The Shadow Deputy Leader of the House of Lords, the Rt Hon Lord Philip Hunt, has expressed concerns about changes to nurse education and funding.

During a visit to the University of Worcester, the former Labour Minister of State for Health said he was concerned about the Government’s removal of bursaries and its impact on attracting more mature students to the profession. But he praised the University’s forward-thinking approach to easing the current and future crises in the health system, by introducing innovative new initiatives to prepare practitioners who will be able to manage care differently in the future.

His comments come after the independent Migration Advisory Committee published a damning report last month on the current nursing shortage affecting the UK.

"The cuts in 2010 to training places has led to the big problems at the moment," he said.

Lord Hunt, who is President of the Royal Society for Public Health, said the removal of bursaries should allow universities to train more nurses but warned that there needs to be adequate clinical placements available to accommodate this.

"We need to ensure that we can provide enough clinical placements and the University of Worcester has shown in its approach that it would be able to do that," he said.

Among the initiatives Lord Hunt heard about was the University’s introduction of undergraduate level training for nurses in dealing with chronic oedema and lymphedema, conditions which affect huge proportions of the population, but, in England, are only dealt with by specialists, rather than all nurses.

The University of Worcester is the first in the Country to introduce training in dealing with these conditions as part of its undergraduate programme.

"Worcester has developed a practical based approach to enhancing the quality of care," Lord Hunt said. "I’m really impressed by the programmes and facilities here."

The University is also engaged in developing new programmes to increase the numbers of nurses entering the profession and increase the skills of professionals already in the health sector.

Dr Jan Quallington, Head of the University’s Institute of Health and Society, said: "We were delighted to showcase our excellent simulation facilities to Lord Hunt. Using technology and innovative approaches to teaching and learning ensures that future professionals will be equipped with the right skills and attributes to provide excellent care both now and in the future."