**Breastfeeding commitment commended**

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust has been awarded a certificate of commitment in recognition of its efforts to encourage more new mums to breastfeed.

The certificate has been presented to the hospital by UNICEF in recognition of the dedication it has shown to supporting mothers to breastfeed. It is the first step towards gaining UNICEF’s Baby Friendly accreditation, which is awarded to organisations which have made a significant difference to breastfeeding rates.

Patricia Davis, head of midwifery and general manager at West Suffolk Hospital, said: “We are pleased to have been awarded this certificate and take the first steps towards achieving Baby Friendly accreditation.

"Breastfeeding protects babies against a wide range of serious illnesses, including gastroenteritis and respiratory infections in infancy as well as allergies and diabetes in childhood. It can also help protect mum too, by reducing the risk of some cancers.

“But breastfeeding isn’t always easy and lots of new mothers need support. We’re committed to making sure they get the help they need and are pleased that has been recognised by UNICEF.”

The Baby Friendly initiative, set up by UNICEF and the World Health Organisation, is a global programme which provides a practical and effective way for health services to improve the care provided for all mothers and babies. In the UK, the initiative works with health professionals to ensure that mothers receive high quality support to enable successful breastfeeding.

"We are delighted that West Suffolk Hospital has received this award,” said Sue Ashmore, Baby Friendly initiative programme director. “Surveys show us that most mothers want to breastfeed but don’t always get the support they need. Mothers in West Suffolk have the satisfaction of knowing that their midwives are aiming to provide the highest standard of care.”

For more information about the Baby Friendly initiative, visit [www.babyfriendly.org.uk](http://www.babyfriendly.org.uk/)