



Warm Welcome Spaces

# Handbook

# Warm Welcome Spaces Handbook

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# About the Warm Welcome Campaign

The Warm Welcome Campaign wants to turn the tide on loneliness and poverty by connecting communities and giving people a place of belonging in community spaces made by and for everyone. By good-hearted volunteers, neighbours and community groups coming together we can build a more deeply connected society where we all have free access to welcoming community spaces.

We resource, connect, and champion a network of more than 5,300+ Warm Welcome Spaces across the UK, working with charities, faith groups, businesses, and local and national partners.

Our goal is simple: to make sure everyone, wherever they live, can find a Warm Welcome Space nearby. At the moment, two-thirds of people live within a 30-minute walk of a space, but only 23% know how to find one. We want to change that. By working together, we can make sure everyone can find a Warm Welcome Space in their neighbourhood, in spaces where people of all cultures, backgrounds, faiths, and walks of life can come together in their communities.

## What is a Warm Welcome Space?

Warm Welcome Spaces are the heart of the campaign. They bring people together, offering connection, friendship, and support during tough times.

They come in all shapes and sizes and can be found in community centres, libraries, cafes, places of worship, museums, schools, businesses, and more. Every Warm Welcome Space is encouraged to be:

- **Warm**
- **Welcoming**
- **Free** (or very low cost, e.g. tea/coffee)
- **Safe**
- **Inclusive and accessible to all**

Spaces can open as often as suits the community—many are open all year round, while others focus on winter, when people need warmth and company most. And lots of spaces also double up as cool spaces in the summer. Your space can be open as little or often as you wish, and we encourage you to connect with other spaces near you via our [online map](#).

## Our offer to you

As a Warm Welcome Space, you'll receive:

- Regular newsletters with events, resources, toolkits, and funding opportunities
- Inspiring stories and ideas from other spaces
- Access to our online map to connect with nearby spaces
- An invitation to join our Facebook group for hosts
- Sometimes, we may ask for your help with sharing stories or feedback for PR and evaluation (always with clear notice of the time involved).

We'd love to hear from you: your stories, photos, and ideas help us grow the movement. Contact us anytime at [info@warmwelcome.uk](mailto:info@warmwelcome.uk).

# Section 1:

## Setting up a Warm Welcome Space

The following guide offers a simple step-by-step journey you can follow as you set up a new Warm Welcome Space. Before you start, have a look at the Warm Welcome Charter, which you can find in the 'pullouts and printables' section of the resource website. This sets out the basis of the key elements of every Warm Welcome Space.

### Step 1: People

The best first step to setting up a Warm Welcome Space is to define who your Warm Welcome Space will be for and who it will be created by.

#### Did you know?

Many successful community projects are developed slowly, avoiding reliance on one person, paid or unpaid. They mature into spaces cared for and developed by many people, as a result of listening to local people and thinking about what is needed locally. This process of identifying the right ingredients for your local space and drawing on the strengths of people and organisations in your area is sometimes called co-production.

#### Guests

Identify groups in your community that are likely to become Warm Welcome guests. Based on your experience, who would appreciate accessing a warm and welcoming space offered by your organisation this winter and/or beyond?

If you are concerned you don't know what mix of residents live in your area, and want to make sure you are finding out who lives locally to ensure you offer support to everyone, you can look on the [Office for National Statistics](#) website which will show you the data for your ward.

#### Volunteers and Space Leaders

Create a list of people you would like to team up with to deliver your Warm Welcome Space. Consider people with skills and passions that complement one another and enrich your Warm Welcome offering. This may include people who are good at mobilising the community, welcoming and integrating new members, listening and befriending, communications and social media, group game facilitation and entertainment, cooking, logistics, safeguarding, research, and learning. Think about how you can involve the right number and mix of volunteers to ensure your space stays fresh, sustainable, flexible and inclusive.

Volunteers are the key to running any activity in a sustainable way, whether it is an organisation with paid staff and a strong volunteer support system or an entirely voluntary group. The key to successful recruitment is to think about it from the point of view of the volunteer, not from the point of the organisation. You might know you need volunteers to make soup, wipe tables or offer helpful advice about filling in online forms for other local people. There's every chance that's not what people would like to do – but they might be willing to do those things for other reasons. That's what you need to consider.

## Did you know?

The Warm Welcome Campaign runs a peer-to-peer learning platform on a closed Facebook group, where space leaders discuss topics of interest and seek advice. Additionally, you can find a variety of resources and recorded webinars in the resources section on your dashboard on topics such as mental health, trauma-informed spaces, how to make your space welcoming, and how to fundraise to deliver your Warm Welcome Space.

