years have since died—and capturing their experience, expertise and wisdom has therefore been especially important.

There is an importance in looking back and remembering history. As attention is justifiably and importantly concentrated on forward planning with strategies and targets generated to seek improvements for the future, there is a danger that the past is forgotten and not known. This is of significance within the personal social services. For example, just consider three points within the age range of people's life spans.

Firstly, for older people who are living in care homes their average age of admission is in the mid-80s. They would have been born and had a childhood in the context of the Poor Law with its policies of deterring people from seeking assistance and stigmatising those who received help. The Poor Law was only ended by the 1948 National Assistance Act. Their expectations and anticipations of welfare and the personal social services would, in its early foundations, have been built on the public fear and threat of the Poor Law and the workhouse, albeit a fear and threat which was already being ameliorated before its formal ending with, as will also be shown later, practice leading to rather than following legislative change [2].

And if the older person now in their mid-80s were admitted to a care home straight from hospital it may well be that the hospital was converted from a former Poor Law workhouse, as with the community hospital in Redruth in Cornwall where my parents grew up, where we lived and where my mother was an in-patient before her death a few years ago. Even when policies change, bricks and mortar tend to endure and to be

recycled and reinvented as a resource for the new policies, but their previous usage and reputation are likely still to be recalled by some.

Secondly, many of the new students starting their social work degree programmes would have been born in the late 1990s and early 2000s. For them Thatcherism and the Conservative governments of 1979–1997 are unknown in their lived experience. They are history. Their personal knowledge of politics and policy will have been within the context of New Labour and Blair and Brown and then the Coalition and Conservative governments of Cameron, May and Johnson. Without a knowledge of policy and practice before they were born they would not, for example, know about how the personalisation programme within adult social care had its roots within the lobbying of disabled people in the 1970s and 1980s. They would not know how cash transfers to disabled and older people through direct payments were initially established and promoted by some local authorities before the permissive 1996 Community Care (Direct Payments) Act gave the legal power and then duty to local councils to provide direct payments. They would not know about the prompts and processes, and the debates on principles and practice philosophy, which led to the 1989 Children Act which is still the statutory foundation for their social work practice with children and families.

Thirdly, the current context for local authority personal social services is one of funding reductions and cuts in services and assistance whilst at the same time charges are increased for service users who have to contribute financially to meet the cost of more heavily rationed assistance. This has become a subject of public comment and concern [3, 4]. But this is not the first, nor no doubt the last, time that public services, including the personal social services, will be confronted with imposed reductions in funding.

It might be wise to recall and reflect on the previous periods of funding cuts. The current national and international economic crisis, largely created by a banking system and bankers who became reckless and greedy [5], will not continue forever. A sensible strategy for local politicians and managers may be to do as little fundamental damage as possible whilst awaiting the upturn in the economy and changed national political priorities.

The current impact of politically chosen austerity targeted at poor children and families and disabled people, and at public services and public servants is, however, deeper and more dramatic than at any time over the past 50 years. Indeed, it was 70 years ago in the late 1940s at a time of post-war austerity that the Labour government introduced the public services that formed the infrastructure of the welfare state. It was a government led by Clement Attlee. One hundred years ago in 1920 he wrote a book titled *The Social Worker* [6] based on his experience of working in a settlement in East London. The message from the post-war 1920s and 1940s is that economic difficulties do not necessarily require cuts and retrenchment—and they should not be accepted as an excuse for politically chosen austerity targeting poor people and public services.

Reflecting on the past is not, however, as the comments above probably signify, a neutral and value-free activity. As we speculate about the future, what might be called 'thought experiments' [7], we might also recall that all thought is 'action in the mind' [8], including our reflections on the past. The events and ideas from history are glimpsed through our more recent and contemporary experiences and through our selective and incomplete recall. There is also a power held by the historian, the power of interpretation, as once noted by Winston Churchill:

> 'History', Winston Churchill once told Stanley Baldwin during an exchange in the House of Commons in the 1930s, 'will say that the right honourable gentleman was wrong in this matter'. He then paused and added with a grin, 'I know it, because I will write that history'. [9]

Historians are partisan, taking sides as they structure the story they tell [10], and their structuring of the story is for relatively recent history (as with this book) likely to be influenced from where they viewed events as they unfolded [11].

