

## Press release

Date: 31 March 2021 Embargoed until Thursday, 1 April 2021 (00:01)

### Exciting future for Portsmouth Sexual Abuse & Rape Counselling Service (PARCS)

The future of the Portsmouth Abuse & Rape Counselling Service, PARCS, has been assured by joining national charity, Family Action. PARCS and Family Action will merge on 1 April 2021 with PARCS' services becoming part of Family Action's wider portfolio. Both organisations share similar values as well as a rich heritage supporting vulnerable people.

By joining a larger national organisation and sharing their respective expertise, PARCS' services can grow and develop in the longer term, reaching more people and creating opportunities for innovation and increased impact.

PARCS has supported survivors of rape and sexual abuse for 40 years. Alongside ever-changing public awareness and increasing confidence in addressing sexual abuse and rape, PARCS has expanded and diversified and delivers a range of integrated services to meet the holistic needs of children and adults impacted by sexual abuse and domestic violence. Whilst the financial position of the Charity has been sustained so far, it has been of paramount concern to the Board, with the increased competition for funding, that PARCS' reputation, its culture, innovation and success should continue to develop and flourish into the future. PARCS has therefore sought to merge with an organisation that not only reflects its values and ethos but can offer stability and more security to our service beneficiaries.

All PARCS' services will continue to be delivered by existing PARCS staff, who will transfer to Family Action. They will remain based in their current premises in Portsmouth and those who need help will continue to receive high quality support and advice as usual.

David Holmes CBE, Chief Executive, Family Action said:

*"We are delighted that such a respected and highly regarded charity is joining Family Action. We welcome our new PARCS colleagues and look forward to working with them. Their expertise and knowledge is invaluable and together we will continue to offer the essential help and support needed by those affected by sexual abuse and rape. Joining together offers us the opportunity to build on PARCS' substantial legacy and will enable us to reach more people, with even more impact in the longer term."*

Lyndsey Marshall, Chair of Trustees, PARCS said:

*"We are delighted that Family Action, with its long established history, respected reputation, as well as its focus on mental health and community services to children and families, agree that they create a perfect synergy with PARCS and have warmly welcomed us to join their organisation. We are excited by Family Action's proven track record of acquiring and stabilising other smaller charities allowing them to continue to grow and develop their work. Their expertise will be invaluable in helping to ensure the continuation of the valuable work that PARCS has done in Portsmouth and the surrounding area since 1981 and we welcome this merger."*

-End-

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## Notes to Editor

Family Action is a national charity committed to building stronger families and brighter lives. Since the charity was founded in 1869, we have continued to help children and families overcome the challenges they face through a wide range of practical, emotional and financial support. We offer free and immediate support to adult family members through our national helpline, FamilyLine and with some 160 community-based services across the UK as well as a range of national programmes, we currently support more than 60,000 families each year.

We help families and individuals to manage their mental health and wellbeing, working with families to reduce the impact of social isolation, poverty, addiction and other significant sources of stress and pressure. We also support families affected by adoption, special guardianship, separation, special educational needs, disability, domestic violence and sexual abuse. In addition, we provide thousands of welfare and educational grants every year to people in financial crisis.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic Family Action has adapted its service delivery to ensure we are still very much there for the people who rely on us. While we have continued to work in person with the most vulnerable individuals and families, many of our services are now being delivered virtually. We have expanded our grants services and network of FOOD Clubs during the pandemic to provide the most vulnerable with emergency financial support as well as food and practical resources to help them get through.

For further information, please visit our website at [www.family-action.org.uk](http://www.family-action.org.uk)

Registered charity number: 264 713

[twitter.com/family\\_action](https://twitter.com/family_action)

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## Portsmouth Abuse & Rape Counselling Service (Parcs)

Portsmouth Abuse and Rape Counselling Service (PARCS) emerged in 1981 as a grass root initiative run by women for women that had experienced sexual abuse. Initially PARCS provided telephone and practical support but later developed to provide counselling, psychotherapy, group and outreach work. PARCS began offering a service to men in 1994 and in 1996 its counselling and outreach service for young people was launched. PARCS began to offer counselling to survivors of domestic abuse in September 2012. The specialist services (which cover Portsmouth and South East Hampshire) are provided by a small team of dedicated staff and volunteers. PARCS services for children (aged 5-10 years) was established in December 2014. In 2019 PARCS began offering CISVA (Children's independent violence advocate) support to children aged 4 – 12 who have experienced sexual abuse, as they progress through the criminal justice process.

PARCS overall aim is to prevent sexual and domestic abuse through its educational programme and the provision of free counselling, group therapy and a telephone support line. Within this PARCS also aims to ameliorate the impact of inter-personal abuse no matter when the abuse took place.

PARCS is a registered charity (number 1079950) and a company limited by guarantee (number 3643599).

For more information, please visit our website – [www.parcs.org.uk](http://www.parcs.org.uk)