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Nurse's fond farewell to pioneering project

Nurse Irma Shephard has said goodbye to her colleagues in a pioneering South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust service that supports first-time young parents, which she was instrumental in setting up.

Mrs Shephard, who has been in nursing almost 40 years, has been supervisor of the Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) since Sunderland was chosen as a test site in 2009. Since then, it has been extended to South Tyneside and Gateshead.

She said: "I feel privileged to have been part of the FNP, which offers babies and their young parents a better chance in life. Beginning early in pregnancy, it gives young people the support to become the parents that they are capable of being - and helps their children to reach their potential - through a nurse-led, intensive home visiting programme which lasts until the child is two years old. The nurses in the team, who have a wide range of experience, from midwifery, health visiting, and school nursing to sexual health, are brilliant – so committed and caring – and the admin support staff are wonderful, too. I will miss working with them all."

Mrs Shephard, of Durham, started her career at Sunderland General Hospital as a cadet nurse and was then a midwife, a health visitor and an early years mental health specialist before joining the FNP team. Whilst she has retired from the FNP, she is returning to the Trust as a part-time primary mental health specialist in the Sunderland Community Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service.

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Pictured above: Irma Shephard, right, with her Family Nurse Partnership colleagues.

Issued on behalf of South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust by Kay Jordan

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