This is a history which is intended to illustrate and illuminate the journey for the personal social services and for social work in England (with comparative reflections on Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland within increasingly devolved political administrations) which has brought us to the present day and where the context is particularly challenging for social workers and for those they seek to assist.

It is sensible to remember and recall, however, that the current context will not remain static—it will continue to evolve, change and potentially re-route. If there are two messages from this book they are that, firstly, social work has and always should and will have a relevance within a caring society and, secondly, the future is still to be shaped and created and social workers, as they have done over the past 50 years, have a role to play in creating that future.

Part I

Creating the Personal Social Services

2

Seizing the Moment: The Seebohm Committee

The formation and focus of the Seebohm Committee in the late 1960s might be seen as an adventure of intrigue and personalities. And what in retrospect, and from a considerable distance 50 years on, might be seen as logical step change for the personal social services was at the time neither so obvious nor necessarily welcomed and agreed. Professional and political vested interests all played a part in the discussions and debates, along with the continuation, but also the refining and re-shaping, of the script that was already beginning to flow.

The Drivers for Change

By the mid-1960s, there were a number of drivers for change which led to the Seebohm Committee and its recommendations. This was truly a gestation period for a new concept of the personal social services and for their future organisational home within local authority social services departments.

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The drivers for change included, firstly, the refocusing of children's services from care away from families to assisting families to care for their children. The role of child care officers had started to change in the 1950s [1] and following the 1963 Children Act. They were now more engaged in work with families to improve and maintain their care of children, including children and young people involved in offending, rather than primarily arranging placements in children's homes and, increasingly, foster care, for children in the care of local councils. This was to be of particular significance in leading, probably unseen and unexpectedly in the early 1960s, to the ending of children's departments, separate children's services and child care officers, as noted by Jean Packman:

> Developments in prevention and work with delinquency not only strained, modified and redefined the original aims and methods of the child care service; they also contributed directly to its eventual demise … [As] the prevention of neglect [was] seen more and more as a key means of forestalling delinquency, [there was] pressure to change … and to provide an integrated 'family service' … In the event, the form of reorganisation was much more radical than the early child-centred blueprints envisaged, so that the service lost its identity in a way that was not anticipated. [2]

A Family Focus in the Midst of Demographic Change

The family focus led to the argument that there should be a family service, with social workers working with all family members. It would also tackle the issue 'that David Donnison's research in Salford and Manchester found that some families had had ten different kinds of social workers' [Bob Holman interview].

What was less easy to define, however, was where a family started and where it ended. Did a family's boundary include or exclude extended family members? Within families, and indeed within family homes, there might not just be parents and their children but also grandparents and

may be uncles and aunts and nieces and nephews. And what about people who lived alone or in relationships but with no children? Were they to be included or excluded from a potential family social work service?

One aspect of emerging democratic change was that the traditionally constituted nuclear family of parents and children, with maybe granddad but more likely granny also present, was only one model of family life as increasing rates of divorce, remarriage and reconstituted families became more prevalent.

Secondly, demographic change also included an increasing number of people living into old age, albeit that old age in the 1960s was still seen to start at age 65 (with pensions payable at age 60 for women). How was an expanding older population to be responded to and assisted within whatever future arrangements might be made for social work services?

Amongst the options available were retaining separate local authority welfare departments, with their antecedents in the old Poor Law; merging welfare services into health services, but the focus of discussions and developments within the National Health Service were still largely about hospitals and hospital care and treatment; or seeing a new family service as spanning the age range from birth to death and with a focus on care and assistance outside of the big institutions of geriatric hospitals and wards which still existed.

Thirdly, there was the demographic change of younger disabled adults living for longer and the service change of people with mental health difficulties no longer being incarcerated in the large asylums, partly as a consequence of pharmacological advances. But within the existing tripartite council arrangements of children's, welfare and mental health services, there had been less development of services in the community for disabled and older adults, and for people with mental health difficulties, compared to children.

Children's services had benefitted from having their own legislative focus in 1948 and with their legislation being upgraded in 1963 along with developing professional practice. Services for disabled and older adults were still framed by the 1948 National Assistance Act which had replaced the Poor Law and with the Act still having a focus on institutional and residential care. Mental health services, although re-set by the 1959 Mental Health Act away from an overwhelming orientation towards

hospital care, were still largely undeveloped and remained dominated by the large institutions.

