

Dear

## **Is more regulation, management and inspection always better?**

*Large mouthfuls often choke*

– Italian proverb

Can you hear our NHS choking? ... on its serial, cumulative and then inassimilable reforms, each vaunted as a clever step to 'transformation' (to what?).

Certainly, cleverness and wisdom can be very different. And here, in our health services, we can see how our clever expedience, over time is, so often, proving most unwise.

This is what is unravelling our NHS now (and – importantly – more widely in our kindred Welfare services: education, social care, rehabilitation and housing).

Planners, managers, economists, and the responsible politicians, have increasingly turned to 'clever' strategies: adopting models based on commercial manufacturing and distribution industries to chivvy and shape our healthcare.

This specious cleverness has, in the last two decades, been facilitated and accelerated particularly by a new genre of Welfare governance: *REMIC* (remote management, inspection and compliance). REMIC systems are centrally computerised, so are necessarily informed and fuelled by generic data, templates, codes, statistics ... and then, of course, the need for workforce 'compliance' to make the system work. The advantages of such systems to those

in the managing cadres are several: clarity, precision, accessibility, speed, impartiality, 'objectivity' and standardisation ... All good, surely?

Yet in this process of mass-management crucial aspects of healthcare activity and community are clearly getting damaged or lost. As REMIC management operates more and more like an air traffic control tower, so our healthcare employees are losing their work's human heart, identification, connection and sense: and so it is that we are losing these people faster than we can replace them. Our 'transformational' reforms have, in fact, increasingly yielded us an unsustainably alienated, sick and demoralised healthcare community.

How and why is this happening? The attached letter, to a senior officer of the Care Quality Commission samples our difficulties. It may provide some answers or, at least, more interesting questions.

With best wishes

David Zigmond

**Attachment**

*How may disciplining authorities best be dialogic?*

*Should governance have limits in Welfare?*

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**From the office of Dr David Zigmond**