



## **Media Release**

For immediate release

14<sup>th</sup> September 2020

# **NORFOLK'S COMMUNITY ADVICE NETWORK (NCAN) UNLOCKS FREE ADVICE FOR PROFESSIONALS SUPPORTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE.**

## **Launch of "One Door With NCAN" Awareness Campaign.**

Norfolk Community Advice Network (NCAN) has launched a new communications campaign ("One Door With NCAN") designed to reach professionals across the county who are supporting younger or older people, people with disabilities, those experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse, and people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities.

With so many Norfolk people now easing into "new normal" life after lockdown, the demand for free, quality assured advice has never been higher. Professionals supporting vulnerable people can be inundated with complex queries from their clients or service users which require specialist advice from multiple organisations. Not knowing which door to knock on first can be an obstacle to speedy outcomes for their clients. NCAN is the answer.

*Emily Balsdon, Director of NCAN, said "Our new "One Door with NCAN" campaign encourages professionals to become aware of the impartial advice and "joined up" support from NCAN's member organisations. The network's simple shared online referral system means every question will be answered by the right organisation and in the right order, so the client avoids costly pitfalls of inaccurate or conditional advice. NCAN's shared referral process saves time too – the client will not need to keep repeating the facts to each person helping them. It is free of charge for charities and voluntary sector organisations to join NCAN and then they can use our referral system."*

Age UK Norfolk is a charity and a member of NCAN. Their Information and Advice Manager, Emma Lomas, said:

*"Many vulnerable older people across Norfolk are more in need of trusted and reliable advice than ever. Age UK Norfolk is committed to all older people being able to access timely, free, quality assured advice. NCAN facilitates this process and we are proud and pleased to be part of the referral system and helping to make Norfolk a great place to grow older."*

The Bridge Plus+ in Norwich is a voluntary organisation that provides a wide range of information and advice for people from BAME communities, with access to language support where required. When staff began using the NCAN online referral system they immediately saw its benefits. *Béatrice Humarau* said:

*“We haven’t looked back – the NCAN online system is very user friendly, we receive email alerts showing how the referral is making progress, we can make sure additional needs (such as a need for interpreting support) are clearly highlighted. Not having to repeat everything all over again saves a lot of time for staff and reduces the trauma or emotionally triggering experiences for the client.*

*Using NCAN’s online referral system has been especially useful since Covid-19 lockdown, as we have seen a 30% increase in the demand for our services. We’ve been able to refer service users to specialist advice in a secure and time efficient manner. Online referrals via NCAN are helping to get people a wide range of free advice, including employment law and Universal Credit “Help to Claim” support for new claimants needing urgent financial help.”*

Amy Griffiths, Social Media Assistant at Norfolk Citizens Advice, said:

*“We don't know what we'd do without NCAN. It allows us to work closely with our partners so we can provide our clients with the services they need as soon as possible.”*

To find out more about NCAN, the free support available to member organisations and its online Referral System go to <https://norfolkcan.org.uk/>

**ENDS**

#### Editor’s Notes

NCAN is short for “Norfolk Community Advice Network”. <https://norfolkcan.org.uk/>

The “One Door With NCAN” campaign is funded by Norfolk Community Foundation for 12 months.

NCAN is a membership network made up of voluntary, public and not-for-profit organisations that are committed to meeting the advice and guidance needs of Norfolk residents, particularly those most disadvantaged by a lack of FREE, high quality, timely and impartial advice.

Media Contact for interview requests or questions: Helen Oldfield, Affinity PR.  
Tel 01473 724902 or 07974 502847. Email [helen@Affinitypr.co.uk](mailto:helen@Affinitypr.co.uk)