So, demographic and social changes were a part of the changing landscape to be considered by whatever policy and organisational social welfare arrangements might be made. But there were also already professional changes and expansion emerging which contributed to the shaping of the landscape for social welfare in the mid-1960s. They were in part a response to and represented a much more diverse society, as noted by Richard Titmuss, a professor at the London School of Economics (LSE) and a prominent advisor to the Labour governments of the 1960s:

> It is an interesting and often overlooked fact that, during the last twenty years, whenever the British people have identified and investigated a social problem there has followed a national call for more social work and more trained social workers. Consider, for one moment, the history of twenty years of Royal Commissions, central and local committees of inquiry, working parties, conferences and Government task forces concerned with: the mentally ill, the schizophrenic discharged from hospital, the mentally subnormal, the maladjusted child, the physically handicapped, the blind and the deaf, the chronically ill and bedridden, the long-stay patient in hospitals and other kinds of residential accommodation, neglected and deprived children, young delinquents and those brought before the juvenile court, youth unemployment, the after-care of prisoners, the prevention of venereal disease, and the after-care of those who have contracted it, the problems of prostitution, unmarried mothers, unsupported wives, marital breakdown and the roles of the courts, drug addiction, alcoholism, homeless families, immigrants from the Commonwealth, and so on. [3]

Unifying the Social Work Profession

There were already underway the argument and arrangements for the development of an integrated and unified profession of social work. Common core characteristics of social work were being identified which spanned and transcended the separate occupational groupings of social workers working in different settings (e.g. within hospitals compared to those working within the community) and with different client groups.

Kenneth Brill, a children's officer who in 1970 would become the first general secretary of the British Association of Social Workers, noted that there was 'a trend towards a coherent philosophy of casework seen as a form of treatment' [4], and Webb and Wistow commented:

> In the years before Seebohm at least eight groups of field social workers, or potential social workers, could be identified: psychiatric social workers; medical social workers (almoners); probation officers; mental welfare officers; welfare officers; housing welfare officers; and education welfare officers. Of these, only the first four were well down the road towards something like full professional standing. The types of training offered to each group had traditionally varied, as had the proportion of practitioners with professional qualifications. Moreover, each group of social workers was located within a different organisational setting and the extent of discretion, of managerial control, and of independence of other—'superior'—professions, also differed greatly … The search for a common professional identity rested on two pillars, that of organisational change to bring the professional sub-groups together and that of a common training structure able to produce the set of generic skills necessary for the performance of all types of social work. [5]

This variety and variation of social work and social welfare occupational groups was seen at the time as more of a 'dog's dinner' than an opportunity to 'let every flower bloom'. The solution was to have a common education and training curriculum leading to one qualification, and with one major agency and organisational home-base for statutory social work to tackle the concern that 'social workers [had] found themselves limited in the help they could give by the functions of their agencies and sometimes by their peripheral status within them' [6].

But there were also rivalries and vested interests, especially for high status psychiatric social workers and medical social workers benefitting from the glow of being associated with doctors and of not being directed by local and central government politicians [7].

A further concern was about deskilling and losing the ground gained, especially by child care officers, with welfare officers still usually untrained, and with their roots as Poor Law visiting officers still remembered, as noted by several interviewees for this book:

> My experience before Seebohm was that the children's departments were considered to be the crème de la crème. The welfare departments were really considered to be by many people, in comparison, rather pedestrian and completely overshadowed by the chief medical officer who operated within local authorities in those days and really was a prima donna in my view. And then the mental health services were very much under the control of the hospital-based psychiatric services. [Herbert Laming interview]

> The welfare departments were not on the same levels of sophistication as the children's departments. Quite a high proportion of the welfare officers had started their [working] lives as workhouse clerks. [Bleddyn Davies interview]

> In the welfare services there were a much larger proportion of people who'd been part of the Poor Law until 1948 when the National Assistance Act was passed and they were still there with some of the old welfare attitudes and were much more reticent about what they saw as 'new fangled ideas' … But in child care there was an increasingly large number of people who said 'We're doing the job, we know what's going on, we need to use that knowledge to influence the actual policy that affects the services provided. [Tom White interview]

