NCAN Referral System Overview

What is the *NCAN Referral System*?

- Provides 'one door' into the diverse VCSE landscape by pooling a wide range of VCSE and other support providers into one platform, enabling referral pathways that are secure, efficient and with trackable outcomes.

- NCAN provides a platform for training and ongoing support for professionals so that they can provide consistent, accurate and meaningful warm handovers.

- This intuitive and embedded 'one-door' for accessing a diverse range of specialist and holistic support addresses crisis situations and underlying causes of poverty, unemployment, and ill-health.

Directory

- Integral to the NCAN Referral System is a [Directory of organisations](#) in the county that provide information and advice on a range of different topics;

- The Directory provides further information on the advice agencies, enabling the referrer to select the correct agency for the client.

Analysis and *Reporting*

- With a built-in monitoring and analysis function, the NCAN Referral System facilitates analysis of referrals from and to organisations;

- This analysis can be used to demonstrate impact by sector, geographic and demographic groupings, thus providing valuable impact measurements.

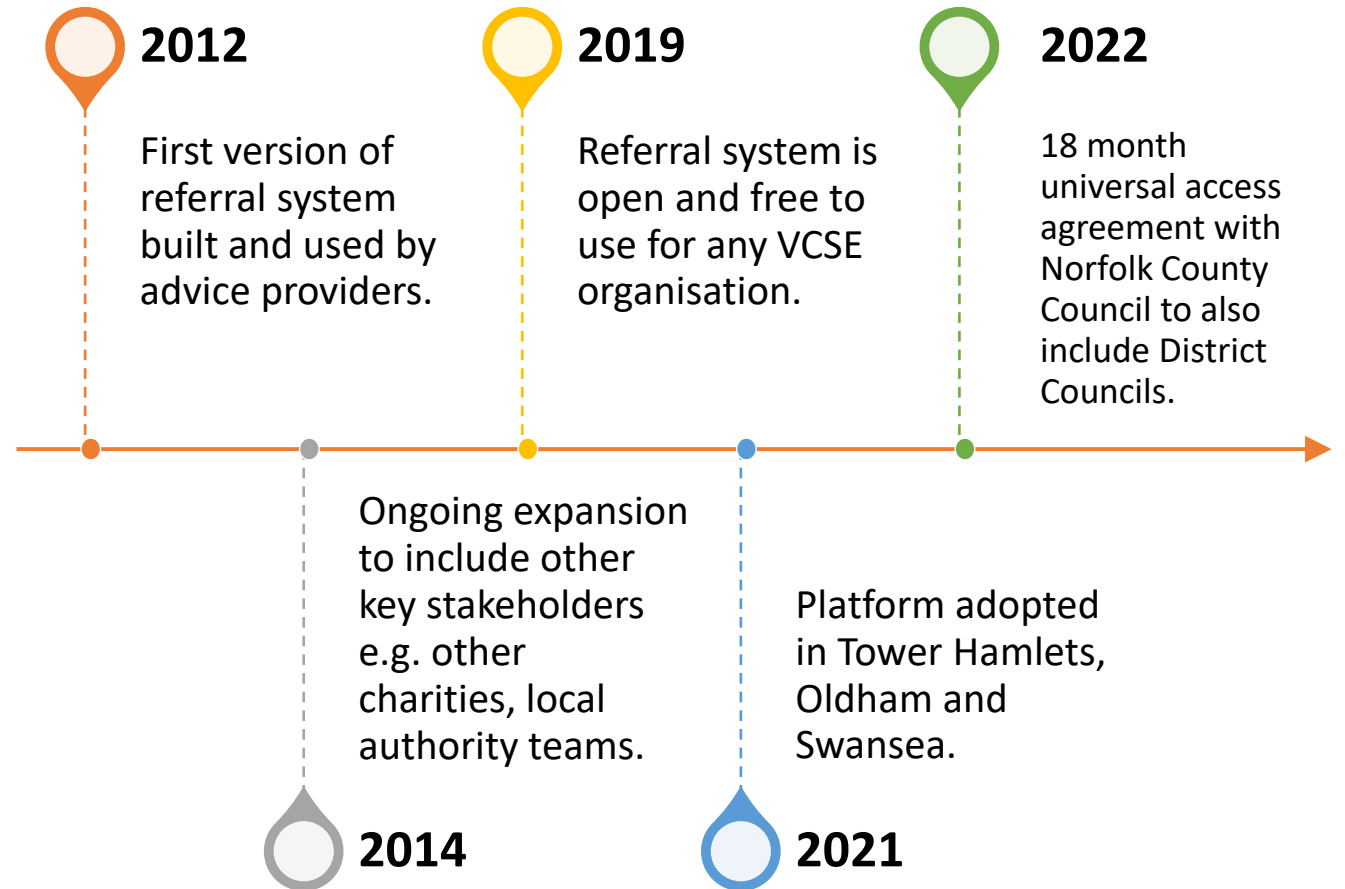# Benefits of *referring* rather than *signposting*

- Organisations who use the referral system report that they are more able to refer, rather than signpost people as a result of the system.

