

WE ARE A
**WARM
SPOT**

SETTING UP A **WARM SPOT**

A toolkit to help create
Warm Spots across Cumbria.

Update - November 2023



What is a Warm Spot?

Warm Spots are a warm and safe place to be this winter.

They are places in the community that give people a warm space and a warm welcome.

They include a wide range of spaces, including coffee mornings in village halls, churches opening up space for people to meet, and libraries welcoming people to work or chat in their buildings.

This toolkit is for people who are thinking about setting up a Warm Spot in their community. It gives you information on:

- Funding for Warm Spots in Cumbria
- What a Warm Spot could offer
- Promoting your Warm Spot
- Tips for running a welcoming Warm Spot
- Tips for running a safe Warm Spot



Funding for Warm Spots in Cumbria

As energy bills remain high, many people across Cumbria are struggling to afford their utility bills. The Warm Spots Fund is providing funding to charitable organisations to help them stay open for longer this winter and provide a warm place for people to shelter from the cold and to help mitigate the cost-of-living crisis and reduce social isolation.

A Warm Spot can be any community venue - a village hall, community centre, church, parish room - which provides a warm and friendly environment for people to meet over refreshments.

The funding is provided by Cumberland Council, Westmorland and Furness Council and Cumbria Community Foundation.

Community groups that are establishing a Warm Spot to support the ongoing needs of people impacted by the cost-of-living crisis to ensure that their health and wellbeing is maintained can apply.

The fund will support:

- additional salary costs
- additional utility and rental costs
- small modifications to make the venue safer and more accessible (e.g., heater guards)
- infection control measures (hand gel, masks, additional cleaning costs)
- volunteer expenses
- Level 2 food and hygiene qualifications (to prepare and serve food)
- Purchase of light refreshments (tea and biscuits)
- promotion - i.e., posters
- transport costs for people to attend

The Fund cannot support:

- existing activities unless provision is being extended and additional costs incurred (e.g. additional heating costs)
- individuals
- organisational core costs
- organisational administration costs

Grants of up to £500 per venue will be considered.

Apply here: www.cumbriafoundation.org/fund/warm-spots-fund/

We also suggest you read the "Warm Spots Fund - Winter 2022/23" report by Cumbria Community Foundation that shares the successes and lessons learned by Warm Spots providers and funders.

https://link.edgepilot.com/s/17ffa9d9/_WZxvcuQPE2a9-p-YWNcdg?u=https://www.cumbriafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/CCF-Warm-Spot-Fund-Report-2022-23.pdf



What a Warm Spot can offer

It should be simple to set up and run a Warm Spot - it's probably very similar to activities your organisation already runs, such as coffee mornings or drop-in sessions.

Last year, most of the Warm Spots operated during the working week from 10am until 3pm. The majority operated Monday to Friday, with Thursday and Friday being the most popular days. Most were operational for around 2-3 hours on the day they were open. Some venues offered activities after school - Lego clubs for example.

These operating times were chosen depending on the availability of the space and accommodating other user groups - this can be helpful as it allowed users to attend both the Warm Spot and the other group in succession on the same day. The majority of attendees were over the age of 60 years.

Venues offered light refreshments and several offered a meal (although not funded by the Warm Spots Fund) and so the venue would primarily be open around mealtimes.

A wide array of amenities were offered and the most popular included free Wi-Fi, films nights, reading material and games, as well as space to read or talk, and in some instances formal music or exercise sessions.

More practical amenities were offered by some venues such as clothing, blankets, scarves and gloves, heaters. Some centres offered food and refreshments from hot drinks to soup, snacks, toast, as well as breakfasts and lunches.

Warm Spots should:

- Provide a warm and friendly welcome
- Treat everyone who comes with dignity and respect - people don't need a reason to come along, and everyone should be made welcome
- Be safe places that adhere to relevant safeguarding and health and safety legislation
- Maintain people's confidentiality - only sharing information on who attends with their permission, or because it's necessary to keep them safe

Most Warm Spots will be open to anyone who wants to come along, but some Warm Spots are aimed at a particular group of people (for example, families with young children).



Promoting your Warm Spot

Word-of-mouth proved to be the most effective way of spreading information about warm spots. Social media is a popular method of advertising the venues (local Facebook pages and groups) along with posters, flyers, parish magazines and church notices, and in some cases, email and radio broadcast.

If your organisation is funded through Cumbria Community Foundation's 'Warm Spots fund' then you'll need to use the 'Warm Spots' logo somewhere on your publicity, but the most important thing is that you tailor the publicity to your community and the people who you want to support. The name of your Warm Spot should be something that will appeal to the people you want to attend.

