RCN general secretary Peter Carter says nurse innovators should gain inspiration from geese when leading their teams (news November 26).

This is not as odd as it sounds. Although domestic geese are generally quarrelsome and bad-tempered, migrating geese represent one of the best models of effective teamwork.

Geese fly in a 'V' formation. As each goose flaps its wings in the air, it creates uplift for the bird immediately behind. By flying together in a group, the flock can fly further than if each flew separately.

Teamwork is a bit like this. It involves putting egos aside and doing whatever it takes for the good of the team.

Finally, when a goose begins to lag behind the flock, the others honk it back into position. In terms of teamwork, we nurses are lucky to have similar encouragement if we stray from our goals.

Graeme Beale, by email

CHILD PROTECTION REQUIRES A COMPLEX WEB OF INTERVENTIONS

Your editorial and analysis (November 26) relating to the death of the 17-month-old boy known as Baby P raise many issues about the way we deal with the safeguarding of children and young people.

The comments in the editorial about avoiding a new layer of bureaucracy and increasing the number of front line health and social care professionals are certainly welcome, but these are just a few elements in the complex web of safeguarding children.

Many health practitioners comment on the difficulties they experience in safeguarding children as a result of thresholds, lack of resources and problems with training and supervision. A further issue in such cases concerns the reluctance of UK governments to ban physical punishment. While this in itself will not necessarily prevent abuse, it would help to develop a societal attitude that children should not be harmed.

John Thain, by email

A NURSE’S IDENTITY ADDS UP TO FAR MORE THAN A STARCHED HAT

I disagree with Sarah Edwards that scrub-style uniforms will erode nurses’ unique identity (letters November 19).

Scrub-style uniforms that are laundered centrally and exchanged on a daily basis will reduce the spread of infection and benefit patients.

Some nurses seem to long for the halcyon days of starched aprons and hats. But they are anachronistic in 21st-century healthcare environments. It is true that patients need to know who is in charge, but this is being addressed through the Smart Scrubs working groups, with staff wearing distinct colour-coded outfits.

We need to move beyond the issue of uniform as a proxy for nursing identity. Instead, we should concentrate on delivering high quality care.

Mark Davies, by email

UNDERGRADUATES SHOULD BE TAUGHT BUSINESS SKILLS

I was interested to read chief nursing officer Dame Chris Beasley’s comments about nurses needing to develop business skills (news November 26).

My experience is in private health care. I try to encourage practitioners to ask patients with private medical insurance if they would like to use it. If they do, it takes the pressure off the NHS, leaving more resources for