

# NEWS RELEASE

Borough Council of  
King's Lynn &  
West Norfolk



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**For Immediate Release**

## **Advice services in West Norfolk are changing**

With effect from 1 July 2016, residents of King's Lynn & West Norfolk will be able to access free, confidential information and advice services from three local providers, specialising in housing advice, debt advice and general advice.

The Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk recently tendered for specialist debt and housing advice services which will sit alongside the general advice service which receives funding from Norfolk County Council. The agencies involved in this innovative arrangement are:

Shelter - who will provide debt advice, with funding from the borough council. Shelter's debt advice services may be able to help you with debt problems including dealing with:

- housing arrears
- utility bill debts – gas, electricity and water
- debt collection companies or creditors
- hire purchase, credit card or loan arrears

West Norfolk Advice Hub – who will provide housing advice as a consortium of local advice providers, led by Community Action Norfolk (CAN), with funding from the borough council. This will include advice and information for people at risk of becoming homeless, or for people who are trying to get on the housing list or into social housing.

Norfolk Citizens' Advice – will provide generalist advice and a point of access and triage to specialist advice through funding from Norfolk County Council. They will cover a full range of advice as before. They can provide advice and assistance whether you are facing an immediate crisis or just considering your options.

Cllr Adrian Lawrence, Cabinet Member for Housing and Community, said "All three organisations have worked hard together to ensure a smooth transition to the new arrangements. Their main aim being to ensure that members of the public, who need general advice or specialist advice about housing issues or money matters, can access it easily and they aren't inconvenienced in any way. All three partners will

adopt a no-wrong-door approach to ensure that no matter who contacts them for advice, they will ensure that they are referred to the appropriate agency quickly and effectively.”

Historically many people have gone straight to Norfolk Citizens' Advice for support and advice. Norfolk Citizens' Advice will continue to provide the traditional generalist face-to-face advice in addition to assessment and triaging for the specialist provision.

Residents will be able to access the services in a number of ways – telephone, internet or Skype. Norfolk Citizens' Advice will offer drop-in sessions at published times. West Norfolk Advice Hub and Shelter will be able to meet people face-to-face through bookable appointments either at the borough council offices or at the Shelter offices in Hospital Walk. Norfolk Citizens' Advice are in the process of securing new premises, and details of where to visit them will be published as soon as arrangements are confirmed.

Jonathan Clemo, Chief Executive of CAN, said: "Housing is a critical issue in people's lives and with this new service we will ensure people can access the advice they need. We are committed to working with our partners to deliver the best quality advice to local people - whatever their needs. With this investment from the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk we will be able to provide better advice for local people delivered through a model of joint-working we hope to replicate more in the future".

Mat Armitage, Norfolk Operations Manager for Norfolk Citizens' Advice, added: "Norfolk Citizens Advice is looking forward to working with our partners and the borough council in the delivery of this new model. Many clients present with not one issue but several that can compound the difficulties they face. The role of Citizens' Advice in this partnership will be vital in the comprehensive assessment and initial advice stage which in many cases can enable the client to deal with their problems quickly and successfully."

Michael Deakin, Shelter King's Lynn Service Manager, said, "This funding means that we can offer even greater support to local people struggling to meet their housing payments.

"It's a sad state of affairs that Shelter is needed now just as much as it was fifty years ago, but tragically too many of us still don't have a stable and affordable place to call home.

"From helping to deal with creditors or managing housing payments, our new debt and welfare benefits advice service is here to help with a huge range of problems. We'd urge anyone who's struggling to come and see us as soon as possible, because it really can make all the difference."

Information about how to access advice services from 1 July will be available on the borough council's website [www.west-norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk) and on all three agencies' websites as follows:

Citizens Advice Bureau – [www.norfolkcab.org.uk](http://www.norfolkcab.org.uk) or call 03444 111 444

West Norfolk Advice Hub – [www.westnorfolkadvicehub.org.uk](http://www.westnorfolkadvicehub.org.uk) or email [housing@westnorfolkadvicehub.org.uk](mailto:housing@westnorfolkadvicehub.org.uk)

Shelter - [www.shelter.org.uk](http://www.shelter.org.uk) or email [Norfolk@shelter.org.uk](mailto:Norfolk@shelter.org.uk) or call 0344 515 1860

Notes to Editors

There are a host of other organisations and agencies which provide advice, but these three receive funding from Norfolk County Council or the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk to provide specific free advice to residents who may be struggling with debt or having issues with housing.

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