



FOCUS ON: David Howell

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Why is a CAO role important now and in the future?

The CAO role is essential to driving new approaches to insights and analytics, with the aim of expanding from traditional business intelligence, a descriptive and diagnostic type of approach, through to a more advanced analytical capabilities for using data to drive predict and prescribe change for stakeholders across the organisation.

How will the role be transformed by AI?

AI provides a significant opportunity to move the world of analytics forward from that of a retrospective look to a more predictive and prescriptive one. AI has already proven how effective these tools are across a number of use cases areas ranging from clinical applications through to administration and clerical support. There is a strong need to grow this capability and share best practice approaches for this work to develop high quality, safe and effective tools to support some of the key challenges faced by health and care systems including workforce capacity, demand pressures and quality of care challenges.

What are the key recruitment issues for a CAO over the next 5 years?

Over the next five years, recruitment will be challenging for CAOs specifically within the data science and actuarial roles needed to drive forward a move to more predictive and prescriptive analytics. Still relatively new as a discipline within the health and care sector, there is a large national shortage of these technical roles. Currently many organisations are seeking to address this through upskilling current staff, but noting that these courses are often around 12-18 months in duration to cover the variety of topics necessary to produce a capable data scientist.

How can a CAO influence decision-making in an organisation?

A Chief Analytical Officer can greatly influence decision-making in an organisation by providing data-driven insights and analysis to support strategic planning and decision-making processes. By working with their skilled teams using advanced analytical tools and techniques, the CAO can work with senior managers across the organisation to bring to the forefront key trends, patterns, and opportunities within the data that can inform better business decisions to be made. Additionally, they can collaborate with other organisations across the wider health and care system to ensure more cohesion with larger programmes of work and the ability to share and support the adoption of best practice. Ultimately, the Chief Analytical Officer plays a crucial role in helping the organisation make better informed decisions based on data and evidence.