NCAN
Steering Group

⇒ *Meets monthly to discuss relevant matters for Norfolk communities and referral system insights*
⇒ *Organises open meetings to all members to share knowledge and identify ways to collaborate better on particular themes (homelessness, poverty and access to advice, child protection, etc.)*
⇒ *Collaborates on research and campaigns to help improve the experience of the most vulnerable in Norfolk*
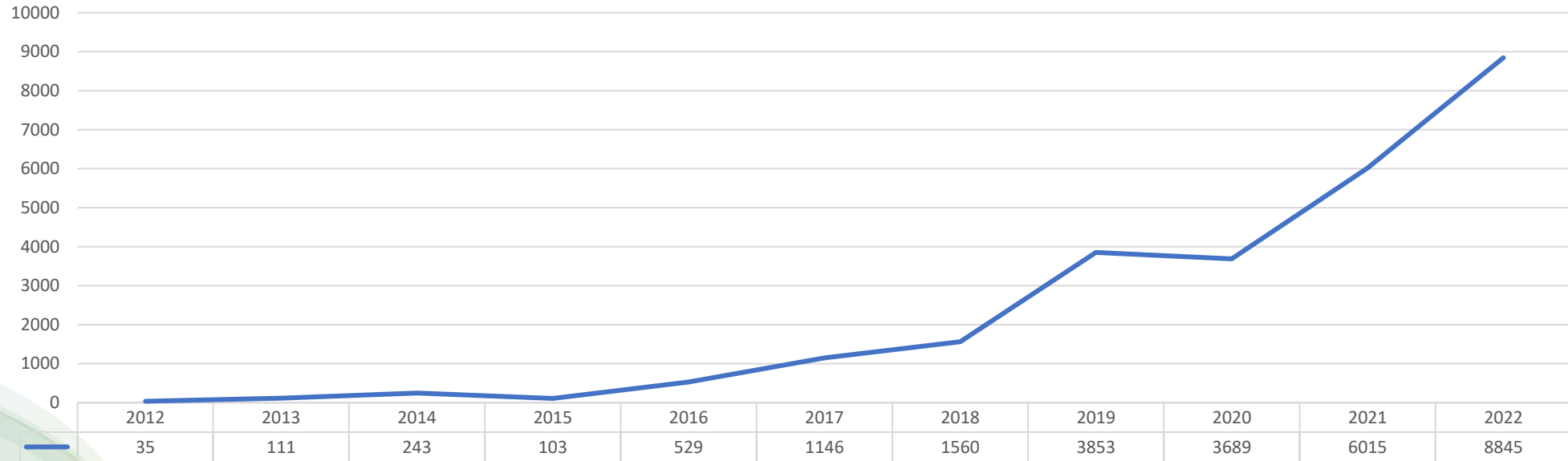
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Referral System
Timeline

2012
First version of referral system built and used by advice providers.

2019
Referral system is open and free to use for any VCSE organisation.

2022
18 month universal access agreement with Norfolk County Council to also include District Councils.

2014
Ongoing expansion to include other key stakeholders e.g. other charities, local authority teams.

2021
Platform adopted in Tower Hamlets, Oldham and Swansea.

Current Use

The NCAN referral system is increasingly seen as an integral part of the statutory sector's work in areas of prevention, crisis support, community resilience, health and social care integration, and addressing health inequalities.

Referrals by Calendar Year

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
—	35	111	243	103	529	1146	1560	3853	3689	6015	8845

What is available? *Advice & Support Service Categories*

70 services accepting referrals for various issues and new members joining every month.

Accredited Advice	Advocacy	Consumer Rights	Debt and Money	Digital Inclusion	Discrimination
Domestic Abuse	Education	Employment	Family	Healthcare	Housing
Immigration	Loneliness and Social Isolation	Mental Health	Welfare Benefits	Wills and POA	Crime

It is _FREE_ for VCSEs to join
and use the
NCAN Referral System.

Key Feature #1:
Person-centred Warm Handover

No **wrong door** approach – people are connected wherever they present

Personalised contact e.g. at the right time of day

Needs and goals are shared rather than repeating story

Getting help is **less stressful,** more likely to happen and to happen earlier

Prevention of debt, homelessness, poverty, poor mental health

Key Feature #2: *Promotion*

ORGANISATION UPDATES AND SERVICES INCLUDED IN THE NCAN NEWSLETTER.

