I spent a day with Dave Munday, Unite/CPHVA Professional Officer, on 31 January 2014. My personal learning objectives for the day were to discover how the role of the health visitor is promoted, to increase my knowledge about how to improve practice and to discover the plan for the future of health visiting.

Our first visit was to Pauline Watts, Professional Lead for Health Visiting at the Department of Health (DH). We discussed the fulfilment of the Health Visitor Implementation Plan in which Dave emphasised that it is not just about meeting targets, but also about enhancing quality in health visitor training and support.

The second meeting was with Lord Victor Adebowale, CEO of charity Turning Point and a non-Executive Director on NHS England’s board who I really enjoyed meeting as he was an incredibly passionate and inspirational figure. The main discussion was about the national decline in the number of Sure Start Centres and Lord Adebowale felt that collaborative working to achieve community ownership would reduce the risk of closure.

We then met with Andrew Gwynne MP, Shadow Minister for Health, to lobby him about health visiting and the wider issues on the Health and Social Care Act. After the previous meetings I felt confident enough to contribute to the discussion surrounding the future of the NHS and health visiting. Andrew Gwynne proposed that health visiting will be at the forefront of a more integrated community health service. I took the opportunity to ask him about how this was achieved; whether in terms of numbers or support, with emphasis on my personal belief that support is vital for health visitors to fulfil the comprehensive role we already maintain.

Before this experience I did not fully appreciate the strong links between politics and health visiting. I have now begun to see that political party initiatives are integral to the future of the health service. Consequently, I believe that it is essential that we, as health visitors, play a more active role in the wider elements of health and community in order to save and promote our own profession.

My main learning objective before this experience was to discover how the CPHVA campaigns to protect and improve the status of the health visitor. However, I now realise that it is not the responsibility of the union to provide direction for health visiting, but the individual and collective health visitors who play a vital role in achieving this and that we have the opportunity to ask the union to deliver what is important to us. I concluded this experience feeling that I have influenced health visiting for the future and with the deep responsibility to participate in actively improving practice in my own community. The experience has also increased my enthusiasm and passion for the profession and I hope to play a more active role in CPHVA now I recognise how they can help to improve my future in health visiting.

For more details about #adaywithdave, visit: www.unitetheunion.org/adaywithdave

Ellie Moreton and Andrew Gwynne MP, Shadow Minister for Health

For CPHVA member Retires

Marion McDowall is retiring after over 37 years of dedicated service to the NHS. She started her nursing career in 1976 at King Edward VII Hospital, Sheffield, and has been a health visitor for the last 32 years. During this time she has been pro-active within the CPHVA, initially writing book reviews in the 1980s for Community Practitioner, fulfilling the role of chair of the local Torbay branch, and acting as a steward at national conferences in Harrogate and Torbay. She has been a community practice teacher for the last 22 years and was the health visiting panel member for Torbay Adoption Panel for nine years. We wish her a healthy and happy retirement.

Ellie Moreton
Student Health Visitor, Durham

School nurse contact
I regularly send out information to a group of 'interested' school nurses. If you would like to receive these emails, then please kindly contact me: rosalind.godson@unitetheunion.org