## Partners

- Identify potential partners who may share mutual interest with you in creating a Warm Welcome Space. This could be any number of different types of organisations, from a local bakery that may want to donate pastries for the space, a community member who may want to donate to support your costs, or an organisation/charity that you can signpost to or invite to your space to speak to guests or run activities.

Get in touch with your local GP surgery to find out who your local **social prescribing** link workers are. Let them know about your Warm Welcome Space so that they can prescribe people to come along. You could also offer them the opportunity to hold a drop-in at your Warm Welcome Space so that they can effectively signpost and support vulnerable visitors to other community services.

## Your Local Warm Welcome Network

- Use our **UK online map** to find out who else in your area has a Warm Welcome Space.
- Consider if it makes sense to collaborate with them to address resource shortages (e.g. physical space or volunteers). You can also join forces to bolster your offering by merging teams or creating one-off collaborations.
- Knowing about other Warm Welcome Spaces nearby can also help you make decisions that address gaps in the Warm Welcome offer in your area. For example, if a Warm Welcome Space nearby is open on certain days of the week, you may consider adjusting your opening days/hours to avoid overlapping. You can also address geographical gaps in provision by choosing a location for your space where no one else is offering a Warm Welcome.

## Step 2: Facts

Now that you have a better idea about who your space may be for and who might help to run it, it is good to consider the facts you're working with to ensure your vision is realistic. Limitations can allow us to be more creative because they give us rules and a framework to arrive at ideas that are in tune with what's possible.

## Organisational resources and limitations

- Identify tangible resources within your organisation or planning group that you can use for your Warm Welcome Space. For example: furniture in your space, signposting resources, games or toys, coffee/tea, a community kitchen, accessible entrances, wifi, and funding sources.
- Think about your group's limitations and restrictions, such as costs, the number of employees or volunteers you can allocate to this project, maximum guest capacity, or any other elements or scenarios that will limit you.

## Consider any challenges

- Identify challenges in your local context that may inhibit the success of your Warm Welcome Space, such as poor public transport that makes it difficult for guests to get to your space.
- Explore cost-effective solutions to address these risks, e.g. creating a volunteer-led shuttle system.

## Step 3: Space Design

How you design your space is up to you. Create a plan that plays to your skills and resources, whether it's a lunch club for older people, a parent and toddler group, drop-in coffee morning, or something else.

### The Basics

By the end of this stage, you should have an idea of the following:

- When will your Warm Welcome Space be open (days and times)?
- Where will it be located? Which room will you use? How will you arrange furniture to make the space welcoming and inclusive?
- What types of activities will you offer your guests? What refreshments, snacks or food can you provide?
- How will you organise your team and their responsibilities?
- How will people find out about your space? (e.g. local newspapers and magazines, notice boards, word-of-mouth, partner networks, GP surgeries, supermarkets etc).

### Did you know?

The Warm Welcome Campaign has logos, brand assets and sample social media posts that you can use. You can find these in the 'communications toolkit' in the resources section of your dashboard.

### Funding

- How much will your Warm Welcome Space cost?
- What can you do to make sure your space is as cost-effective as possible?
- How will you cover the costs?

Information about funding for space is covered in [Section 2](#).

### Communications

Think about how you might be able to collect, record, and share positive stories from your Warm Welcome Space, whether that's an event in the space, such as a birthday party or celebration, or a positive story of an individual. With the permission of those involved, you can share stories on your social media or website, and we'd love you to share your stories with us. To reach out to us about a story in your space, please email us at [press@warmwelcome.uk](mailto:press@warmwelcome.uk).

You can [download your Warm Welcome Spaces Communications Toolkit here](#).

### Monitoring and Evaluation

How will you evaluate the impact of your Warm Welcome Space on your guests? How will you make sure you are listening to your community to improve your space?

It is also good to have conversations with people throughout the year, as many people don't like to engage with formal questionnaires. Find out about ways to collect information about what people value about the spaces and what other things they would like to see in ways that are anonymous. It is easy to be swayed by the loudest voices, and they don't always belong to those most in need of support. You also need to continue to use your knowledge of who is still missing from the group and how you might want to approach that topic. You might want to ensure that you aren't doing things as you are because you've always done them like that if you feel that is excluding people.

## Step 4: Preparing for Launch

Now that you have your theoretical space design document ready, it's time to start putting it into action!

### Register your Warm Welcome Space

Make sure your space is registered on the [Warm Welcome website](#). You can access our network and training resources, and (if you wish) your space can be on our national map, which will be advertised to guests as a tool to locate Warm Welcome Spaces near them!

