

Safeguarding and the CQC: is the method destroying the mission?

The Social Care Workforce now has many well-documented accounts illustrating clearly how our expanding inspection regime – here the CQC – can so easily become clumsily destructive, and then draconian in self-defence. This is a familiar theme with wasteful, sometimes tragic, consequences: institutions may start a mission, with apparent good sense and intent, only to betray it by the increasing rigidity of their method. History is littered with depressing and shocking examples.

The evidence is mounting that, particularly in welfare services, increasing regulations and inspections beyond a certain point usually becomes counterproductive: we spawn a tick-box culture where inspectable compliance to regulators often displaces core work and attention with clients. Larger organisations have the resources and PR mind-set to create a good ‘shop window’, to game the system, or to outsource the inspection requirements to an agency.

Smaller organisations are not similarly equipped for this compliance-parade, so are more liable to closure or punitive measures.

The CQC's *mission* – to assume probity, competence, safety and compassion – is unarguable. But its *method* all too often is achieving something very different and often highly contentious.

Formal and formulaic inspections in welfare activities are often coarse in their judgement despite, and because of, their dense procedural complexity. They are easily corrupted, too. We need something much more intelligently flexible. Yes,

whatever we devise will be fallible – but can be much better than what we have now.

I have my own egregious experiences of how destructively unwise and corruptible the CQC can be: my much-loved small GP practice was closed down after I challenged their method and culture.

If you are interested in this please look at my Home Page (<http://www.marco-learningssystem.com/pages/david-zigmond/david-zigmond.htm>). Articles 73 and 74 tell the story. Correspondence with the CQC is found in Section G.

David Zigmond