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Norfolk County Council

NEWS RELEASE

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Free Information, Advice, Representation and Advocacy Services launch for all Norfolk residents

New Information, Advice, Representation and Advocacy services are launching in Norfolk, providing residents with smoother access to the services they need, free of charge.

The free support, funded by Norfolk County Council, will be available to anyone in the county who needs help identifying which organisations in the county can help them, as well as helping them access those services. By offering information and advice via phone or email to anyone needing further information on services available, the service will help match people to the services they need.

The Information, Advice and Representation Service can be contacted via the Norfolk Community Advice Network by calling the freephone number 0333 996 8333 or by email at helpline@ncan.co.uk and the Norfolk Advocacy Partnership on 01508 491 210 or email at info@equallives.org.uk.

Professionals can also refer those they support to the service's available across the sector and region.

Councillor Bill Borrett, Norfolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, said: "When people need help and advice, it is vitally important that they can access it quickly and easily. Therefore, Norfolk County Council has commissioned the new Information, Advice and Advocacy Service to ensure people find the right support, when they need it with the maximum of ease.

"Norfolk County Council awarded the contract to deliver the service to Age UK Norfolk and Equal Lives as their combined knowledge and experience will ensure that Norfolk residents are provided with a service that is efficient, and most importantly, effective."

This service is funded by the County Council and sees Age UK Norfolk and Equal Lives leading a free service to Norfolk residents.

Using a triage approach that will assess people's needs, the service will ensure that residents get the right support as quickly as possible in an easy, user-friendly way.

Emily Balsdon, Director of the Norfolk Community Advice Network (NCAN), said: "We are very pleased to be able to provide this service to the residents of Norfolk. All of the charities involved are committed to ensuring people get the right help at the right time and we will approach all of the support we give in a person-centred way. The new helpline team are set-up and ready to take calls so please reach out if you think we can be of assistance to you or a loved one. We are very aware of the current Cost of Living crisis and that many people may be entitled to help and support that they may not be aware of. We can take a range of approaches from guidance so you can self-help through to referrals for more in-depth information, advice and advocacy services across the county."

Rolling several pre-existing contracts into one, the service supports the Council's strategy of providing good quality information and advice that is freely and easily accessible to all, helping people to plan effectively for the future, solve emerging problems and make well informed life choices to maximise their health, wellbeing and financial security.

Both charities will be supported by a number of well-recognised and established organisations, including Norfolk Citizens Advice, DIAL, MAP, Norfolk Community Law Service, Opening Doors, Deaf Connexions, West Norfolk Deaf Association and The Bridge Plus+. The service will be able to deliver advice and answer questions on a range of issues, including access to benefits, dealing with financial worries and independent advice on accessing social care, among many others.

To find out more information please visit the Norfolk Community Advice Network website at <https://ncan.co.uk/>

ENDS

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Group leaders' and councillors' contact details are available at: www.norfolk.gov.uk/countycouncillors

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