If you'd rather your space isn't publicly visible on our map for any reason (e.g. specific security or safeguarding reasons), you can still register your space with us and choose to hide the visibility of your space. By doing this, it means we still have a clear national picture of Warm Welcome Spaces, and you still get access to the wider support offered by our campaign.

Make sure that your Warm Welcome Space Leader has access to the account on our website and is subscribed to our newsletter so we can keep in touch.

### Getting ready

- Make sure you have a safeguarding strategy in place [see [Section 4: Making Your Space Safe](#)].
- Make sure your volunteers receive any necessary training before your space opens. Please see the later section on volunteering for further information.

### Brand your space as a Warm Welcome Space

We have created a brand that every registered Warm Welcome Space can use. It includes logos and assets that you can use to promote your space and show that you are part of a trusted national campaign. Our logo and brand communicate our values and act as a signal to potential visitors about what kind of space they will encounter. Our values are being inclusive, collaborative, and courageous – doing all we can to ensure a Warm Welcome for All. Our logo is a kitemark and shows that you are part of the award-winning Warm Welcome Campaign. All the brand assets can be found in our [Communications Toolkit](#).

### Spread the word

- Create and print posters and banners for your Warm Welcome Space using our Communications Toolkit to make sure anyone who passes by your space can tell that they're welcome to come in! Reach out to contacts and partners who can spread the word.
- Keep your communications with potential guests simple, accessible, and welcoming for all.
- Include information about where and when, and include a map/address. For example: Drop in for a free coffee on Friday afternoons. We're open between 2pm and 4pm for free coffee, biscuits, and wifi. Pick up useful information about what's happening locally. Everyone is welcome. You might want to list your activities, but remember that some people might find activities like knitting off-putting; it's not for everyone. And some guests might just want to drop in for a free coffee, without the pressure of having to "make friends" or talk to others.

## Step 5: Action

By this stage your Warm Welcome Space is ready to open.

Make sure your space is live on [our map](#).

Thank you for being part of the Warm Welcome Spaces Community!

Keep us in the loop with the story of your space by tagging us on social media or emailing photos and updates to us at [info@warmwelcome.uk](mailto:info@warmwelcome.uk).



# Section 2: Funding for your Warm Welcome Space

We understand that running your Warm Welcome Space takes a huge amount of money, time, and other resources. It costs a lot just to keep the lights and heating on, plus all the other resources you need to keep your doors open. While some spaces are open in the winter, most spaces want to continue their activity all year round. However your space operates, we are here to support you.

That's why we are speaking with key decision makers and working hard to communicate your needs to them, as well as through our awareness work and partnerships. We are here to listen to what you need and advocate on your behalf to businesses, the Government, potential funders, and providers of resources. We'll communicate our collective ambition to enable a more deeply connected society where we all have free access to welcoming community spaces. We will keep this conversation going – and will be knocking on doors and talking loudly about your space needs wherever and whenever we can.

## A Warm Welcome for All

We want everyone to have access to a Warm Welcome Space, close to home. We are striving to gather what we know are essential resources for spaces so you can keep your doors open. We know the difference and impact a space can make; we want to make sure that being able to offer a Warm Welcome Space is an affordable and viable option for every community.

We also know what a difficult funding environment it is for many right now – it isn't an easy time to be generating income and raising funds for new or even existing work, however valuable and important it is. And, of course, your work is vital to the thousands of people who come through your doors to receive a Warm Welcome.

The information below sets out some fundraising tips and advice. It is by no means an exhaustive list and you will likely have a better understanding of specific funding opportunities for your space in your local community.

We will continue to share funding opportunities as and when we become aware of them – most often through our newsletter. Please make sure you've given us permission to contact you, ideally both via email and telephone—so that we can make sure we can keep you updated. You can grant us permission through your personal dashboard on the Warm Welcome Campaign website.

## Know and show your value!

Any funder wants to know their gift is going to really help people. Every year we gather evaluation data to show the value and impact of Warm Welcome Spaces like yours. Feel free to use the information below to support your fundraising and work with us to gather more insights to show your value.

### Our impact across the winter of 2024/25:

Warm Welcome Spaces have seen approximately 2.6 million visitors over the last 12 months (with the biggest numbers in the winter season). This was supported by over 10,000 volunteers kindly giving their time, energy and skills.

- **84%** of people polled said that attending a Warm Welcome Space had helped them feel a stronger sense of belonging to their local community.



- There are more than **5,400 Warm Welcome Spaces across the UK**, and the number is growing all the time.
- **87%** of Warm Welcome Space guests said coming to the space had improved their mental health.
- **57%** of people visit a warm space to save money.
- **57%** of the general UK population have heard of 'Warm Spaces'.
- **68%** of people in the UK live within 30 minutes walk of a Warm Space, up from 62% last year
- **70%** of people surveyed said that since coming to the warm space they now never or rarely feel isolated.

