

Agenda item:

Title of meeting: Resources Portfolio Decision Making Meeting

Subject: **Update on Portsmouth Area Rape Crisis Service (PARCS)**

Date of meeting: 22nd March 2012

Report by: Head of Customer, Community and Democratic Services

Wards affected: All

1. **Requested by:** Head of Customer Community and Democratic Services

2. **Purpose**

To update the Resources Portfolio Holder on the good work being undertaken by PARCS, one of the organisations that receives support from the Resources Portfolio.

3. **Information Requested**

Update on Portsmouth Area Rape Crisis Service (PARCS)

Introduction

The PARCS Annual Report for 2010 - 2011 was sent by the organisation to the Head of Customer Community and Democratic Services. Having read the report she wished to bring to the attention of members the good work being undertaken in the city by PARCS.

PARCS provides specialist services addressing sexual violation and aims to reduce the incidence of sexual violation, promote healthy relationships and alleviate the physical, emotional and psychological distress associated with rape and sexual abuse/exploitation. They work with women and men aged 13 and over and provide free specialist support, counselling and psychotherapy to survivors of sexual abuse. They also raise awareness of the issues surrounding sexual exploitation through local campaigns and the provision of education, consultation and training. Their work is undertaken by a small team of paid staff and over 50 volunteers.

Funding

PCC funding for 2011-12 totals £149,555 and makes up 64% of their total funding. This allows them to bring in additional funding (totalling £88,105) from other sources, including the Police, Hampshire County Council, the Ministry of Justice and Children in Need. Since July 2011 PARCS has taken a 15% reduction in funding in their main contract with PCC. They have “cut costs to the bone” and have cut two posts. The demand has increased over the same period and because they will not turn anyone away this has inevitably, led to an increase in waiting times.

Referrals

Since 2009 the number of referrals to the service has **increased by 467%**; counselling hours have increased **from 2853 per annum to 4592 per annum**

Currently there are 191 clients on the waiting list (an increase of 267% since 2009), which reflects the increase in the number of referrals.

71% of PARCS referrals have experienced Childhood Sexual Abuse. 14% have experienced Sexual Violation in adulthood and 29% have experienced violation and abuse both as children and adults.

Specialist Services which PARCS provides are:

- **Adult Counselling and Psychotherapy:** From April 2010-March 2011 they undertook **4592 counselling sessions**
- **Young People’s Counselling (13-18 years):** During 2010-11 the Young people’s service provided **1042 counselling sessions** (receiving 137 new referrals)
- **Counselling for Parents and Carers**
- **Helpline:** In 2010 – 2011 PARCS received **832** calls via their helpline service
- **Young Person’s Outreach Project:** Children in Need funds a specialist Young People’s Worker for this service: the post is split, with half the time given to counselling and half to outreach into the community. **1461 young people attended Outreach Workshops.** Outreach is prevention and helps young people access the service. They also work with young people with learning disabilities. The outreach worker has also undertaken specific work with “hard to reach” young people who are at greater risk of sexual exploitation, which has included working with the Youth Offending team and with young people who are in the care of the local authority.

Research

PARCS is in discussion with Dr Belinda Harris from Nottingham University with the aim of building a partnership between PARCS and The Centre for Trauma, Resilience and

Growth. This will allow PARCS to build an evidence base and develop its best practice. In turn, this evidence will be used to support further funding applications.

Future developments

The Board would like to be able to work more with victims of Domestic Violence (DV) – they are currently getting a lot of interventions in this area of work. They would like to see this service developing, and are working to design and deliver programmes around this. They are looking at changing their Memorandum & Articles to enable them to access funding for this service. Funding for DV services are often only available to specialist organisations, rather than generic counselling services.

There are also difficulties in having perpetrators in the same building as vulnerable women.

They are having discussions about the waiting list and looking at prioritising people where there has been a recent rape, or fast tracking support where a court case is pending. They would like to start work with young people around relationships and are also looking at **working with BME communities**. They have been discussing this with the Rape Crisis Service in Southampton and are also in contact with other services. One problem Southampton has experienced is the difficulty of one worker engaging with different communities. Kim Hosier, the Centre Director, feels that some research around the needs of different communities is needed before they can start to offer such as service and to this end a volunteer is now undertaking research on behalf of PARCS. She is looking at how the charity can develop its links with the BME community and promote greater access to the service. She is undertaking secondary research and visiting projects that already have a track record of working successfully with the BME communities. .

Volunteers

The small team of paid staff is supported by over 50 volunteers who provide a wide range of expertise. They have a vibrant volunteer community who are committed to the organisation and tend to stay. Their volunteers include trustees, PR, admin and counsellors. A volunteer is making a film about the organisation which will be shown on You Tube. Another volunteer designed their website and volunteers from IBM are updating their database. They are also working with some volunteer psychology students to evaluate the mindfulness group. They are getting volunteers from a much more diverse background including younger people (minimum age is 18 plus), a Bangladeshi woman and a transgender woman.

Purple Ribbon supports PARCS with a fundraising and information role..

Management

There has been a re-organisation since Kim Hosier took up her post as Centre Director. There are currently 8 part time staff and she is the only full time member of staff apart from the specialist Young People’s Worker, whose post is funded by Children in Need. Kim is in the process of applying for continuation funding for this post. She is also talking to the Lloyds TSB Charitable Trust about funding staff posts.

They currently have five trustees (maximum is six) with an excellent range of professional skills, including clinical skills, finance, law and charity management, together with a trustee who was previously a volunteer.

PARCS is currently housed (rent free) at a confidential address in the city, which is owned by the council. They have been at these premises (two terraced houses) since 1985. The accommodation was originally intended to be temporary as the houses were due for demolition. This is now no longer the case and Asset Management is conducting a review of premises and looking at various options around accommodation. Mandy Lindley is working with Asset management on this project.

The current building needs work doing on it; PARCS are only doing the minimum at present to keep it comfortable for clients because of the uncertainty as to whether they will be staying there: they do not want to use their resources unnecessarily. Kim has re-organised the working space and says that it would be feasible to work in just one of the current houses. She is not against the principle of sharing with another service or organisation, but feels this should be a service like Early Intervention or Aurora. Sharing with other counselling services would not be a good idea – clients would need to be confident that perpetrators (who may be accessing other counselling services) would not know where they were going for support. Also, some funding (e.g. MOJ funding) is dependent on them being able to offer “women only” access at particular times.

Service Delivery

PARCS provides quarterly monitoring reports to the Voluntary Sector Team to evidence the level and quality of the service they provide. They consistently exceed the level of service required by their contract with PCC, proving excellent value for money.

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Signed by (Head of Service)

Appendices:

Appendix 1: PARCS Annual Report 2010-2011

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
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THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY


