

عنوان مقاله:

Challenges Facing Healthwatch, a New Consumer Champion in England

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نویسندگان:

Pam Carter - Department of Health Sciences, University of Leicester, Leicester, UK

Graham Martin - Department of Health Sciences, University of Leicester, Leicester, UK

خلاصه مقاله:

This article engages with debates about the conceptualisation and practical challenges of patient and public involvement (PPI) in health and social care services. Policy in this area in England has shifted numerous times but increasingly a consumerist discourse seems to override more democratic ideas concerning the relationship between citizens and public services. Recent policy change in England has seen the creation of new consumer champion bodies in the form of local Healthwatch. The article describes these new organisational structures for PPI and shows how those who seek to influence planning and delivery of services or comment or complain about aspects of their care face considerable complexity. This is due, in part, to the ambiguous remit set out for newly instigated Healthwatch organisations by government. Drawing on governance theory, we show that it can also be understood as a function of an increasingly polycentric governance arena. Challenges that flow from this include problems of specifying jurisdictional responsibility, accountability, and legitimacy. We review Healthwatch progress to date, then we set out four challenges facing local Healthwatch organisations before discussing the implications of these for patients and the public. The first challenge relates to non-coterminous boundaries and jurisdictional integrity. Secondly, establishing the unique features of Healthwatch is problematic in the crowded PPI arena. The third challenge arises from limited resources as well as the fact that resources flow to Healthwatch from the local authorities that Healthwatch are expected to hold to account. The fourth challenge we identify is how local Healthwatch organisations negotiate the complexity of being a partner to statutory and other organisations, while at the same time being expected to champion local people's views.

کلمات کلیدی:

Patient and Public Involvement (PPI), Consumer Involvement, Citizenship, Quality, Accountability

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