



WE ARE A  
**WARM  
SPOT**

# SETTING UP A **WARM SPOT**

A toolkit to help create  
Warm Spots across Cumbria.



## What is a Warm Spot?

Warm Spots are warm and safe places to be this winter.

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

Cumbria CVS, ACTion with Communities in Cumbria, Churches Together in Cumbria, Cumbria County Council and other partners have come together to support the creation of Warm Spots across the county.

They'll include a wide range of spaces, such as 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:

- What a Warm Spot needs to offer
- How to register your Warm Spot
- Tips for running a welcoming Warm Spot
- Tips for running a safe Warm Spot

## What should a Warm Spot 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.

To be able to use the Warm Spots logo, be featured on the Warm Spots website and access support and advice, there are a few basic requirements and principles we'd like all Warm Spots in Cumbria to commit to.

Warm Spots should provide:

- A warm, heated space
- A warm welcome (with at least one volunteer or member of staff present on site)
- A warm drink (free or at cost)
- A space that is open for at least 2 hours each week

Many Warm Spots may want to offer more, for example food or Wi-Fi access, but you only need to meet these basic requirements above in order to register.



We expect Warm Spots in Cumbria to:

- 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 if your Warm Spot is aimed at a particular group of people (for example, families with young children), then please explain this on your registration form.

## Registering your Warm Spot

### *Why should I register?*

Registering your Warm Spot will help more people to find you!

Once you've registered, your Warm Spot will be added to an interactive map on the Cumbria County Council website. This will mean people can search for Warm Spots near to them and check when they'll be open.

Registering will also mean that we can support you to set up and run your Warm Spot; for example, we're planning a pack of information giving you tips on how to promote your Warm Spot, with template posters and ideas for posts on social media.

**Please register your Warm Spot online.**

### *Other warm spaces initiatives*

There are many similar initiatives to create warm spaces locally and nationally, with names including Warm Hubs, Warm Welcome, Warm Spaces and Heat Banks. They all have a similar aim to provide a warm space for people who are struggling to heat their home (or who want a bit of company).

You can register your Warm Spot with other initiatives, too – this will help people to find you.

One national website and map that you might also want to register with is [warmwelcome.uk](https://warmwelcome.uk)



## Funding

Once you're registered as a Warm Spot, you'll be eligible to apply for a grant to help with running costs and improvements from Cumbria Community Foundation, through their [Warm Spots grant fund](#) – there's more information here:

ACTion with Communities in Cumbria has a [guide for village halls and other community groups which lists many funders supporting community projects in Cumbria](#).

### *If you need to close.....*

If you need to stop running your warm spot for any reason (for example, because of a lack of volunteers), please contact [Public.HealthEnquiries@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:Public.HealthEnquiries@cumbria.gov.uk) so that you can be taken off the map.

## 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 tips 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, providing 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 Spot accessible to everyone*

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

[There is more information about accessibility on gov.uk](#)

## *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

[Cumbria County Council offers a range of community transport solutions that may help.](#)

Bus timetables for Cumbria can be found at: [Cumbria.gov.uk/buses](http://Cumbria.gov.uk/buses)

You can check train times on: [Nationalrail.co.uk](http://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.

You can find information on these topics on the [Cumbria County Council Cost of Living webpage](#).

We'll also be producing a Community Leaders Pack around the Cost of Living Crisis that will help your staff and volunteers point people in the right direction – once this is ready, we will email it to registered Warm Spots.

Health & Wellbeing Coaches (HAWCs) work with anyone over the age of 16 who wants to make positive changes to their life and needs some extra support. They visit people in their own home or other settings.

### *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 online](#).



[Information about other vaccinations, including flu is also available from the NHS:](#)

### ***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.

### ***Face coverings and face masks***

There are not currently any legal requirements to wear face coverings, but it might be useful to have some available at your Warm Spot, because there are times when people might choose to wear one. Again, you could build the cost of this into any funding application.

