Working with Older People and Their Families: Key Issues in Policy and Practice
Mike Nolan, Sue Davies and Gordon Grant (editors)
Open University Press
228pp £17.95
ISBN 0 335 20560 7
This is a book for thinkers and planners rather than those seeking simple answers to everyday problems. Central to the work is the editors’ belief in the need for theories of care that can help us organise and develop our thinking. They identify six ‘senses’ that could form a framework for providing care. Separate chapters explore the theme in different circumstances including palliative care; continuing care; acute and rehabilitative care; community care and care for those with special mental health needs or learning difficulties.

The concluding chapters emphasise the importance of the six ‘senses’ in all of these areas. Whatever the special circumstances, the editors suggest there is a need for senses of:

- Security
- Continuity
- Belonging
- Purpose
- Fulfilment
- Significance.

Providing good care involves more than concern for the older people themselves. Satisfying the six senses is also important for those who care for them, both family and staff. They too must be valued and supported. The editors show how the framework of senses can also apply to the needs of carers. For instance, while the sense of security for older people means ‘attention to essential physiological and psychological needs’, for the staff it means ‘having the emotional demands of work recognised and working within a supportive and challenging culture’. For family carers the sense of security includes the need to have ‘adequate support networks and timely help when required’.

This is a book that needs careful reading to unravel the major themes but it is well worth the effort. Essential for anybody who has a part in influencing delivery of care, whatever the setting.

Ruth Sander MSc, RN, PGCE

Promoting the Health of Older People: The Next Step in Health Generation
Anthony Chiva and David Stears (editors)
Open University Press
151pp £16.99
ISBN 0 335 20438 4
By identifying the factors that contribute to the health of older people, the editors have used that platform to establish ways of promoting health for this client group. The wide-ranging issues are considered logically, confirming this paperback’s status in the Open University ‘Rethinking Ageing’ series.

Divided into two parts, the first five chapters consider principles of practice, the remaining six practical issues.

Sexuality, grief and loss, fall prevention and care settings are discussed: one suggestion is about to be implemented by our team – no higher recommendation.

Stephen Weeks BA(Hons), RMN

Change Here! Managing Change to Improve Local Services
Audit Commission (tel 0800 502030)
107pp £25
ISBN 1 86240 275 2
Code LMP 1804
The Audit Commission has neatly summarised some key literature about change management, and has drawn on the experience of individual managers and change experts gained from a series of workshops. In my opinion this information, when combined with the Audit Commission’s other accumulated understanding of how organisations can manage change, produces a readable and user-friendly reference book.

Those who work within the public service sector often feel they struggle with conflicting demands and immense expectations from the public, politicians and within their organisation. When faced with this, it is important to remember that there is no magic formula to help with the modernisation agenda.

While targeted at chief executives and those in corporate roles, I would suggest this book has relevance and use for anyone trying to manage change.

Janet Monkman BEd(Hons), RM, RGN, FETC