

## INLOGOV hosts ESRC Seminar Series

Posted on Monday 2nd April 2012

What are the political and managerial implications of public policy decisions and service delivery being undertaken at arm's length to elected politicians, and the consequences for citizens and communities?

These were the issues recently discussed at two workshops hosted by INLOGOV, the Local Government Research Unit at de Montfort University (DMU), and the University of Delaware, in an ESRC sponsored seminar series entitled: **'Beyond the state: arm's length government in comparative perspective'**.



The two events attracted academics, doctoral researchers, community activists and public officials, as well as consultants from across the UK, the Netherlands, USA, Spain, India, and Denmark. The workshops were convened by Chris Skelcher (INLOGOV), Catherine Durose (DMU) and Jonathan Justice (Delaware).

### Headline conclusions included:

1. The designs of arm's length governments – e.g. Foundation Trusts, quangos, public-private partnerships, development corporations – embody particular ideologies of the relationship between government, citizens, and business.
2. Fragmentation of responsibilities increases the problem of effective public accountability across the governmental system, even if specific parts of the system are now more open
3. The growth of web-based technologies increases the possibilities for virtual organisation, crowd-sourcing and 'do it yourself' forms of scrutiny and accountability
4. Community mobilisation around specific day to day issues has limited purchase where arm's length government is the vehicle for realising an elitist vision.

There will be a policy paper for practitioners and academic articles arising from these discussions, which will be available to read in the next issue of INLOGOV Informs.

**Read the most recent issue of INLOGOV Informs (<http://www.download.bham.ac.uk/inlogov/enewsletter/2011/winter/0.html>).**