We welcome all readers’ letters, but reserve the right to edit them or withhold names and addresses. Please write to: The Editor, Nursing Standard, The Heights, 59-65 Lowlands Road, Harrow-on-the-Hill, Middlesex HA1 3AW. email: letters@rcnpublishing.co.uk

Please keep letters to a maximum of 150 words, and include your full name, address and a daytime telephone number.

Let's write to the editor:

**Cash-starved NHS forced to squeeze money out of specialist equipment**

How bizarre that expensive radiology equipment might be used for animal treatment (news November 8). It is blatantly apparent that the trust involved sees the equipment as a milch cow rather than an important resource for human health.

This also highlights the problem of the NHS being run as a business – businesses will stop at nothing to squeeze an extra penny out of whatever assets they have. And there I was thinking that the NHS had ethics.

Then again, what choice does an NHS organisation have when it is starved of funds because money is being redirected into farcical projects such as private finance initiatives and Connecting for Health?

Lei Foster, Bedford

**BRING BACK THE REGISTERED MENTAL HEALTH NURSE**

Most of the readers panel members commenting on whether pre-registration branches should be scrapped appear to be under the misapprehension that physical health has priority over mental health (reflections November 1).

It might be better if mental health nursing were the basic nurse education qualification, followed by another specialism. This might help nurses realize there is more to an individual than physical needs. It could also help to reduce the stigma that affects mental health service users and nurses.

The view that physical disorder is the foundation of all ill health is also supported by Ghislaine Young, who argues that science and medicine are the key to professional nursing (letters November 1).

Nurse education is ripe for change. It appears to be in vogue to bring back things that were scrapped a few years ago, such as matrons, so can I suggest we bring back the registered mental health nurse (RMN)? They could have an education linked to their needs, and newly qualified staff could be given the appropriate skills and knowledge for mental health care.

Paul Illingworth, by email

**WHY PENALISE SENIOR NURSES WITH UNSOCIAL HOURS PAY?**

Everyone agrees that nurses have to work weekends and night shifts to deliver a good service (news November 8). Unsocial hours need to be paid for at the requisite grade for the nurses concerned to encourage them to work these unpopular shifts.

Yvonne Sinclair, London

**RCN RESPONSE TO REVIEW OF REGULATION CLARIFIED**

Further to your story ‘Foster regulation proposals rejected by unions and NMC’ (news November 15), you state that the RCN, in its response to the Review of Regulation for Non Medical-Healthcare Professionals, called for a professional majority of one on the NMC council. This is not the case. The RCN said either option put forward in the consultation – either a professional or a lay majority of one – is acceptable.

Alison Kitson, RCN Executive Director for Nursing, by email

**BURSARY MEANS IT IS HARDER TO GET ON DIPLOMA COURSES**

The only way an all-graduate nursing profession can work is if the government provides enough funding for degree-course bursaries. I am a...