I am delighted that your Care campaign is highlighting patient care. Nurses struggle so much with paperwork, audits and inspections that care has become of secondary importance. This is not through choice. If we do not tick the boxes, we do not get the funding.

All nurses would agree that standards of care need to be good. After all, 99.9 per cent of nurses are caring people. But too much of our time is spent dealing with paperwork away from the bedside. I hope the government will finally listen and trust us to get on with caring.

My workplace has high standards of care, but we feel insulted that we have to prove it all the time.

Elizabeth Fox-Smith, by email

IN THIS COMPUTER AGE, WHY DO WE REPEAT SO MUCH DOCUMENTATION?
I agree with prime minister David Cameron that there is too much paperwork. In this computer age, why do we duplicate and repeat so much of our nursing documentation?

What is the point of repeating over and over on a piece of paper: ‘Patient privacy and dignity maintained’? It means nothing. Filling in all this paperwork means we have less time to care. The cost must be huge and the outcome debatable.

Bring back the Kardex.

Jenny McIntyre, by email

EDUCATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF NURSES IN COMPASSIONATE CARE
Nurse Stephen Smith raises the issue of compassion in the care of older people (reflections January 4), highlighting the leadership in compassionate care programme in Scotland. This aims to educate the next generation of nurses so that compassion becomes embedded.

Its principles reflect last year’s health service ombudsman’s care and compassion report, which revealed that even in this enlightened age there is still a need to ensure that compassion is part of patient-centred care for older people.

The essence of such standards is captured in the opening words of the NHS constitution: ‘The NHS touches our lives at times of basic human need, when care and compassion are what matter most.’

The NHS must close the gap between the ideology of care and compassion outlined in its constitution and the injustice that many older people experience in reality.

Mr Smith is correct in saying: ‘One way to ensure compassion is intrinsic to all aspects of care is by educating and supporting staff.’ There are many skilled staff in the NHS who provide a compassionate and considerate service. But sadly, there are others who would benefit from courses in compassionate care.

Hazel Courtney, organisational development manager, Central Manchester Foundation Trust

HEALTHIER FOOD IN SHOPPING CENTRES COULD CHANGE BAD HABITS
Your readers panellists were asked if the government should impose a ‘fat tax’ on fatty food (reflections December 14). After my experiences of shopping over the recent holiday period, I would have to say yes.

At every shopping centre I visited, there were food courts with the ubiquitous McDonald’s, Burger King, KFC and Subway – all offering similar over-processed convenience foods.

They were all busy, but I believe this is only because there were no outlets with opportunities for healthier eating.