

Dear Resident / Stakeholder,

29 October 2018

Consultation on a Public Spaces Protection Order for the Rosslyn Road area

We are seeking your feedback on a local issue which may be affecting you - the activities of pro-life organisations who protest or keep vigil outside the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS) Clinic on Rosslyn Road.

There is evidence that there have been protests/vigils outside the clinic on and off over the last ten years. From September 2013, the frequency and scope of the protests/vigils has increased to the extent that they have been almost daily. The protestors/vigil holders appear to be associated with, or volunteers of, pro-life organisations, with the primary organisation being The Good Counsel Network.

A range of behaviours have been reported, including displaying images to both residents and visitors to the clinic, approaching people and attempting to speak to them, handing out leaflets and rosary beads, which has made some people feel upset, uncomfortable, intimidated and/or harassed. These protests/vigils have resulted in two petitions being presented to Richmond Council in 2014 and 2018 and a number of impact and witness statements being gathered by BPAS and Richmond Police between 2003-2018 asking the Council to address the issue.

In response to this evidence, the Council wrote to The Good Counsel Network asking them to cease the activities that were causing complaints. The Good Counsel Network describe themselves on their website as "a life affirming women's organisation which offers a free pregnancy test, free advice, medical information, practical help and moral support to women seeking an abortion." In response to the Council's letter, they refuted the description of their vigils and offers of help as protests, and denied that their actions caused harassment, alarm or distress.

There are various actions available to the Council to deal appropriately and proportionately with anti-social behaviour. Having considered all of the options available, the Council feels that a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) may be the most appropriate course of action.

What would a PSPO involve?

A PSPO prohibits specific activities within a defined area. In this case the activities and the defined area (or buffer zone) are shown in the consultation document attached. Failing to comply with the restrictions imposed by the PSPO would constitute a criminal offence. If implemented, the Order would be introduced for three years and reviewed on a regular basis.

Have your say

We would like to hear your views on the issue and whether or not you would support the implementation of a PSPO in the Rosslyn Road area.

To take part in the online consultation please go to:

<https://haveyoursay.citizenspace.com/community-safety/rosslyn-road>

All other supporting documents can be viewed at:

<https://cabnet.richmond.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=35875#mgDocuments>

If you have any questions in relation to the consultation or would like a paper copy of the questionnaire, please call **020 8891 1411** or e-mail us at consultationrosslynroad@richmond.gov.uk. The consultation will launch on **29 October** and will be open until **9 December 2018**.

Yours faithfully,

Robyn Thomas, Head of Community Safety