Written Answers

Sarah Wollaston Chair, Health Committee

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he plans to take to ensure that UK nursing is effectively represented at (a) the World Health Assembly and (b) other EU and international fora.

Ben Gummer The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health

The World Health Assembly (WHA) is usually attended by the Chief Medical Officer and senior health officials. In the past the Chief Nursing Officer has attended the WHA, though in recent years has not been part of the Department’s delegation. However, the World Health Organization (WHO) is largely focussed on public health and the Chief Nurse at Public Health England works with and contributes to international nursing development with the WHO, including attendance at the WHO Nursing Forum, and also contributes to other global programmes.

There is a European Chief Nursing Officers forum which Government chief nurse advisors attend. It is for the Chief Nursing Officer for England to attend this meeting. In her absence one of the other United Kingdom Chief Nursing Officers should attend.

Sarah Wollaston Chair, Health Committee

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what steps he plans to take to ensure nurses are consulted on his Department’s future policies after the proposed closure of the Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions policy unit in his Department.

Sarah Wollaston Chair, Health Committee

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, whether (a) staff and (b) external stakeholders were consulted on the proposal to close the Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions policy unit in his Department.

Sarah Wollaston Chair, Health Committee

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what mechanisms he plans to put in place to ensure ministers receive impartial nursing advice after the proposed closure of the Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions policy unit in his Department.

Ben Gummer The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health

The Department leads the health and care system in England, working closely with a range of organisations on whose expertise it draws, including the nursing and midwifery expertise
in NHS England and Public Health England. The Department’s approach to ensuring that nurses are consulted about future policies is to flexibly access professional advice from a wide range of sources, including arms-length bodies, regulators, stakeholders and professional bodies.

The Department's policy teams will establish new networks and relationships with stakeholders and partners and collaborate with the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) to ensure systems are in place to secure advice when developing evidence based policy. These changes do not affect the role of the CNO, who as CNO of the Department already advises, and will continue to advise all Ministers and the Department on the range of nursing and midwifery issues.

The Department is changing the way it works to deliver its essential work for the Government while achieving efficiency savings. All of the changes we are making through the resulting DH2020 programme are being done transparently and communicated to staff.