

## Editorial

We are delighted to have been appointed to take responsibility for editing this journal for the next five years. We have taken over a long-established journal that has been well managed by Miriam David and Dulcie Groves since 1994. Our first months as editors are made easier by the fact that we have inherited a substantial backlog of accepted articles. However, we consider it very important that the time lag between acceptance of an article and publication should not be too long, particularly in a journal which contains assessments of and reactions to contemporary policies. Our publishers, Cambridge University Press, share our concern and have agreed that the size of the journal can be increased. However, more than that is required. This editorial has been written to inform readers of the other steps we are taking.

First, we propose to reduce the size of articles. We are not changing the standard upper limit, but we will need very strong persuasion that exceptions should be allowed to that limit. We also propose to look at, and to ask referees to consider, how articles below that limit may be shortened. In very many cases the original elements in articles have been set out quite briefly and a lot of space has been used reviewing earlier work. We think that the latter task can often be performed more succinctly. All new articles will be scrutinised in this way, and we may also be writing back to authors of already accepted articles to suggest size reductions. We know academics are reluctant to accept word limitations, we ask everyone to bear with us on this issue in the interests of the ‘general welfare’ – the publication of more articles more quickly.

Our second step is directly related to that first one. That is, that we are eager to include in the journal brief research notes (of say around 2,000 words). We hope that some articles will come to us in that form, but we will also scrutinise longer articles and suggest resubmission in this form where it seems to us a fair and appropriate request.

Third, if, after the normal reviewing processes, we accept an article of obvious topical relevance we may give it priority over others awaiting publication. Clearly if we succeed in reducing the size of the waiting list for publication this will be less necessary, but as we see it at the moment a delay in publication of up to two years could seriously diminish the value of some importance new contributions to our subject.

We welcome comments from readers. We will also be very pleased to

hear from readers who are willing to referee articles – as wide a spread as possible in the range of people we are able to consult is desirable. Just let us know your name, address, E-mail address (if you have one) and the topics on which you consider yourself to be able to referee. Do respond to us by E mail – [jsped@gold.ac.uk](mailto:jsped@gold.ac.uk). The review editor would similarly like to hear from people willing to be added to his list of reviewers.

We are looking forward to a busy time over the next five years. We want to ensure the *Journal of Social Policy* remains a lively internationally oriented journal for a specialist area of study pioneered by United Kingdom scholars.