

Encyclopedia of Social Work

Call for chapter suggestions

Are you interested in authoring a chapter for a forthcoming international encyclopaedia of social work (the work)?

If so, your action is needed by 31 May 2026.

Title: Encyclopedia of Social Work

Subtitle: Future Directions, Practices and Histories.

Publisher: Elsevier

Editor in Chief: Professor Sarah Vicary, The Open University.

Sub editors: Dr Gillian Ferguson, The Open University; Dr Justin Rogers, The Open University, Professor Gary Spolander, Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen

Background

Social work is a well-recognised profession underscored by values, skills and knowledge practised locally but within a global context. Although widely known, the profession and practice of social work is little understood by those who have not been immersed in it. Even for those immersed, the knowledge base, tasks and contribution of social work is subject to perpetual debate.

This work brings together for the first time in one place an authoritative and comprehensive overview of social work as it has emerged, how it is understood, taught, practised and researched today and how it might be in the future. Innovative in its vision, this work will enable its readers to recognise fundamental aspects of social work and its continuing evolution.

Offered in three volumes:

- Volume one looks forward. It provides a collection of chapters which seek to understand how social work itself changes and how the profession supports wider individual and social transitions. This includes the wisdom social work provides along with examples and evidence of how it responds to social and material challenges which might enforce change. This volume examines the evidence base for effective practice including how its service users, practitioners and researchers are positioned in a changing world. Readers will have a chance to consider the impact of change, the challenges for social work and a scan of the horizon for the profession looking to the future.

- Volume two focuses on the international context, considering social work across boundaries, understanding and working with multiple identities and reflections on its management and organisation. Intergenerational aspects of social work are investigated, providing an opportunity to consider how core social work values, knowledge and skills are applied with different people and in diverse contexts. The future is rooted in this context but also in social work histories and development as a profession.
- Volume three allows its readers to explore the fundamental elements of the profession as it has emerged. Across all three volumes, the past, present and future are inextricably connected.

Collectively, the work will be the primary reference in the field, providing the opportunity to consider social work from multiple perspectives in one place. In a new development this work looks to identify the contemporary debates around the profession by way of enabling effective support to those whom it serves.

What do we want from author(s)?

We are seeking over **200 chapters**, each of 8,000 words and have an outline for each volume. If you have expertise and interest in a particular topic that you feel would merit inclusion, please let us know indicating which volume this could be included in along with a brief synopsis of your suggested content.

If we as an editorial team agree that your suggested chapter should be included each author will be provided with an author brief by the publisher and assigned a volume editor. The publisher will contract the author.

Important considerations

Each assigned author(s) will be provided with a standard four (4) month writing schedule from the date of the Contributor Agreement.

All chapters must be in, reviewed and in approved format for publication by **May 31, 2027, latest.**

Thank you for considering this.

Sarah

Please send any outlines by email to sarah.vicary@open.ac.uk