



## **NHS worker nominated for Health Heroes Award for going the extra mile to help the elderly during the pandemic**

An NHS worker from the New Forest has been nominated for a [Skills for Health](#) award.

Julie Kemp, a medical secretary working for Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust, has been nominated in the category “Our Health Heroes Awards 2022” in recognition of her work going above and beyond throughout the pandemic.

The New Forest has an ageing population, with the number of over-65s well exceeding the national average. With an elderly population comes additional community care needs, which puts pressure on the NHS, particularly so during Covid, when referrals to the area’s frailty service grew by 20%.

Caring for the elderly is a large and complex task, requiring management of referrals from multiple sources, arranging home visits or clinic appointments, supporting patients with obtaining their tests and liaising with carers, families, GPs and the wider health and social care team.

Ensuring that all this runs smoothly is Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust Medical Secretary Julie Kemp. During the first wave of Covid between April and June 2020 Julie, in addition to her weekday role, worked unpaid at weekends to enable the New Forest Community Geriatric Medicine team to provide community assessments to elderly people 7 days a week.

Her outstanding commitment meant that the Frailty Team nearly doubled the number of patients it saw at a crucial time, with the full effects of the virus still relatively unknown.

In addition to her day job supporting the hospital's medical consultants, Julie stepped up to the plate to support wider administrative teams too, helping them to adjust to working from home and acting as a role model and mentor.

Prior to Covid, Julie is credited with implementing a raft of improvements at the Trust, including the development of an induction program to support trainee doctors who generally have limited experience of working with elderly patients out in the community.

Backing Julie to scoop the Operational Support Worker of the Year Award is her colleague Marianne Plater, Consultant Geriatrician at Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust. She comments:

“Julie is an amazingly dedicated Medical Secretary who supports the New Forest community geriatric medicine team which consists of 3 geriatricians, a specialist frailty GP and a trainee doctor.

“She is compassionate and caring, going the extra mile to ensure patients and their families understand the assessment process and helps with coordinating investigations between departments to minimise the disruption for a patient.

“She supports us as a team to offer a high- quality service which has now expanded to cover the whole of the New Forest since the start of the pandemic. Her work ethic, kindness and reliability are an example to us all.”

The Operational Support Worker of the Year Award is sponsored by UNISON.

Show your support for Julie by voting here: <https://bit.ly/3EZ0kXo>

The voting will close on 4 February.

**ENDS**