



PRESS RELEASE – Wednesday 9 August 2017

Top marks for nurse's education prize double

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust district nurse Catherine Blake has double cause for celebration after being awarded two prestigious educational prizes.

She was recognised by Northumbria University for Best Postgraduate Academic Performance on a Nursing and Midwifery programme. She was also the recipient of the Queen's Nursing Institute prize for the top performing student on the district nursing programme at the university.

Miss Blake passed the Community Specialist Practice District Nursing Postgraduate Diploma course with distinction in June. Also in June, she began work as a district nurse in Sunderland, where she had been on placement during the course.

Miss Blake, who is based with the Sunderland Community Integrated Team at Grindon Lane Primary Care Centre, said: "I had no idea I was in the running for these awards and I was totally overwhelmed when I found out I had won. The course was very intense and I feel so proud to have been given this recognition for all the hard work which it

involved. I have to thank all the academic staff and Michelle O'Brien, who was my community practice teacher during my placement.”

Melanie Johnson, South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's Executive Director of Nursing and Patient Experience, said: “On behalf of the Trust, I want to congratulate Catherine on a wonderful achievement. I have no doubt that her patients will benefit enormously from her knowledge, combined with her skills and dedication. District nurses like Catherine have a vital role to play in the future as the NHS addresses the challenge of an increasing ageing population by treating more patients with complex conditions at home, rather than in hospital. Provision of care in the home can not only reduce hospital admissions but can result in improved experience and better outcomes for patients.”

Amanda Clarke, Professor of Nursing and Head of Department for Nursing, Midwifery and Health at Northumbria University, Newcastle: said: “This is a fabulous achievement for Catherine. To win not just one, but two awards at the end of her Postgraduate study is a real success and Catherine has clearly been recognised for her compassion, determination and ability as a district nurse alongside her academic prowess. We are proud to have taught Catherine here at Northumbria University and wish her all the best in her new role as a district nurse.”

Miss Blake, who lives in Gateshead, qualified as a nurse six years ago after achieving her degree in adult nursing at Northumbria University. She worked in Newcastle at the Royal Victoria Infirmary as an orthopaedic staff nurse and then at the Freeman Hospital as a staff nurse on the liver high dependency ward before deciding she wanted to broaden her experience to cover community nursing.

“I had experienced what it was like to care for acutely ill patients in a hospital setting and I was interested in how complex care is increasingly being provided for patients at home,” she said. “The district nurse role is very varied and I really love the job. As well as basic care, such as checking temperature and blood pressure, you are managing long-term conditions such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), heart

failure and diabetes, and providing a wide range of other care, including palliative. Because you are in the patient's home, you are in the very privileged position of being able to develop a special relationship with them, and their family and carers, through providing continuity of care."

Ends

Photo caption: District nurse Catherine Blake who has won two prestigious academic prizes

Notes to editors

- The Queen's Nursing Institute is a registered charity dedicated to improving the nursing care of people in the home and the community. Every university in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is invited to nominate a district nurse student who has demonstrated the most outstanding achievement on their programme for the Institute's prize.

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

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