

## Critical Social Policy

### Advice and information for those publishing in CSP

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If you are considering publishing with *Critical Social Policy* we hope this guidance will help you to decide if we are the right journal for you and give you some pointers for the development of your article. It is our aim to provide a space for publication for all of those interested in critical studies of social policy and as such we are keen to receive submissions from practitioners, policy makers, those working in local government or in third sector organisations, those who use services, activists and academics at all stages in their career.

We welcome articles relating to any area of social policy and from any part of the world. We adopt a broad definition of social policy as anything which focuses on government and societal responses to social need. However, we do expect all articles to adopt a *critical approach* to social policy. By this we mean that articles should develop an analysis and discussion based on critical theoretical, political or ideological understandings.

#### ***What to write and how to write it***

Whilst the style of an article is a decision for the author, there are a number of issues which we recommend that you take into consideration when developing your article, in order to maximise the chance of acceptance:

- Is your article broadly in sympathy with Critical Social Policy's distinct political perspective and values? CSP is committed to a number of core values and we would expect to see these reflected in the articles submitted to us. You can read more about our principles and values [here](#).
- While different forms and levels of oppression exist in all national contexts, authors who are writing about countries or contexts where there are systematic abuses of human rights should explicitly acknowledge this by including a discussion of the impacts of these abuses.
- What does your article add to what has already been written on this topic? We do not publish material which has already been published elsewhere.
- Has the subject matter of your article already been the topic of previous papers published in CSP? If so you should aim, where possible, to engage with the debates and theoretical insights of our previously-published work.
- Is your article accessible to CSP's international readership? You should aim to provide succinct explanations of any policies which are country-specific. You should also spell out any acronyms.
- Have you provided some contextualising information? The papers which we accept typically include an introductory section which sets out key policy issues and/or key theoretical frameworks which will be used as the starting point for the remainder of the paper.

- If your article is based on original empirical research then we expect it to include a methods section. This need not be lengthy, but it must include an explanation of how data was collected and analysed, and a consideration of any pertinent ethical issues.
- Consideration of ethical issues should go beyond stating that the author has complied with the relevant bureaucratic processes and include an account of how ethics were enacted before, during and after data collection, particularly where there was a substantial power differential between researcher and participants.
- The conclusion should do more than simply provide a summary of the article's content – it should demonstrate how the paper has provided new understandings or insights. As a general rule, new material should not be introduced in the conclusion; it is seldom a good idea to end with a quote from someone else's work.

Articles should be between 6,000 and 8,000 words (including references). Authors wishing to submit shorter pieces may consider whether to submit a commentary (3,000 – 4,000 words, including references) rather than an article. However, please note that word length is not the only thing that differentiates a commentary from an article. Please read our [guidance on commentaries](#) for further information on this.

All articles should be written in English, using standard UK spelling. Further, more detailed, information on style and submission of papers can be found [here](#).

### ***What to expect when you submit: how your article will be reviewed***

Unlike most academic journals, but in keeping with its core values, CSP does not have a single editor but instead operates as an editorial collective. Whilst individual editorial collective members may volunteer to take on specific roles for a defined term of office, all members are equal and all play an equal role in editorial decisions. All editorial decisions, including whether or not to publish individual articles are taken by members of the collective; we do not use external reviewers. However, we do operate a rigorous blind peer review process, as follows.

*For articles:*

- All articles should be submitted by email to [articlescsp@gmail.com](mailto:articlescsp@gmail.com) This email account is managed by our Journal Administrator; this is a paid role and, whilst central to the smooth functioning of CSP, the Journal Administrator is not a member of the Editorial Collective and so is not involved in deciding whether or not an article will be published.
- The Journal Administrator undertakes an initial check that the submission meets CSP basic requirements. These include a covering statement of originality from the authors; complying with the word limit; the article being fully anonymised; and the article being presented with numbered pages.
- Prior to each of the quarterly Editorial Collective meetings, the Journal Administrator allocates articles for review to EC members, based on their expertise and interests. Fully anonymised articles are emailed to EC members approximately 3 weeks prior to each EC meeting. Each article is allocated to three reviewers, each of whom read and review an anonymised version of the article prior to the EC meeting. Each EC member produces a

written review of the article and a recommendation regarding whether or not the article should be published. EC members do not know who else is reviewing each article.

- At the EC meeting, the Journal Administrator provides a grid which lists each article (but does NOT identify the authors) and lists which three EC members have reviewed it. Each article is discussed by the three EC members who have read and reviewed the article and a joint decision is reached on whether or not to accept the article. The possible decisions are:
  - **Publish:** the article is accepted for publication with no requested changes. This outcome is rare.
  - **Publish edit:** the article is accepted for publication subject to the satisfactory completion of minor edits.
  - **Re-write:** the authors are invited to re-write the article and resubmit for further review; no guarantee of publication is made.
  - **No publish:** the article is not considered suitable for publication in CSP and is rejected.
- After each EC meeting, the Journal Administrator circulates a second grid listing each article. This time the grid also lists the decision made by the EC collective and provides the corresponding authors' name and email address. Members of the EC are nominated to write to each author with the decision about their paper.
- Letters to authors clearly state the editorial decision and provide a summary of the reasons for that decision. Where the decision is re-write and resubmit, the letter will set out what the author needs to do in order to change the paper and make it acceptable for publication in CSP. There is no guarantee that re-submitted articles will be accepted; re-submitted articles which pay close attention to the points raised by the reviewers have a far greater chance of acceptance than those which do not. Any resubmission should be accompanied by a letter setting out what changes have been made in response to the reviewers' feedback.
- CSP does not provide authors with comments from individual reviewers. The feedback is a collective view. This process is both in keeping with our values and aims to avoid the situation (common in traditional academic peer review processes) where authors are given contradictory feedback from two or more reviewers.
- The editorial decision is final.

*For commentaries:*

- The same basic process as above is followed. However, the process is managed by the *Commentaries Editor*. All discussions and decisions take place by email, with the intention that a faster turnaround is achieved because decisions do not have to wait until the next EC meeting takes place.

***What to expect when you submit: timescales***

- The editorial collective meets 4 times per year, in late January, late April, late June and late October.
- Papers need to be submitted *at least* 5 weeks in advance of an editorial collective meeting in order to be considered at that meeting.
- After the editorial collective meeting has taken place, authors can expect to receive a decision in writing within 3 weeks.
- Once a paper has been accepted for publication it is passed to our publisher, Sage, who manage the production process. This normally takes several weeks. After this time the paper will appear 'online first' on the Sage website. The time between online and hard copy publication may vary.

### **How to contact us**

If you have an idea for an article or commentary and would like to discuss with us whether it might be suitable for publication in CSP, please do get in touch.

For articles, please email [articlescsp@gmail.com](mailto:articlescsp@gmail.com)

For commentaries, please email Jay Wiggan [J.Wiggan@ed.ac.uk](mailto:J.Wiggan@ed.ac.uk)