You can support us by tracking how many people are using your Warm Welcome Space and/or how many cups of tea and coffee you are making, or how many litres of soup you serve! Anything that helps tell your story.

You may like to ask the people who are using your Space (guests and volunteers) if they are happy to give you a quote to share about why and how your Warm Welcome Space is making a difference. Telling people's stories is important alongside data evidence. It is also important to us that our guests are not just a statistic – we want to tell the stories behind the facts.

You could collect guest feedback every week. Some of the spaces we work with have a little book where guests can leave their messages after their visit. It's a lovely way for people to share what they love about your space. And it's really motivating to hear what people say about your space.

Most funders love the personal touch, these quotes or a case study from a guest who has been able to change their circumstances as a result of interaction with your space. Create a case study 'bank', over time you will develop a range of examples. This will help when applying for funding as certain funders will connect with different case studies. Look carefully at each funder's criteria and select the case study that matches their priorities.

Email us at [info@warmwelcome.uk](mailto:info@warmwelcome.uk) and share your story and photos (as long as you have consent).

## Look for Local Connections

Other local organisations that you might be partnering with, your volunteers, and your guests may all know of routes to funding for you. It's good to talk, ask questions, and have everyone involved in your space act as fundraising ambassadors for you! Some starting points:

UK Community Foundations can help you find your local Community Foundation, which may be able to connect you to local funding pots you could be eligible for.

Contact your local councillor—some local councils have money available to support community projects that are responding to the cost-of-living crisis. You can use the communications toolkit to help you write a letter to your councillor.

Bringing your community together to support you. A great and relatively easy way to fundraise for your space is to set up an online fundraiser.

Create local partnerships - there is currently a drive among funders to encourage partnership working, to strengthen local connections, avoid duplication and provide multiple strands of support. Look for these opportunities to present to funders, could you partner with an organisation providing a similar service, or an organisation providing a complimentary service which would give beneficiaries an increased support network? Funders will also often consider larger proposals in these circumstances.

## Gifts in Kind

Talk to local businesses close to your Warm Welcome Space. Lots of shops and businesses may have gifts they can donate to your space. Many spaces have relationships with local supermarkets, newsagents, bakeries, craft suppliers, and more. People are often happy to donate goods. It's a great way to give something back to the local community.

## Grants

As well as the above, visit our 'Fundraising Opportunities' section of our Resources to find open grants that you can apply for. We update this list on a regular basis, and we encourage you to keep a lookout for opportunities that are relevant to your space.

We have recently updated the 'Fundraising Opportunities' section of our website to include multiple filters and search functions. You can use these facilities to filter all of the opportunities to those that are relevant to your space. We urge you to check through the criteria and your potential fit before spending time working on an application.

## Top tips when applying to grants

Check all application criteria carefully and make sure you fit these before beginning any application.

Pick up the phone – most funders are happy to speak with you about what they'd like to see in any application and give you advice before you submit—which can really help save you time and energy and make the chances of any application more successful.

Finances – make sure you get your budgets right! Funders see hundreds, if not thousands of applications and if your finances are wrong or unrealistic it is an easy way for them to narrow down their applications.

What would happen without you? If you can, paint a picture of why your space is needed and show your value. Using quotes, case studies, and statistics (see above) from people using your space is often the best way of doing this. As we say, the Warm Welcome Campaign is all about telling the stories of our guests, volunteers, and spaces!

## Thanking Supporters

It's important to thank those who have helped to keep your Warm Welcome Space door open and update them on the difference they've made. You might choose to use some of the information and quotes you've collected to do this.

If you are able to take time to thank people in a personal way, through an email or a video, it can make all the difference in ensuring that they feel their generosity is truly valued by you.

**Good luck with your fundraising!**

# Section 3: A Warm and Welcoming Space for All

We want everyone to feel they can come to a Warm Welcome Space and feel welcomed and included. Making your space welcoming, minimising stigma and barriers, and thinking about inclusivity and accessibility are key things to consider. It's important that visitors feel that coming to a Warm Welcome Space is a positive choice for them.

## Tips on welcoming

Ensuring your space is welcoming can be really simple. Here are some things to consider doing in your space:

### 1. Giving everyone a warm welcome

Make sure that you have someone or several people in your team, volunteers or staff, who know that it's their responsibility to welcome people. Think about the experience of your visitors – is there someone to welcome them when they first come in? Is it clear where they can go and get a drink or make themselves at home? It can be nice to keep your 'welcome' gentle and responsive to how people are feeling.