The welfare officers, with their roots in the Poor Law and with a tradition as local authority officers rather than as professionals with special expertise, were however within a service working with disabled and older people which was 'big business':

> The number of people employed [in welfare departments] was enormously greater than children's departments. They employed more fieldworkers than children's departments. Few of them were qualified, but there were more of them … [There was also] the extent to which the chief welfare officers were well embedded into local government traditions more than the children's officers. [Keith Bilton interview]

It was noted in the Seebohm Report [8] that local authority welfare services employed 3513 full-time equivalent (FTE) welfare officers and large numbers of other workers, including, for example, almost 32,000

workers in residential homes and over 30,000 home helps. This was much greater than children's departments with 2341 field workers and 5600 workers in children's homes and nurseries. Other services employing social workers were also much smaller than the welfare departments with 176 FTE psychiatric social workers employed across England and Wales in school health services and child guidance clinics [9], 1794 largely unqualified mental health social workers [10], and the probation service, a national service accountable to the Home Office, had 2549 basic grade and senior probation officers [11].

The Climate for Change

But there were other developments in the 1960s, in addition to the aspirations of the developing social work profession, which set the ground for the Seebohm Committee. One was the great hope that science and technology would find and deliver solutions to problems, including social problems. This was the era of the 'white heat of technology' [12], a phrase coined by Harold Wilson as prime minister in the incoming Labour government of 1964 after 14 years of Conservative government. Change was in the air and this was to be a time of renewal, including a re-energising and resurgence of the welfare state 20 years on from its incarnation. Pressure groups, academics and researchers were all a part of fuelling up this revitalisation of political and social action.

Keith Bilton, who with Tom White was to take a leading role in pressing for the soon to be established Seebohm Committee's recommendations to be implemented, was the secretary of the Association of Child Care Officers. He became one of the first assistant secretaries of the British Association of Social Workers when it was formed in the early 1970s. He commented that the roots of the Seebohm Committee were in part grounded in the aspirations and energy of the new incoming Labour government:

> Harold Wilson won the 1964 election and talked about thirteen wasted years of Tory rule, and I think there must have been quite a strong consciousness in that new government that they needed to revisit the achieve-

> ments of setting up the welfare state and that something needed to be done to make the bits of it work together better. [Keith Bilton interview]

And Tom White commented:

> I remember being in Scarborough for the Labour Party Conference and Harold Wilson made his speech [about the 'white heat of technology']—I mean there were more scientists alive that day in 1964 than there had been ever in the whole world. So it was a time when people were thinking about change and modernising everything. [Tom White interview]

Although the outgoing prime minister had recently claimed that 'you have never had it so good' [13], there was an emerging recognition of and increasing attention given to poverty and deprivation [14] and also about how care services were less than adequate with a remaining stigmatising and shaming poor quality legacy of the Poor Law, including in care homes for older people (Townsend) [15], in 'subnormality' hospitals for people with learning disabilities [16] and mental asylums [17], and in institutions generally [18]. And it was the expanding base of social science, including in the increasing number of new universities converted from colleges of advanced technology, which provided the capacity, competence and commitment to stimulate and inform the discussions about driving improvements in social welfare.

'Big Bureaucracies Are Beautiful'

A further contribution to setting the landscape within which the Seebohm Committee was to operate was that big was seen as beautiful, especially for organisations:

> The Maud Report on Management in Local Government (published in 1967) deplored the proliferation of committees and small departments, which made efficient management so difficult. One of its proposals was a drastic reduction in such departments. [19]

Within these organisations, bureaucracy and bureaucratic structures were the means of generating performance. This was despite the counter-current within some sociological research which argued that bureaucracy was not necessarily efficient, primarily because the concept was too mechanistic and rule-determined, whereas in real life organisations were organic with employees generating their own subcultures and meaning and were more motivated when they could control and shape their working lives and contributions [20, 21].

However, even in the mid-1960s, there were challenges about what much later will be seen as the concerns about the 'bureaucratisation' of social work:

> Are local authorities quite certain that they are making the most effective use of trained social work staff? How much unnecessary form-filling, record-keeping and report writing is there? … To what extent are social workers undertaking tasks that might be delegated to other and less trained staff? Are social workers at all levels being given the clerical help they need? [22]

This 1965 comment from Richard Titmuss could easily be cut-and-pasted into the debates about social work in the 2000s, for example in the report of the Social Work Task Force [23] and in the Munro Review of child protection social work [24].

