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Media Release

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UNICEF officially declare RUH Maternity 'Baby Friendly'

RUH Maternity Services and the Dyson Centre for Neonatal Care have been presented with a number of official awards in recognition of their 'Baby Friendly' status.

Elizabeth Mayo of UNICEF visited the hospital on Friday 17 October to present the awards to staff from the recently formed Women and Children's Division – of which the Maternity Service and the Dyson Centre for Neonatal Care (also known as NICU) are a part.

Set up in partnership with the World Health Organisation, the Baby Friendly Initiative aims to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding and to strengthen mother-baby and family relationships – and works with UK public services to achieve this goal.

Strict criteria need to be met in order for UNICEF's prestigious Baby Friendly status to be granted, so the accreditation is a real achievement for the staff who have worked so hard towards improving the hospital experience for mothers, babies and their families.

Since June 2014, community birth centres in Frome, Chippenham, Trowbridge, Paulton and Shepton Mallet have been incorporated into the RUH Maternity Service. Each of the birthing centres run by the Trust received the accreditation, following a series of rigorous assessments.

Elizabeth Mayo from UNICEF presented the award and delivered a speech in which she praised staff for their 'tremendous achievement'. She said: "I've been at each assessment so it's extra special to come back here – and extra special when there are so many accreditations. This is a global, evidence-based award – but its real value is that it relies on our talking to the mothers who use the services. That's what matters most and that's what we are all here for." She added: "I was blown away by the environment in NICU. I hope Bath trail-blazes the way in Neonatal Care."

Vicky Tinsley, Head of Nursing and Midwifery said:

"As head of service, I am so very proud to be receiving a number of accreditations at one time. We have been working extremely hard towards this goal for many years, and have been through 31 assessments in that time. During a trip to Russia last year, I visited a maternity unit, in the starkly-named Hospital 3, who had just received their UNICEF Baby Friendly status. There was nothing plush or comfortable about the hospital surroundings, but what we both shared was a passion for providing consistent quality information, support and care to our mums and babies – and we do so by working as a team. I am so very proud of everyone involved."

In order to maintain Baby Friendly Status, Maternity and NICU need to continue to demonstrate the same high level of care and support for women, children and their families.

For more information on the Baby Friendly Initiative, visit www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly

Ends



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Note to editors: Accreditation was specifically awarded to the Maternity Services run by the Royal United Hospital Bath NHS Trust (including Princess Anne Wing (RUH), Chippenham Birth Centre, Trowbridge Birth Centre, Frome Birth Centre, and Paulton and Shepton Mallet Birth Centres) and to the Dyson Centre for Neonatal Care (RUH).

Pictures attached:

Elizabeth Mayo from UNICEF presents the Princess Anne Wing's accreditation to Infant Feeding Specialist Midwife, Ingrid Henderson.

RUH Maternity Service staff and volunteers receive their awards.