

# The NHS: A national treasure or decaying emblem?

Jacob Sagers

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A billboard sign thanking the NHS for its service in the UK.

Jacob Sagers – A recent article from the New York Times [reports](#) that the United Kingdom's National Health Service (NHS) is facing numerous challenges harming the service. Since COVID, an additional 3.3 million people were added to the existing 4.1 million in 2020 waiting for medical procedures. Meanwhile, stagnating funding over the past decade from the Conservative Party, alongside aging infrastructure, is straining the entire system. These problems have led to doctors and nurses moving abroad in search of better compensation and working conditions; this exodus has created a flow and redefined the role of the UK and its location within medical services.

[Location](#) is the role that a country or place plays within the world. For example, London is a global city with migrants coming in search of work and educational opportunities. Its role in the Commonwealth is especially poignant because of its historical influences and the heart of the British colonial empire. However, the departure of medical staff – primarily to Australia and New Zealand – is creating staffing shortages in an already overworked medical system. London's role as a location for medical workers is reversing from a destination to a departure point. This small change is causing challenges that threaten to undermine the UK's entire healthcare sector. The flow of medical staff and trained professionals are creating a network for the medical profession, one not in the UK's favor. It threatens the future generation of British

doctors and the quality of healthcare. As politicians seek a solution, they run into an even greater issue.

[Networks](#) are a combination of nodes that support their function. British cities could become a node in educating future doctors but then act as a departure point. On the other hand, they could draw foreign doctors and talent to help fill shortages. However, The NHS remains completely run by the British government and has become culturally significant to British culture. Any major changes to the system meet stiff resistance. It managed to survive Thatcher's privatization reforms in the 1980s, but a new round of challenges may create networks that could exacerbate or lessen its problems. One concern is partial privatization and investment from U.S. companies that would bring a very different model of healthcare. Nevertheless, if the hemorrhaging of doctors through networks is not fixed, the NHS may face its undoing from within.

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