Although vaccination has really reduced the risks of becoming severely ill from Coronavirus, some people are still more clinically vulnerable to Coronavirus and other infections, and they may choose to wear a face covering or face mask in enclosed spaces to protect themselves.

Government guidance suggests that people who have symptoms of a respiratory infection should stay at home if they have a temperature or feel unwell, try to avoid crowded places, and consider wearing a face covering.

### ***[Read the government guidance on face coverings](#)***

You could ask your staff and volunteers to avoid coming to Warm Spots if they feel unwell, but it's almost inevitable that over the winter months some people who come to use a Warm Spot will have a respiratory infection of some kind (even if they don't have symptoms). The basic tips in this section, like spreading out in the room and ventilating it regularly, will help reduce the risks to everyone there.





## Food Hygiene

If your Warm Spot is planning to provide meals, or to donate food to people, there are a few extra things to think about.

If you are donating or preparing food, it is important to make sure that those who receive the food know what is in it and how to prepare it. This is so it doesn't present a risk of making them ill. This guidance, from the Food Standards Agency, provides food safety information and guidance for individuals or groups wishing to prepare meals at home for their community. This can include preparing or donating meals for individuals, community groups and local organisations.

[Guidance on providing food in a village hall or other community settings](#) for volunteers and charity groups (includes advice on registration, certificates and allergen information).

You may not need to hold a food hygiene certificate to provide food for charity or community groups. However, you need a suitable level of knowledge to make sure that food is handled safely and that your group or organisation takes responsibility for staff and volunteer training and supervision when it comes to food safety.

[This guide will help you decide if you need to register as a food provider](#)

There is an exemption if the building is used exclusively for charitable purposes and if only dry foods (tea, coffee, sugar, biscuits, etc) are stored in the building.

## 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 your staff or volunteers to be alone and unsupervised with someone using your Warm Spot.

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.

Many organisations running Warm Spots will already have a safeguarding policy in place, but if don't, here are some links to further information (including templates) for you to look at and adapt for your organisation.

Safeguarding for community groups:

- [Cumbria CVS](#)
- [NCVO \(The National Council for Voluntary Organisations\)](#)

Safeguarding for community buildings, village halls and Good Neighbours Schemes:

- [ACTion with Communities in Cumbria guidance and toolkits](#)
- [ACRE \(Action for Communities in Rural England\) safeguarding guidance](#)

## Health and Safety

### *Health and Safety policy*

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](#)



## *Health and Safety in Village Halls and Community Buildings*

Anyone with control of non-domestic premises (such as a village or community hall) has legal responsibilities under health and safety law.

They must take reasonable measures to ensure the hall, access to it and any equipment or substances provided are safe for people using it, so far as is 'reasonably practicable'. This means balancing the level of risk against the measures needed to control the real risk in terms of money, time or trouble. Responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the hall may be organised by the owner or by a voluntary management committee.

Guidance for Village Halls and Community Venues:

[Health and Safety Executive guidance for Village Halls and Community Venues:](#)

[ACTion with Communities in Cumbria health and safety guidance for Village Halls and Community Buildings](#)

### *Fire Safety*

Buildings that are open to the public are required by law to carry out a fire risk assessment.

If you're using a building owned by another organisation, make sure you have read their fire safety assessment.

#### ***What is a fire risk assessment?***

A fire risk assessment is simply an organised and methodical look at your premises, the activities carried out there and the likelihood that a fire could start and cause harm to those in and around the premises.

The aims of the fire risk assessment are:

- To identify the fire hazards.
- To reduce the risk of those hazards causing harm to as low as reasonably practicable.
- To decide what physical fire precautions and management arrangements are necessary to ensure the safety of people in your premises if a fire does start.

Where there are 5 or more employees, including voluntary members of staff this must be written down.

