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**West Suffolk Hospital presented with a Carer Friendly Hospital Award**

Local charity, Suffolk Family Carers have recognised West Suffolk Hospital NHS Trust’s commitment to supporting family carers across the hospital by presenting them with a ‘Family Carer Friendly Hospital Award’.

Hayley Hancock, Head of Adult Services at Suffolk Family Carers said “We are delighted to be presenting this award to West Suffolk Hospital. Despite playing a crucial role in the care for their loved ones, many family carers struggle to have their role recognised by health and care professionals but West Suffolk Hospital have worked hard to ensure their practices and policies identify and support family carers alongside that of the person they care for. This award is a testament to how carers’ needs are being recognised within the hospital environment and appropriate support offered.”

Family carers have access to a range of support at the hospital such as extended visiting times, information packs, including a badge identifying them so that hospital staff know they are the right person to talk to about the patient’s care and treatment. One to one support for family carers is also provided by Suffolk Family Carer Support and Information Workers who work throughout the hospital on the wards and in the outpatients departments.

Julie Fountain, Lead Nurse at West Suffolk Hospital, said: “Family carers play a vital role, and it is therefore essential that they receive the help and support they need when their loved one comes into hospital. We have put a range of initiatives in place at West Suffolk to help us care for carers, including …………. . Some of our wards have gone the extra mile and introduced their own initiatives, such as the……. Ward where staff have ……….

“We are thrilled that these efforts have been recognised by Suffolk Family Carers, and look forward to finding further ways in which we can improve to make life easier for family carers.”

This award culminates a rigorous 10 month assessment period that has involved a panel of assessors including staff from Suffolk Family Carers, West Suffolk Hospital, Ipswich Hospital (who received their award in 2016) and Family Carers. 10 wards across the hospital will also be receiving special recognition for their delivery and commitment.

The award was presented by Kirsten Alderson, Suffolk Family Carers Chief Executive Officer to Dr Stephen Dunn, Chief Executive Officer of West Suffolk Hospital.

If you think you are a family carer and would like advice, information and support, please call Suffolk Family Carers information line on 01473 835477.

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**Media contact**

Suffolk Family Carers

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**Notes to Editors**

Website: [www.suffolkfamilycarers.org](http://www.suffolkfamilycarers.org)

Twitter: @SuffolkCarers #volunteersweek

Facebook: www.facebook.com/suffolkfamilycarers

**Who is a carer?**

A carer is someone who provides unpaid care and support to a family member or friend who has a disability, illness, mental health problem or who needs extra help as they grow older.

For some, taking on a caring role can be sudden: someone in your family has an accident or your child is born with a disability. For others, caring creeps up unnoticed: your parents can’t manage on their own any longer or your partner’s health gradually worsens.

The amount and type of support that carers provide varies considerably. It can range from a few hours a week, such as picking up prescriptions and preparing meals, to providing care day and night.

Caring will touch each and every one of us in our lifetime, whether we become a carer or need care ourselves. Whilst caring can be a rewarding experience, it can also have a damaging impact on a person’s health, finances and relationships.

**Facts about carers**

* 6.5 million people in the UK are carers; that’s 1 in 8 adults (Census 2011)
* By 2037, it is estimated that the number of carers in the UK will rise to 9 million (Carers UK)
* Every day another 6,000 people take on a caring responsibility – that equals over 2 million people every year (Carers UK)
* 58% of carers are women and 42% are men (Census 2011)
* The unpaid care provided by the UK’s carers is worth £132 billion per year, an average of £19,336 per carer (Carers UK, University of Sheffield, University of Leeds)
* Over 3 million people juggle care with work, however the significant demands of caring mean that 1 in 5 carers are forced to give up work altogether (Carers UK)
* A BBC Survey (2010) estimated there are more than 700,000 young carers
* There are 376,000 young adult carers in the UK aged 16-25 (Census 2011)
* 1 in 5 people aged 50-64 are carers (Census 2011)