**Motion passed by Portsmouth City Council on 14/11/2017**
**Anti-choice protests outside St Mary's Hospital**

Proposed: Cllr Will Purvis (Liberal Democrat)
Seconded: Cllr Robert New (Conservative, Cabinet Member for Community Safety)

This Council notes the recent protests outside the main entrance of the St Mary's Hospital Health Campus in Milton, the location of the British Pregnancy Advice Service clinic.

This Council also recognises the concerns of staff and those seeking treatment at the clinic, for example one patient said "It made an extremely difficult decision even more horrendous than it could/should have been… I suffer from mental health problems and I felt the comments made by protesters significantly increased my anxiety... No one should ever have to deal with that."

This motion is explicitly not one for or against abortion, which is available in Great Britain in the circumstances laid out in the Abortion Act 1967. This Council believes that all individuals should be protected from harassment and intimidation when accessing legally existing health services, and that local residents should not to be exposed to related disruption and distress on a daily basis.

The right to protest needs to be balanced with the right of pregnant women to choose and to obtain advice and treatment in confidence and free from intimidation. Those who wish to restrict women's reproductive choices have plenty of opportunities and locations in which to do so. The area outside a clinic need not and should not be one of them.

This Council asks the Cabinet to do all within its powers to prevent anti-abortion protestors from intimidating and harassing private individuals outside the St Mary's Hospital, and its entrances.

The Council also notes the steps taken by Ealing Council to pursue a Public Space Protection Order to prevent harassment of women accessing pregnancy advice services in their Borough.

This Council therefore requests that a report be brought to the Cabinet Member for Community Safety fully exploring every possible option, including the use of a Public Spaces Protection Order, to create a 'buffer zone' around this location to provide the necessary reassurance and security that all women need and deserve as they make their own personal decision about their pregnancy.

Councillor Will Purvis: 07590 282135 / wapurvis@me.com