

SOCIAL OUTCOMES



Refernet working with Citizens Advice Liverpool

Setting Standards in Digital Signposting

Citizens Advice Liverpool introduced Refernet to the Liverpool City Region during 2019, setting the foundations for what was to become the Liverpool Access to Advice Network.

From inception, it was understood that whilst having a single referral system gives a go-to portal for the partner organisations to refer to each other, building relationships between organisations as key to the success of the project. Using Refernet has enabled more than 30 different organisations across the Liverpool City Region to send and receive referrals through a single platform.

At times of great demand on voluntary and community sector organisations, ensuring the needs of clients are addressed by the most appropriate organisation enables the partner organisations to focus their attention on providing the support they specialise in, whilst when appropriate, referring clients to the most appropriate partner organisation for further support.

Since implementation in the Liverpool City Region, more than 6000 referrals have been processed through Refernet, by more than 30 different partner organisations. This includes more than 1900 self-referrals (an optional feature of Refernet, used during the COVID pandemic), more than 1900 referrals sent by the local authority, and more than 4000

referrals received by Citizens Advice Liverpool covering a range of general advice and specialist advice needs such as debt and energy.

Having this support network in place enabled Citizens Advice Liverpool to promote their administration of the Household Support Fund to the network, reaching a broader range of potential clients.

Here's the story of the success of one such referral:

Jan is in receipt of Universal Credit, Personal Independence Payment, Child Benefit and Council Tax Support.

Jan lives in her rented housing association flat with her pre-school age child. This is Jan's first home with her child, having been homeless or sofa surfing for the last four years.

Jan has several chronic health conditions including severe mental health conditions.

Jan also has debts totaling more than £5000, including fuel debts of almost £2000.

Although Jan has now secured a home, there was little furniture in the flat, including no fridge, washer or dryer, inevitably increasing Jan's outgoings and difficult living circumstances.

Following a referral to Citizens Advice, Jan was contacted by an advisor. Specialist advice was provided, including specialist debt advice and we were able to:

- Complete a full debt assessment, benefits check, and assessment of any advice needs,
- Arranged a Food Bank Voucher as Jan had no food or food storage,
- Arrange an application for an emergency £60 payment from the Biscuit Fund,
- Arrange an application to the British Gas energy Trust fund, resulting in an award of £1450.00.
- Applied to Glasspool and received an award of a fridge freezer, and soon to receive a tumble dryer.
- Arranged appointments for specialist debt and energy advice to support Jan with her budgeting and ongoing plan for efficient energy use and support in financial planning and repaying debts.
- The above is in addition to the £250.00 Household Support Fund payment to set Jan on her way with credit in her energy account.

For further information contact:

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