

## 5 point plan for the future:

### 5) New Healthcare Roles

**Hire and train Health Coach roles, armed with home monitoring data, to oversee chronic patients entire health pathway.**

The last 10 years (FY13/14 to FY23/24) have seen the number of clinical employees increase by nearly 165,000 or 30% (measured as WTEs), including 39,000 more doctors and 75,000 more Nurses & Health Visitors (based on [NHS digital data](#)). The number of new Doctors in training has increased ([a 17% increase 2017-2021 to nearly 70,000](#)) and the numbers of new UK educated nurses has also risen (25,000 in FY22/23 a 8.5% increase on the previous year). The difference has been made up from an increasing reliance on more internationally educated Doctors and Nurses ([98% increase](#) in Internationally educated Doctors 2017-21, and almost half new joiners to NMC register in FY22/23 were internationally educated).

Despite these staffing increases, vacancies still stood at 100,000 in Mar-24 or a 6.9% vacancy rate, including over 31,000 Nurses and nearly 8,800 Medical staff. The [NHS Long Term Plan](#) acknowledges the need to locally train many more clinical staff, and better support those working today to stop them leaving their profession.



Whilst it takes time to train the Nurses and Doctors we need moving forwards, we can alongside this train and deploy an army of 'Health Coaches'. This is a catch all term for a range of new health & social care professions directed at overseeing the entire patient pathway of chronic patients, focussed on keeping them well and pre-empting acute exacerbations of their conditions. Health coach positions would be trained across a variety of clinical and non clinical skill sets, and would be deployed at the interface between the Community, Primary and Secondary Care. Health Coaches will be able to respond rapidly to worsening symptoms flagged by Remote Patient Monitoring from the home, oversee patients and their carers wellbeing, support patients post discharge and pre admission/attendance, and better connect the different providers and clinicians overseeing the patient's health. Training and hiring these professional will be quicker and less costly than Doctors and nurses, and they can be deployed more flexibly.

All the evidence is that a small % of patients account for the majority of activity and the cost burden in the NHS. The top 5% of Healthcare users have been estimated to [account for 50% of the total health budget](#), and their mean annual costs are 20 times higher than the mean for the rest of the population. Diabetes and obesity alone have been estimated to account for [10% of the NHS entire budget](#), and [diabetic ulcers](#) specifically 1% of the total spend. There aren't the extra staff or resources to inexorably meet the growth in demand for health and social care services coming from these groups. **With this in mind, there is a strong case for the NHS needing to focus on preventing acute exacerbations and hospital admissions. Both of which can be predicted with increasing accuracy beforehand using new digital tools. Health coaches can be directed towards prevention in these chronic disease patient groups, to drive improved quality of care for patients and spending efficiency, and are a largely missing piece of the NHS ecosystem in place today.**



## **The Health Analyst**

### **About**

The Health Analyst (THAhealth.com) is a blog site discussing the big issues facing the Healthcare and Life Sciences world today. It aims to shine the spotlight on new thinking and ideas that could drive positive change for all.

The Health Analyst works in the Healthcare sector, and has held a variety of different roles over a long career. This has enabled them to develop an innovative perspective on what needs to be changed and how it could be achieved.

The ideas presented in the blogs have been thoroughly researched and fairly presented. If you've got feedback or perspective to add, please contact us on [info.thahealth@gmail.com](mailto:info.thahealth@gmail.com).