As the new Editor of the Journal of Health and Social Care Improvement I would like to thank Dr Christopher Barnes for his contribution to the Journal since taking over from Professor Laura Serrant-Green. The position of Editor for this Journal, so far, seems to have inherited the reputation of being somewhat short-lived, and mystically, a precursor for better things to come. It would be nice to think I am no exception to this rule, however, I hope meanwhile that I will be able to play a significant role in continuing the good work of my predecessors. I am really looking forward to the challenge ahead and I know the journal will grow further in providing the evidence base and critical reflection required to help drive changes and improvements in health and social care education, research and practice.

I am delighted to introduce this forth issue of the Journal. It features three relevant articles where authors have considered some very topical and timely issues that impact on health care delivery, education and practice. The first article considers the role of the Community Matron and offers a perceptive evaluation of a role which, despite its recognised value in managing patients with long term conditions, remains the subject of much debate and often confusion. The second article offers an interesting account of the key finding of an annual audit undertaken on Social Work practice student learning.

This evaluation provides valuable insight into student placements and learning that is not only relevant to Social Work degree programmes, but essentially all courses that involve student placements. The final article is a thought provoking review of the effects of walking and physical activity on physical and mental health. The issues discussed provide a convincing incentive for change in those of us who may be succumbing to the indulgence of an inactive lifestyle. On a less personal note, it is also evident that there are many underpinning benefits and issues around walking that are relevant to the wider health service as a whole.

I hope you will enjoy this Issue and would like to encourage readers who teach, work and research in this area to make contributions to the Journal; it is through such collegiate support that this Journal flourishes.