I am old school. I think that craft beers taste like urine, tofu tastes like polystyrene, and that posting your life all over social media is tasteless. I feel lucky to be a doctor; it’s a privilege not a burden. I also don’t buy into the idea that doctors are the most gifted and caring people in our society, because it just isn’t true. Becoming a doctor is much more about privilege than ability. The attributes of care, intelligence, and commitment are common among the wider population — which brings me to the GP recruitment crisis. Most doctors don’t want to be GPs because of the profession’s low status — and this is not going to change any time soon. In fact, the workforce crisis is only going to get worse. A twister of change is coming; it’s just that the profession hasn’t seen it yet. And this is a good thing, as for too long doctors have had a stranglehold over change in primary care.

Currently I am involved in supporting a large practice that is in difficulties, and I have had an epiphany. The new reality is that other professionals are going to do the work of GPs, for example, paramedics can do GP house calls. I have done thousands of house calls and been involved in every conceivable situation: been through the doors with police holding riot shields; persuaded a patient to come away from their balcony; seen all manner of deaths; dished out antibiotics; conducted mouth-to-mouth resuscitation; and visited patients night and day in all weathers. I’m not fazed by house calls. But I am the exception. Young doctors often have limited exposure to house calls, don’t like doing them, and struggle with the uncertainty of it all. Instead, telephone advice is commonplace, because GPs are becoming avoidant of house calls. You cannot teach doctors about house calls; learning comes from that most underrated aspect of medical training: experience.

Paramedics are highly trained, degree-level professionals who are, above all, experienced — my stories of house calls seem tame in comparison ... They also see the same types of patients as GPs.