#### ***Can I do it myself?***

Duty holders – particularly in small or low-risk premises - [may be able to carry out their own fire risk assessment,](#)



You can also appoint someone to carry out a fire risk assessment for you, but they must be a suitably qualified and experienced person. [You can find additional information on choosing a competent Fire Risk Assessor](#)

You must consider everyone who might be on your premises, whether they are employees, visitors, or members of the public, you must think about the different types of people who will be using the premises including those especially at risk such as, young people, people whose first language isn't English, and people with disabilities both physical and psychological who may need additional assistance to evacuate or may need personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) in place.

[Further information on means of escape for people with disabilities.](#)

### ***How can I prevent a fire occurring?***

The chances of a fire starting will be lower if your premises has few ignition sources and combustible materials are kept away from them. In general, fires start in one of three ways:

- Accidentally, such as when smoking materials are not properly extinguished or when mobile heaters are knocked over; if people are likely to smoke outside your Warm Spot, consider designated smoking areas with clear signage and suitable ashtrays and cigarette bins. Ensure that heaters are protected and not covered or too close to furniture and furnishings.
- By act or omission, such as when electrical equipment is not properly maintained, or when waste is allowed to accumulate near to a heat source; Ensure good housekeeping is maintained and the use of personal electrical items is restricted, ensure that 5 yearly mains installation testing is carried out and consider PAT testing.
- Deliberately, such as an arson attack involving setting fire to external rubbish bins placed too close to the building. Ensure bin storage is adequately managed and not stored too close to the building.

[Further information on how to make your premises safe in the event of fire.](#)

In depth guide on fire risk assessments for small and medium places of assembly.

If you would like more information, a consultation about your needs (an operational business engagement) or to arrange a full fire safety audit, please contact a member of Cumbria Fire's local fire protection team and we will get back to you.

Workington.technical@cumbria.gov.uk

Carlisle.technical@cumbria.gov.uk

Kendal.technical@cumbria.gov.uk



## *Other help and guidance*

[ACTion with Communities in Cumbria has a range of Toolkits & Workbooks available online](#)

These provide additional information and guidance for community groups. These resources have been developed to support you with your community project. Some are specifically for groups involved in Community Exchanges, Emergency Planning etc. whilst others can be useful for all types of projects.

## **Appendix of weblinks:**

### **National Warm Welcome website:**

<https://www.warmwelcome.uk/>

### **Cumbria Community Foundation:**

<https://www.cumbriafoundation.org/fund/warm-spots-fund>

### **ACTion with Communities in Cumbria:**

<https://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/resources/toolkits/dt054-guide-to-funders-2022-1.pdf>

### **Community Transport:**

<https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/roads-transport/public-transport-road-safety/transport/commtrans/default.asp>

### **Cumbria County Council Cost of Living webpage:**

<https://cumbria.gov.uk/costofliving/>

### **Health & Wellbeing Coaches (HAWCS):**

<http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/publichealth/hawcs>

### **Face Covering Guidelines:**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19>

### **Providing Food Guidelines:**

<https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/providing-food-at-community-and-charity-events>

### **Safeguarding for Community Groups:**

<https://cumbriacvs.org.uk/development/>

<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/safeguarding/#/>

### **Safeguarding for Community Buildings:**

<https://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/what-we-do/community-buildings-safeguarding>

<https://acre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Information-Sheet-5-Safeguarding-April-2021-Final.pdf>



**Health and Safety Executive guidance:**

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/policy/index.htm>

**Guidance for Village Halls and Community Venues:**

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/voluntary/work-types/village-and-community-halls.htm>

<https://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/what-we-do/community-buildings>

**Fire Safety:**

<https://www.gov.uk/workplace-fire-safety-your-responsibilities/fire-risk-assessments>

[https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/write/MediaUploads/Grenfell/FSF\\_Guide\\_October\\_20.pdf](https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/write/MediaUploads/Grenfell/FSF_Guide_October_20.pdf)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/886446/9446\\_Means\\_of\\_Escape\\_v2\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/886446/9446_Means_of_Escape_v2_.pdf)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/14879/making-your-premises-safe-short-guide.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/14879/making-your-premises-safe-short-guide.pdf)

**Other Help & Guidance:**

<https://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/resources/toolkits-workbooks>

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