

Dear Professor Field

CQC Inspection and closure of my NHS General Practice. Farewell from a long career.

In July of this year the CQC, under your direction, inspected and then quickly closed my small practice. This practice was longstanding, exceptionally popular and had never been implicated in any substantial litigation or complaints. So, apart from formal inspections, all the evidence was of outstanding reliability and quality.

Clearly there is here an important discrepancy.

I am now age seventy and realistically do not have the resources or funds to challenge the relevant authorities and re-establish my Practice. But while I regretfully accept that my NHS GP career is over, I do not accept the correctness or integrity of the CQC process or decision.

Although I agree with the aim of such inspections, I have much less tolerance of what they tend rapidly to become: dense and draconian authoritarian systems rigidly enforcing compliance to vouchsafe competence and safety. While the mission may be commendable, the current consequences are not: in our zeal to eliminate the 'bad' we are probably destroying rather more that is 'good'. My accompanying essay describes the consequences, and how this has happened.

Noone intends this collateral damage, yet it is very serious: our profession is now hazardously dispirited and ailing. That affects many more citizens.

Planning, governing and administering healthcare is massively complex work with many unobvious paradoxes: even with good effort and intent we can easily get things rapidly and startlingly wrong.

I am no longer your statutory responsibility but I have many thoughts and experiences that I wish you to consider. The accompanying essay – my response to your CQC report – collates much of these, after my long career. I hope we can now generate some real discussion – something I found increasingly obstructed in recent years in the NHS.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

David Zigmond

Attachment

The Proof of the Pudding is in the Eating.

Actual and virtual realities: how our inspection culture unhinges