ANY UPDATES POSTED ON ANNOUNCEMENTS BOARD SENDING AUTOMATIC EMAIL TO ALL MEMBERS.

IF YOU WANT TO RECEIVE REFERRALS, INCLUSION IN THE DIRECTORY AND AI CHATBOT.

ALL OF THE ABOVE CONTRIBUTING TO ACCURATE AND EFFICIENT REFERRALS, GETTING PEOPLE TO THE RIGHT HELP AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Key Feature #4: *Accountability*

The referral systems encourage accountability between organisations. This is increasing trust that professionals are taking responsibility for follow-up work.

01

Staff can see and action referrals as a team.

02

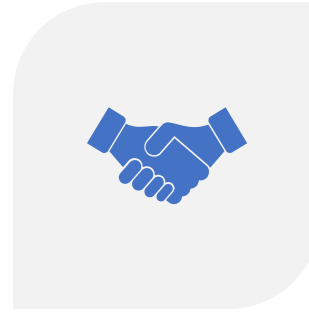Communicate with referring organisation securely in one place.

03

Track & monitor referrals.

04

Data capture and analysis feature to understand issues & demand.

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Key Feature #5:
Networking and Collaboration

CHAMPIONS NETWORKING EVENTS.

ORGANISATION LEADERS' UPDATES WITH INSIGHT INTO DATA, DEMANDS, TRENDS.

INCREASED KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS OF WHAT SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE IS AVAILABLE.
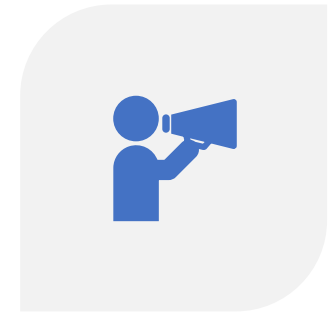
ACCESS TO BITESIZE E-LEARNING TO UPSKILL AND RAISE AWARENESS.

What kind of *ongoing support* will you receive?

Directory of what is available to refer – embedded within the referral system so the key information is right there to view

Helpline if you are unsure where to refer call the dedicated team

Chatbot for a live conversation with NCAN staff

Training (1 hour) where common issues and where to refer are covered

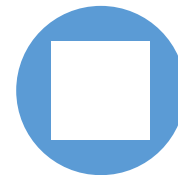**AI** bot on website which will help with directing to the right place

Newsletter with announcements about new services and changes

Announcements automatically emailed and viewable on the referral platform

E-learning platform integrated with the referral system with bitesize learning

Automatic filtering of organisations based on local authority area and type of issue

Benefits for the *Client*

- Receiving organisation contacts the client;
- They are referred to the most appropriate agency securely and quickly;
- Clients don't have to repeat their story.

Benefits for the Agency

- Access multiple organisations from across Norfolk;

- Send client documents, contact details, and confidential information securely;

- Track progress of outgoing referrals;

- Data can be analysed to help measure your agency's impact;

- Promote shared processes & partnership working;

- Prevent duplication of triage work.

"We haven't looked back – the 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 system has been especially useful since Covid, as we have seen a 30% increase in the demand for our services. Being able to refer service users to specialist advice in a secure and time efficient manner is vital. Online referrals via NCAN are helping people to get a wide range of free advice from their member organisations".

Béatrice Humarau, Executive Coordinator, The Bridge Plus +

Norfolk Community Advice Network

"A large part of my role is signposting patients towards appropriate support, which can often be a challenge for those struggling"

NSFT Clinical Support Worker

"It's enabled us to refer residents quickly and simply to ensure they get the help they need, and from the agencies best placed to provide that support. We can see the referral has been picked up and have the confidence to know the customer has received a fully wraparound service."

Norwich City Council

"Many of the people we see live chaotic lives so saying 'take a phone number/address and make an appointment' just won't work"

Norwich Foodbank

"For vulnerable clients who struggle to engage with a service, the referral details enable us to encourage the client to engage in a way that signposting can never do"

Debt advisor at Norfolk Community Law Service

"Norfolk County Council have been working in partnership with NCAN for the past 4 years. The benefits of this relationship are substantial in identifying and supporting the most vulnerable people in Norfolk.

The innovation in digital systems created by NCAN is **"outstanding best practice"**. *This was recently tabled by the Childrens Society Programme Board Member, Duncan Shrubsole, giving evidence to Parliament and citing Norfolk and NCAN as a model example of how digital tools can be used effectively in this space.* <u>You can watch it here</u>, *from just after 16.37 minutes.*

By joining NCAN, organisations are entering too into this great partnership of holistic network support available to people so that they only need to tell their story once."

Carole Rake, Head of Client Services , Norfolk County Council

For more *information*

- The [Directory](#) is where to find information about organisations accepting referrals on the referral system

- Refresher training videos and handbook can also be found [on the website](#)

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