A few things to remember:

- Along with the date and time of your Warm Spot, include the frequency - is it every week, every month?
- Provide a full address and a clear map. A photo of the front of the venue on any posters and publicity is also a good idea, so it is easier to find!
- Including information about any local transport options can be helpful
- Make sure you're clear about what are you going to be doing, and try to make any activities accessible to all.
- Include the name and phone number of someone people can talk to if they have any questions before they attend.
- If it's a 'drop in at any time' type of Warm Spot, it's useful to make this clear. This is often more appealing to new comers - they'll feel less pressure about participating for the first time.

If your Warm Spot is in the Cumberland Council area, you can register it on their website at www.cumberland.gov.uk/warm-spots.

If your Warm Spot is in the Westmorland and Furness area, you can register it on their website at www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/warm-spot There is a national website and map that you might also want to register with, so that people can find out about your offer www.warmwelcome.uk



Tips for running a welcoming Warm Spot session

Every Warm Spot will be different because it will reflect the needs of your community.

Many Warm Spots will have evolved from groups that are already running, but some will be completely new, so we've got some simple ideas and tips to get you started and make everyone feel welcome and safe

Think about what people coming to your Warm Spot will need to be comfortable (but remember, you don't have to be able to offer all of these!) - for example, can you provide:

- Comfy seats
- Wi-Fi access
- Somewhere to charge mobile phones and laptops
- A microwave for people to heat up their own food
- Simple activities like board games, jigsaws or films

Think about who will welcome people and explain how your Warm Spot works. You might need to reassure people who are coming for the first time that they're welcome, and explain practical things like where to get a drink (and what this will cost).

It is good to make your Warm Spot sessions sociable and a place where people can connect with each other and feel part of a community, it is also good to remember that not everyone will want to talk - so have sociable spaces and quiet places too, if that is possible.

And of course, it needs to be warm!

Welcoming parents and carers of babies and small children

Warm Spots won't be providing childcare; the parent (or other adult) who has brought the children along will remain responsible for their children at all times. However, here are some things to make your space child and baby friendly.

The most important resource is you - babies and young children love friendly, smiling faces and people who say hello to them! Consider how your warm space could help parents and children to relax together - for example, provide a small selection of books for families to read with their children. Local families may be happy to donate these.

If possible, you could provide:

- A comfortable seat for breastfeeding and offer a feeding mother a glass of fresh water
- Facilities (or offer) to heat up a baby bottle or baby food
- A clean changing mat for families to use and a place to dispose of nappies - you may also choose to provide nappy sacks and wipes
- A toilet seat and/or potty for small children

Some safety tips to bear in mind are:

- Make sure hot drinks are kept out of reach of small children, and that they can't touch kettles or grab the kettle lead
- Think about heaters - they can sometimes be very hot to touch. Could you use a guard to keep small children away from them?
- Make sure any toys are clean and think about having a washable mat for children to play on.
- Be aware that small toys and objects can be a choking hazard, and keep these away from small children.

Consider applying for funding to make your venue safer for small children.

Making your Warm Space accessible

In the UK, 1 in 5 people have a disability - this could be visual, hearing, motor (affecting fine movement) or cognitive (affecting memory and thinking).

But the concept of accessibility does not just apply to disabled people - everyone will have different needs at different times and in different circumstances. Someone's ability to use a service could be affected by their location, their health or their finance.

Accessibility is about making sure your service can be used by as many people as possible. Thinking about this from the beginning will help you:

- make sure that nobody is excluded
- find out earlier if any parts of your service are not accessible - problems usually cost less to fix if you find them early

<https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/helping-people-to-use-your-service/making-your-service-accessible-an-introduction>

Transport

Thinking about how people will get to your Warm Spot is important, especially in rural areas or for people who might be unable to walk long distances or afford transport costs. There are a few ways you can help and plan for this:

- Checking local bus and train times (if your Warm Spot is on a public transport route) when you're deciding on your opening times
- Letting people know if there is parking available or provide information about good (free or low cost) parking places close by.
- Remembering it's usually easier for people to travel via public transport or walking during the daytime
- Sharing information about any local community transport schemes operating in the area

Councils in Cumbria offer a range of community transport solutions that may help, you can find out about them here:

Cumberland Council: <https://www.cumberland.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-transport/community-transport>



Westmorland and Furness Council:

<https://legacy.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/communitytransport/>

Bus timetables for Cumbria can be found here:

Cumberland: <https://legacy.cumberland.gov.uk/buses/default.asp>

Westmorland and Furness: <https://legacy.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/buses/default.asp>

You can check train times on:

<https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/>



Tips for running a safe warm spot

Much of this section is common sense, but there are a few topics you need to consider. Some of these, such as health and safety, are legal requirements that your group has probably already considered, whilst others might be new things to consider as you set up your Warm Spot.

