

**TITLE: NURSE HONoured FOR HELPING STUDENTS GET CARE MESSAGE**

# Health in a smart phone era

A school nurse has been granted the title of Queen's Nurse for her role in changing the way young people can get help with health care.

Caroline Palmer, who works for Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust, was given the title following her work in launching ChatHealth in schools this year.

The service enables students to contact a school nurse for help by sending a message, rather than waiting to visit a weekly clinic in school.

The 28-year-old, from Narborough, was recognised for her commitment to the safety and quality of the messaging service, which is available to nearly 100,000 students, aged 11 to 19 in full-time education in Leicestershire.

She has trained and helped colleagues while bringing in the changes and has been noted for her leadership, enthusiasm, professionalism and attention to detail.

Ms Palmer said: "I feel honoured to be acknowledged like

by **CATHY BUSS**

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this. Today's teenagers are a 'smart phone' generation so it is important we provide appropriate ways for them to get help with their health.

"It is great the Queen's Nurse Institute has recognised how significant this is."

Young people who use the service said they were more likely to ask for advice from a qualified professional now they had the option of asking questions anonymously.

They said it could be less embarrassing to talk about difficult issues in writing and often made initial contact by text before seeing a nurse in person.

Since ChatHealth was introduced, more young people have been asking for help from nurses, including more boys, who are traditionally less likely to ask for health advice.

Maggie Clarke, Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust's professional lead for school nursing, said: "Caroline has demonstrated the highest integrity and compassion when dealing with extremely sensitive issues for very vulnerable young people.

"She has enabled young people in very challenging situations to obtain help and improve their circumstances."

Ms Palmer is now involved in a new project to reach more young people in special and behaviour support schools, using mobile technology.

Councillor Ernie White, cabinet member for public health at Leicestershire County Council, which helps to fund the school nurse messaging service, said: "The work school nurses do is vitally important.

"We know that if we successfully engage with pupils, they will be more likely to take an interest in their own well-being.

"This will help them stay well for much longer as they grow older."

Ms Palmer will receive her title in London in October.

The title is given to community nurses who have demonstrated a high level of commitment to patients and improving practice.

There are about 500 Queen's Nurses across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The title Queen's Nurse was first used in 1889 and was reintroduced in 2007.



**PROUD:** Caroline Palmer, of Narborough, has been honoured