

Healthwatch Worcestershire response to NICE Consultation on ‘Shared Decision Making’

As stated in the Guideline shared decision making is a collaborative process. Therefore, it needs to be centred around the patient/service user/carer in a way that is appropriate to their needs. For example, some people may need support to help them understand clinical terminology to enable them to make an informed decision.

For shared decision making to take place the advice and information given by professionals must not be based upon their own opinion/preferences and/or skill set. For example, a new mother reported to us she felt pressured to breastfeed her baby and was told bottle feeding was not the ‘right way’. Another example was given when someone had received robotic surgery but told by a different consultant the type of surgery makes no difference to the outcome of the operation.

Whilst Healthwatch Worcestershire welcomes NICE work around Shared Decision Making we would recommend this is not a Guideline but made Mandatory for commissioners and providers. Given the feedback we regularly receive from patients, services users and carers it is evident providers and commissioners often do not act upon NICE Guidelines because they are not required to. How will NICE know if organisations are following this if it is not made Mandatory?