'Big is better', however, was the main mantra of the 1960s. Titmuss' questioning about the form-filling and record keeping did not deter him from advocating an even bigger expanded family service bureaucracy, although even at that time some had concerns about a big bureaucracy being built within local government:

> One of the reservations I did have was that I did not share the sort of current optimism that was the kind of apotheosis of social work in this country, because from my perspective [in the probation service] from outside of local government, it seemed very difficult to me for social work to flourish as an activity inside a local authority politically led, bureaucratically structured organisation. [Bill Utting interview]

But organisational change was not only about scaling up. It was also about tidying up. Just take, for example, the account in Appendix F of the Seebohm Report [25] of the complexity in the mid-1960s of the various arrangements within local authorities for the delivery of the 1948 National Assistance Act welfare responsibilities for disabled and older people:

> 129 authorities have a welfare committee responsible solely for welfare services; in 28 authorities the health committee are responsible for the provision of those services; and 18 authorities have combined health and welfare committees … A few councils do not divide their health functions neatly from their welfare functions, even though there are separate health and welfare committees. For example, the health committee and not the welfare committee may be responsible for services for handicapped people.

So there were a wide range of local authority committee arrangements for the welfare services. There were also a wide range of management arrangements:

> There is no requirement on a welfare authority to appoint an officer directly responsible for its welfare services. In those authorities with a combined health and welfare department, the medical officer of health is in overall charge of the welfare services. In total, in 56 authorities the services are the responsibility of the medical officer of health, in 116 authorities of a chief welfare officer or a director of welfare, and in 3 authorities of the clerk of the council … In the pattern of departmental responsibility also the exact division between health and welfare functions is not the same in all authorities. Even when there is a chief welfare officer he may be subordinate to the medical officer of health … On the other hand, in at least two areas the chief welfare officer, and not the medical officer of health, is responsible for running the home help service which is provided under the National Health Service Act.

Twenty years on from the mid- and late 1940s foundation of the welfare state, it does seem that some tidying up might have been required following two decades of incremental growth and development. And a specific aside about home help services—at this time they were not

primarily about assisting older and disabled people. Instead, they were mainly a 'lying in' service for mothers who had recently given birth, with most babies delivered at home rather than in hospitals.

The Creation of the Seebohm Committee

So with all of this as the scene setting landscape of the mid-1960s how was the Seebohm Committee spawned? The genesis of the Seebohm Committee are described in two accounts published in the late 1970s and early 1980s, both based on extensive access to those who were involved at the time. In her account, Hall notes that:

> By October 1964, when Labour was returned to power, there were two major reports, advocating very similar changes, awaiting the reactions of the incoming ministers. Both documents suggested the formation of new structures for the treatment of offenders and the reorganisation of the local authority social work services so that one department took primary responsibility for the welfare of the family. The immediate reaction of Alice Bacon, who became minister of state at the Home Office, was to begin planning a policy for young offenders based on the advice of the Longford Committee (of which she had been a member). As an Under Secretary at the Scottish Office, Mrs Judith Hart began working on the proposals of the Kilbrandon Report and a third minister, Douglas Houghton, who made his debut in the newly created role of coordinator of the social services, started to develop his own ideas on a family service. [26]

There are several issues to note from this account by Hall. Firstly, it was a concern about tackling youth offending, then called juvenile delinquency, which had led to the Longford report in England and the Kilbrandon report in Scotland. Both reports extended their concerns to concentrate on the child in the family and with recommendations that encouraged thinking about how families might be assisted through what became canvassed as a family (social work) service.

Secondly, although being developed at the same time, the discussions in Scotland and England (and Wales) would diverge and become

differentiated, with contrasting arrangements to be put in place by the early 1970s which have continued to the present day. Why this was so will be discussed below.

Thirdly, Hall notes the names of key politicians who were central to how the discussions were shaped and how arguments were championed. Throughout this book, people and personalities will be seen to be important alongside politics and policies. Indeed, it is key players who over and over again are decisive in determining what happens.