Helping people find further support

It's likely that some people who come to a Warm Spot might ask where they can get help with money and food, and how to access health and wellbeing services.

Citizens Advice provide support and information: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

You can find information on these topics on your local council's Cost of Living webpage:

- Cumberland Council: <https://legacy.cumberland.gov.uk/costofliving/>
- Westmorland and Furness Council: <https://legacy.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/costofliving/>

Cost of Living Support - Household Support Fund (DWP)

The Council's in Cumbria have a limited amount of money available through the Household Support Fund to help people who are in financial crisis because of rising prices. The funding is available to 31 March 2024 or when the funding has been allocated, whichever occurs soonest.

They are expecting demand for support to be high, and will only be able to pay out if people are facing significant hardship.

Payments will only be made to help households in immediate crisis - for example, those unable to buy food, pay energy bills or buy other essentials. Payments are small. They are to help people get what they need while they look for support (such as advice on benefits and debt) from other organisations. They will put people in contact with those services if they need them.

Households most likely to get a hardship payment are those which include:

- a child (or children) under the age of 16 (or 18 if in full time education)
- a person (or people) with long term health conditions or disabilities
- pensioners

Even if this doesn't apply to the person who requires financial help, if they are on a very low income, or have no access to other financial support and are struggling to pay their bills, they should still make an application.

To make an application:

In Cumberland, the welfare team can be contacted on 0300 373 3730.

In Westmorland and Furness, the welfare team can be contacted on 0300 373 3300.



Winter Infections

There aren't currently any Coronavirus restrictions in place, but infections like Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Flu do tend to spread more easily in the winter months, as the chances of catching or passing them on increase when people are close together, in an enclosed space, for prolonged periods of time.

There are some simple precautions you can take to reduce their spread and keep people well at your Warm Spot.

Vaccination

Vaccination reduces the spread of infectious diseases and reduces the severity of your symptoms if you do get infected.

You can provide information on Coronavirus and seasonal flu vaccinations to people who'll be in your Warm Spot - this includes staff, volunteers, and those attending.

Eligibility for Coronavirus boosters can change (and it's never too late to catch up on any missing doses); people can check if they're eligible for a dose of Coronavirus vaccine here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/>

Information about other vaccinations, including flu, is here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/nhs-vaccinations-and-when-to-have-them/>

Let fresh air in

It's clearly a bit tricky to balance this with keeping your Warm Spot warm - but opening doors or windows for just a short period in the middle of a long session can make a big difference.

It's also worth ventilating the space well at the end of the session, perhaps once most people have left and whilst you're clearing up, before you leave and lock up securely.

Keep your Warm Spot clean

You could use posters to encourage people to wash their hands, and to cover coughs and sneezes. Providing hand gels and tissue can also be useful.

Cleaning at the end of your session is also important; surfaces that are frequently touched, such as door handles and taps, need particular attention. You could consider building extra cleaning costs into any funding application.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding simply means making sure that children and adults are protected from harm. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Most Warm Spots will take place in open plan spaces (such as the main room of a village hall), meaning there will be limited opportunities for someone to be alone and unsupervised with children or adults.



Your organisation must have clear rules for the level of supervision needed in day-to-day activities, so people can be kept safe. The decision will depend on:

- who your organisation works with
- their age
- their need for care and support
- the nature of the tasks staff and volunteers carry out
- the level of skill and experience there is in the team

If staff or volunteers will be running a Warm Spot alone, you should also consider their safety and having a policy on lone working.

The Ann Craft Trust supports organisations to safeguard adults and young people at risk and minimise the risk of harm. You can access their guidance here: <https://www.anncrafttrust.org/>

Health and Safety

Health and safety can be a daunting term, but much of it is common sense stuff you will be doing anyway. Writing a simple policy is a good way of making sure that everyone understands how you'll manage everyday risks as an organisation, and nothing gets missed because everyone thinks it's someone else's responsibility.

Every organisation with at least one employee has duties under health and safety law. This means you must protect your employees but also others, including volunteers and those using your service, from any risks arising from your work activities.

You need to have a health and safety policy that sets out your general approach to health and safety. It explains how you, as an employer, will manage health and safety in your business. It should clearly say who does what, when and how.

If you have five or more employees, you must write your policy down. If you have fewer than five employees you do not have to write anything down, but it is useful to do so.

Health and Safety Executive guidance: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/policy/index.htm>

Other help and guidance

If you need information and guidance relating to anything mentioned in this toolkit, there is help available. You can contact:

ACTion with communities in Cumbria: <https://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/> Tel: 01768 425666

Cumbria CVS: <https://cumbriacvs.org.uk/> Tel: 01768 800350

