Displacements in organisations’ responses to the inspections of their psychosocial working environment

The purpose of this paper is to analyse how organisational activities correspond with the Working Environment Authority’s description of psychosocial working environment problems at the workplaces. Through the case study of twelve workplaces the activities are analysed focusing on the relationship between the Working Environment Authority’s problem descriptions after an inspection visit, and the solutions implemented by the workplace to solve the pinpointed problems. The Garbage Can model of decision making frames the understanding of how the workplaces decides, which activities they initiate as a result of the Working Environment Authority inspection. Displacement of the problem solving is suggested as a category of decision-making. The analysis shows, how the organisations choose relevant or displaced activities depended upon their agreement in the problem description, their acceptance of suggestion solution, and their success in establishing a reasonable understanding of the causes of the problems. The inspection visit is regarded as an opportunity to implement solutions to problems in the psychosocial working environment, which already exists as a possible and legitimate improvement activity in the workplaces, as well as a push to start a process to develop new solutions.

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