And fourthly, one option in driving improvement in change in social welfare in the 1960s was seen to be better coordination across services. Indeed a particular role had been created within the newly elected Labour government to lead on this coordination. But better coordination was not, as will be seen, the route to be taken, with more radical and fundamental change ahead instead.

Hall was a social policy academic. Her account was informed by talking with those involved at the time. Joan Cooper, however, gives an insider's perspective. She had been the children's officer for East Sussex County Council from the foundation of children's departments in 1948 until she became, in 1965, the chief inspector at the Home Office's Children's Department [27]. She was, therefore, in the midst of the deliberations about child care services which were central to, and indeed largely generated, the agenda which led to the Seebohm Committee. Cooper noted:

> When it came to power in October 1964 the Labour Party was already committed to an embryonic family policy as a minor item on its political agenda, but it did not have a social services policy. The Party had a majority of only four seats and a financial crisis on its hands but despite these problems Lord Longford, who was made Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Lords (in which post he remained until 1968), was determined to persuade the government to push through the machinery for the implementation of a family policy. [28]

But how and why did this interest in a family policy, what Hall calls a family service, come to lead to the formation of the Seebohm Committee and what led to the brief of this committee being widened beyond a focus on families with children?

Differing Routes for England and Wales and for Scotland

It was not obvious or inevitable that a committee of enquiry should be established to consider whether a 'family service' should be established. Other ways forward might have included the government itself preparing and publishing a consultative green paper detailing options or a white paper with clear proposals. Indeed, as already noted, in relation to children there were two white papers published in the 1960s. Alternatively, the government could have moved directly to the publication of a bill which, following debate and amendment, may have led to legislation. Indeed the route forward in Scotland was different and quicker as:

> At the Scottish Office, Judith Hart decided, in preference to a formal enquiry, to appoint three expert advisers [one of whom was Richard Titmuss, whose significance in relation to the Seebohm Committee is noted below] to work with civil servants on plans for Scotland. This process achieved legislative change [The Social Work (Scotland) Act] two years ahead of that in England and Wales. [29]

Why this difference between England and Scotland? In England, responsibilities for social welfare and social work services were shared between three central government departments. Responsibility for children's social care policy was held by the Home Office. Responsibility for welfare policies for disabled and older people was held by the Ministry of Health. And there was also an interest from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government as the services were primarily provided by local councils. Because of the initial focus in the discussions on children the Ministry of Education also had an interest in how a potential family service might evolve. If the services were fragmented within local councils between children's, health and welfare departments the fragmentation across central government was at least equally as great and with vested interests to be protected:

> There was a very strong feeling within these departments that whatever happened you didn't concede to the other departments. And it's interesting

> that one of the big battles internally wasn't so much about 'Is this a good idea or not [to bring services together]?' but 'What's this going to do to my department? [Tom White interview]

But not so in Scotland where there was one Scottish Office and one Secretary of State for Scotland. So in Scotland there was no requirement to have to manoeuvre around the minefield of ministerial and departmental rivalries. In England, the setting up of a committee of enquiry was one way of handling political and civil service vested interests in an apparently neutral forum.

And Scotland was different in how local government was organised on the ground and where it looked for its reference point:

> I think there's always a desire in Scotland to be different. In Scotland there were a great many small borough/town councils, and this meant that some of the children's departments were far too small, so you did have some very small and not very good departments. But partly because of this failure there arose some very good civil servants and there were also a number of social work trainers, like Vera Hiddleston at Jordan Hill College, who pressed very strongly for much more social work training, because it was lagging behind England, and their drive led to the setting up of the Kilbrandon Committee. [Bob Holman interview]

Vera Hiddleston noted that, as in England, it was a re-setting of the views taken about children and young people and delinquency which in part shaped the agendas of the Seebohm and Kilbrandon Committees. Scotland went further than England in re-shaping its response to children and young people involved in delinquency. There was a process of decriminalisation with children's hearings being introduced in Scotland rather than juvenile courts in England, and there was a driver to provide a 'matching fieldwork organisation'—social work departments—which included what had previously been the separate probation service [30].

