

**What can we learn from  
Hackney, Doncaster, Mid-Staffs, Rotherham...  
WAO Shared Learning Seminar  
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# When will we ever learn?

- Courage to do the right thing
- Political AND managerial leadership
- Evidence-based independent-minded scrutiny
- Challenging primacy of realpolitik

THE MID STAFFORDSHIRE  
NHS FOUNDATION TRUST  
PUBLIC INQUIRY

**Corporate  
Governance  
Inspection**

Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council  
April 2010

Best Value  
Inspection of  
London Borough of  
Tower Hamlets  
Report  
16 October 2014

Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual  
Exploitation in Rotherham  
1997 - 2013

Alexis Jay OBE

# Hackney in 2000



*accountability, transparency, involvement*

**Councillors jailed for Britain's biggest vote fraud**

## How corruption destroyed Hackney

Evening Standard News Extra  
12 Jan 2001  
Page: 6

**The current round of cuts is just the start.  
With £50 million of cuts over the next three years  
none of our jobs or conditions are safe.**

**Hackney chaos threat  
as 3,000 plan to strike**

**Byers poised to take over Hackney**

## Hackney given ultimatum

Council given 14 days to respond to calls for major improvements

**Councillors jailed  
for election fraud**

**Make the government give back the money –  
Sack mad Max not the workers.**

**A nightmare on Mare Street**

**Strike now to win**

# Hackney Town Hall

## Section 114 notice 2000





# Hackney Town Hall

## budget night 2005



# Doncaster Corporate Governance Inspection 2010



“Good governance is about running things properly. It is the means by which a public authority shows it is taking decisions for the good of the people of the area, in a fair, equitable and open way.

It also requires standards of behaviour that support good decision making – collective and individual integrity, openness and honesty.

It is the foundation for the delivery of good quality services that meet all local people’s needs. It is fundamental to showing public money is well spent.

Without good governance councils will struggle to improve services when they perform poorly.”



# Mid-Staffs – Francis report recommendations for scrutiny

*43 - Those charged with oversight and regulatory roles in healthcare should monitor media reports about the organisations for which they have responsibility.*

*147 - Guidance should be given to promote the co-ordination and co-operation between local Healthwatch, Health and Wellbeing Boards, and local government scrutiny committees.*

*149 - Scrutiny committees should be provided with appropriate support to enable them to carry out their scrutiny role, including easily accessible guidance and benchmarks.*

*150 - Scrutiny committees should have powers to inspect providers rather than relying on local patient involvement structures to carry out this role, or should actively work with those structures to trigger and follow up inspections where appropriate rather than receiving reports without comment or suggestion for action.*

# Rotherham – Jay report very critical of scrutiny

Even more significant is the apparent lack of effective scrutiny exercised by these several groups or bodies, and least of all by the Scrutiny Panels. Scrutiny in its widest sense is an essential component of Cabinet government. Rarely does it appear from the minutes that councillors have held officers to account by checking the evidence for proposals or asking whether their ends could be met in other ways. It may be that the minutes are written in bland, non-specific, language, but that does nothing to reassure the public that genuine accountability is being exercised. It is important that councillors test proposals by reference to their broad experience and their knowledge of the Borough and their own constituents. There should be nothing threatening about this; good officers should welcome challenge as a central part of local democracy.



# Politics and realpolitik

## Recent CfPS Survey:

- 33% said the leader appoints all scrutiny chairs
- Nearly 30% said scrutiny never or hardly ever robustly challenges executive (better at challenging officers)
- Nearly 75% authorities have a large majority – is this a problem?

*“Leadership culture of evading challenge - and feeding fish to scrutiny to keep them busy. Probably a result of large political majority.”*

*“Decisions made at Group - large majority do not want to show dissent in public”*