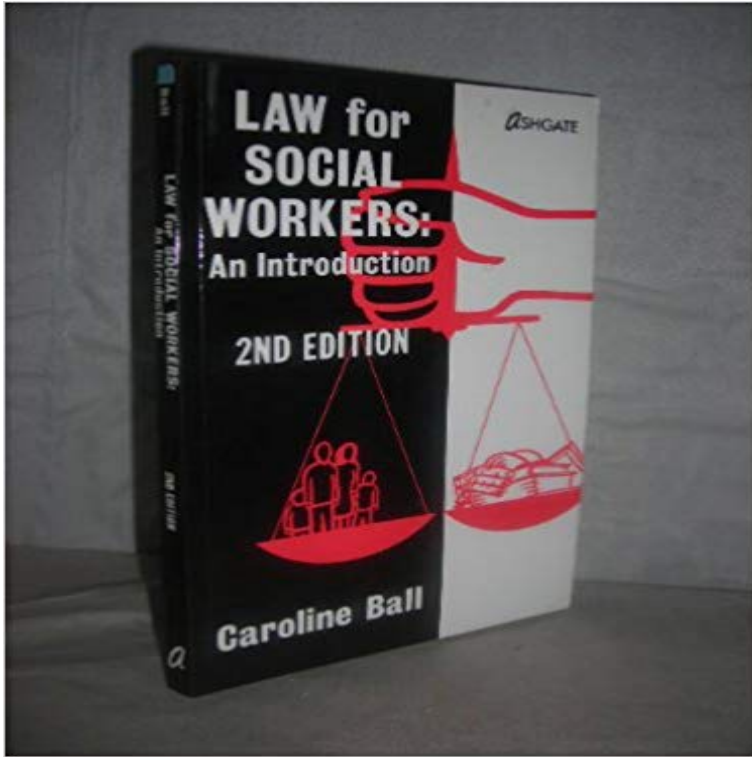


Law for Social Workers: An Introduction



Such is the pace of change that in the three years since the first edition of this book was published not only have three major Acts of Parliament affecting social work practice - the Children Act 1989, the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990 and the Criminal Justice Act 1991 - radically altered the law, particularly in relation to child care, but also the basic professional social work qualification has changed from the dual qualifications of the college-based Certificate of Qualification in social Work (CQSW) and the practice-based Certificate in Social Service (CSS), to the single Diploma in social Work (Dip. SW) with its emphasis on partnership between colleges and agencies. The second edition of this book, as with the first, aims to provide, for those with little previous knowledge and possibly some antipathy to the law, a basic introduction to the legal context of both the general and the specialist areas of social work practice. The need for qualified social workers and probation officers to be competent in terms of knowledge, skills and values in regard to the law as it affects their clients in general, and their exercise of statutory powers and duties in particular, is most recently expressed in the revised Requirements for the Diploma in Social Work (paper 30) published by the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW), 1991). This book aims to provide students with a basic understanding of the legal context of their practice, both in terms of general areas of law and the working of the legal system as it affects all citizens, and of those professional areas of law which form an essential ingredient of effective practice (Davies, 1985). For all Dip. SW students the former includes issues such as homelessness, involvement in the criminal process, or family breakdown, in which clients will benefit from the workers ability to recognize the legal nature of a problem

and advise or refer on appropriately. The level of knowledge required in regard to the areas of the law in which statutory powers and duties are exercised, whether by probation officers or by local authority social workers, involves a sound basic competence, acquired prior to qualification, and regularly reinforced and up-dated throughout professional practice. In the specialist areas of child care, mental health or probation practice, this book aims to provide a necessary introduction to the essential specialist texts to which reference is made.

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