The chair of the Kilbrandon Committee was to be a lawyer (Seebohm in England was a banker) and its reference point was different:

> I think Kilbrandon, I met him and heard him speak a couple of times, did have a tremendous grasp of the issues, social work issues, and I don't know

> who it was on the Kilbrandon Committee, but somebody was obviously drawing on the Scandinavian experience, and some of them did go out to Scandinavia to look at the systems there, and of course there is this historical link between Scotland and Scandinavia. So the result was Scotland then got a different system, which they called social work departments. Then, of course, in Scotland we had local government reorganisation and some of these very small boroughs disappeared and the standard of social work I think improved enormously. [Bob Holman interview]

David Donnison commented:

> I think that the Scots have always been more of a public sector society and still are. More people work in the public sector, more people use public sector services, private education and healthcare is smaller than in England. They always have been a society which believes in qualifications. They are always joking that 'in England it's who you know and in Scotland it's what you know'. [David Donnison interview]

Hall also argued that it was 'deep divisions of opinion between professional groups within the social services as to the preferred patterns of reorganisation, whereas in Scotland the groups were less well developed', [31] which led to the larger and longer Seebohm Committee process in England compared to the work of Kilbrandon in Scotland.

So despite the creation in England at the London School of Economics in 1954 of the first generic training course for social workers, and the establishment in 1963 of the Standing Conference of Organisations of Social Workers (SCOSW), with the objective of establishing a unified national association of social workers, there were still considerable rivalries in the 1960s between these associations and the different specialist occupational groupings of social workers.

The Contribution of the London School of Economics

Several of the interviewees for this book who were involved and active in the 1960s spoke of these rivalries and frictions which were exemplified by personal as well as professional positioning, especially at the LSE [32]:

> To work with Eileen Younghusband, Kay MacDougall, and Claire Britain, as she was when I arrived but who became Claire Winnicott, was an amazing privilege. They were three very good people. But they fought like cats. It was my baptism of fire. Richard [Titmuss], who was not very good at dealing with angry women, had tried to bring about some fusion of these [separate professional] traditions having secured funds from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust to launch the generic course, led by Eileen. He was at his wits end and he asked me, a very innocent young reader, would I get all of them together and try to work out a solution. [David Donnison interview]

A less sympathetic view of Titmuss' actions and struggles at this time, based on correspondence within the Younghusband Archives at Warwick University, has been given by Ann Oakley, Titmuss' daughter:

> People made observations about Titmuss's 'insensitive leadership', his ignorance and ambivalence about professional social work, his refusal to recognise the close links that existed between Eileen Younghusband and the Carnegie Trust, and his blindness about the fact that the Course depended on very close working partnerships with employment and fieldwork training agencies, including government departments, who therefore saw themselves as equals in the experiment, and who objected to LSE's unilateral action to merge the course with others and deposing Younghusband and Lewis from their positions of authority over it. [33]

But students of the 'Carnegie' generic course were generally positive about it, despite an awareness of staff and university conflicts:

> I was confident in my own mind that we had got a sound theoretical case to argue for generic social work, and all that stuff at the LSE between the different courses and staff was really a diversion. [Olive Stevenson interview]

> I did the year on the [LSE] social admin course, and then went on to the professional course. Claire Winnicott I think was the most inspiring teacher. It was a good course and the practical placements I thought were of a good standard, and you got plenty of supervision and I was like quite Freudian, but I think it was a good training because it was a generic course, but you did in fact split into a medical social work stream, a child care stream, or mental work, or whatever it was. [Bob Holman interview]

Overall, the LSE was a considerable influential powerhouse in the 1960s. For example, Tom White commented:

> There was a kind of movement that led to the establishment of the generic social work course at the LSE, there was academic thinking that there wasn't that much difference between the teaching of social work in different settings … There was also a great deal of concern, both in the profession and more widely, and people in the political and social [administration] world generally, about the duplication and waste that went on when one family—a real problem family—would have multiple involvement with every agency under the sun. That obviously was a recipe for either duplication or everybody leaving it to everybody else and nothing being done. [Tom White interview]

Tom White also noted that:

> And then there was the [issue] of 'do you drain the swamp or pull people out of it'? There was a real feeling amongst the intellingencia that we should really be thinking again about how we provided our services, and did we need to be doing something to prevent the problems that occurred rather than providing a fire brigade service. [Tom White interview]

And many within this intelligencia were within the LSE. Seven of the interviewees for this book—all of were chosen to interview because they were influential in their later careers—had been social work students at