There's no denying the professional similarities

'Relatively speaking' (analysis September 5) raises some stimulating points, but I was disappointed to read the response from a 'spokesperson' from the Police Federation, who said 'policing is a unique profession because of the dangers faced by officers on a daily basis'.

As a former police officer who has been nursing since 1996, all I can say is try nursing, mate! Policing is neither harder nor intrinsically more dangerous than nursing, but there is one notable distinction - nurses are more likely to be assaulted 'on a daily basis'.

This is because nurses, unlike police officers, are unarmoured and not actually allowed to hit back when attacked. The violent patient/relative/member of the public is well aware of this. Both professions involve serving and helping the public. They are at the frontline of services, involve a wide range of hands-on and interpersonal skills, have legal and ethical responsibilities, are governed by rigid ethical and professional codes of conduct, and are plagued and hindered by paperwork and bureaucracy.

Both are called upon, or expected to, clean up the mess left by individuals and institutions, and neither receives anything like the support or understanding the job merits. Both exist within an institutional culture of blame and are too often made scapegoats.

It would be an enormous pity if the mutual respect that exists between nurses and the police was eroded by commentators such as this spokesperson.

This attitude can only drive a wedge through the unity of purpose that once epitomised our respective wings of the public service.

Allan McGregor
Cambuslang

New bodies will alienate those they should help

It seems to me that the government's plans for involving the public in the health services will do little more than put them off.

There are now to be three bodies to advise on concerns or needs to any healthcare professional they come into contact with.

I would like to know how the government intends to sell these complex bodies to the public. Historically, the people who do get involved in these kinds of organisations are middle aged and middle class. Does the government think that people living in poverty, for example, or refugees - people who really need a service tailored to their needs - will actually get a say? Rather than creating more and more forums and bodies and organisations, which will do nothing to improve the quality of care for patients in the NHS, the exclusive 'we know what's best for you' culture of the NHS needs to be challenged so that individual patients can feel confident in voicing their concerns or needs to any healthcare professional they come into contact with.

David Morris
Solihull

You can't improve waiting lists without nurses

In response to the articles on pay (analysis September 5), the government would be sensible to acknowledge that there is a national recruitment problem, and more seriously a workforce with a low morale.

Nurses are leaving because of understaffing. Government incentives and proposals can only be effective if there are sufficient nurses to be able to care for the patients.

Targets to reduce waiting lists are fine, but these targets can only be reached with professional nurses.

I believe that the government should look at staffing, morale and how to create an enjoyable workforce in the NHS before embarking on other initiatives.

Morale would be boosted by better pay, which hopefully would also encourage more people to become nurses.

Leslie Aldridge
Hampshire

Many readers will miss Fo's witty articles

I was very sad to read about the death of Nursing Standard columnist Fo Ettinger (news September 5).

I really enjoyed Fo's columns, particularly the way that she wrote not only about having cancer, but about her view of the world.

Her witty, ironic comments always made me laugh and I have shared some of the articles with patients who have cancer. They have all found her articles uplifting and helpful.

I'm sure I won't be the only one to miss her articles.

Rowena Giddens
Yorkshire

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