### 2. Be mindful of guests' cultural backgrounds

Different visitors might have different cultural or faith practices, such as how they may wish to communicate. Be respectful of any differences and make an effort to learn how different visitors like to interact. You could also learn more about the cultures and religions of your local community so you can anticipate what the preferences of your visitors might be.

### 3. Accessibility

It is important to be mindful of how different people might experience your space. Can your space be accessed and enjoyed by everyone, including those with physical disabilities? See the section on 'accessibility' below for suggestions on how to extend a warm welcome to everyone.

### 4. Include visitors in the space

Offer visitors a seat, introduce yourself, and connect them with someone else. You could offer them a cup of tea and sit and drink it with them.

### 5. Physical space

Think about the physical space you are in. Does it have other uses that individuals might find difficult (eg: activity associated with the local authority)? Is it well lit? Is it comfortable? Is there fresh air? Is it easy to find basic amenities like toilets and the way out of the space?

### 6. Be aware of your body language

Simple things like smiling, holding the door for someone, or showing them where they can put an umbrella or their coat can make people feel at home.

### 7. Be present

It is so valuable to give people our full attention when speaking with them. Make eye contact while talking and show that you are listening by asking follow-up questions as appropriate and remembering what they have shared with you in future conversations.

### 8. Be together (if that's what guests want)

Find some simple activities, such as knitting, jigsaws, or dance classes, that you can do alongside visitors. But also find out whether guests want to get involved in group activities. Some might just want to sit quietly and read a book; some may be shy; some might just want a cup of tea in the warm.

## Addressing Stigma

The following tips are some options to consider for your space:

1. Spaces that offer something that everyone might want to access can find it easier to reduce stigma, eg: libraries are open to anyone at any time. Could you offer an activity or a service that lots of different people might want to access?
2. We encourage spaces to offer hot drinks that are free for all. However, some spaces have found that offering a 'pay how you feel' service can give people a sense of dignity and choice, and it also brings in a variety of different people.
3. Encourage volunteers and staff to get their hot drinks and biscuits or food from the same place as the visitors. Encourage them to use the same space. This creates a sense that the Warm Welcome Space is a shared area rather than a service.
4. Think about the language you use to describe your Warm Welcome Space. Warm Welcome Spaces are a place for all of us. We want to see a fairer and friendlier society where everyone has a space they visit to connect with their community, where local community organisations are recognised and resourced, and where relationships strengthen our resilience. Warm Welcome Spaces are our spaces, not just those who are 'needy'. When talking about your space, advertising, and recruiting volunteers, think about the language you use and whether that gives visitors agency and dignity. Avoid words like "vulnerable"; this could be off-putting and prevent guests from joining your space. Other language around older people can be alienating too. Many 50, 60, and 70-year-olds (or older) may not consider themselves as older people. It's best to just say that everyone is welcome.
5. Consider involving visitors in the running of the Warm Welcome Space. As you get to know visitors, you could consider inviting them to volunteer in the space by befriending other visitors, helping to run activities, or serving drinks or cooking. This can promote a sense of communal ownership and belonging.

## Did you know?

Good Practice Mentors have published some toolkit resources to help people to find and engage the people they'd like to reach:

- Informal conversational strategies
- Street outreach

You can download them from your [Warm Welcome Dashboard](#).

## Inclusivity

Beyond the basic welcome, we need to think about how we can make our spaces inclusive. Many people may not want to attend a Warm Welcome Space because they fear being pitied, embarrassed, out of place, or misunderstood. Here are some things we would love you to consider in order to get started:

### 1. Do some local research

In order to better adapt our spaces to the needs of our communities, we would love to encourage you to explore the following three questions as you prepare to open your space:

- a. What else is going on in my area regarding cost-of-living support, tackling loneliness, or improving community connection?
- b. What are the needs of my area? Could you use a data platform like [Mosaic](#) to understand the needs of your community? Or use a free tool like the [census data](#) to understand the types of people who live near your space?
- c. What could I do? What specific activities or offers would be suitable for people in your space? Activities for families? For older people? For young people?

## 2. Consider extending your opening hours

If you have families or young people near your space, they will likely not attend during working and school hours. Could you extend your hours to offer a Warm Welcome Space in the evenings or on the weekends?

## 3. Shift your perspective

Remember that everyone who comes to a Warm Welcome Space has something valuable to offer. Ask questions about your visitors' favourite hobbies or interests, share what the warm space means to you, and over time ask what they would like the Warm Welcome Space to offer. These questions can help communicate that Warm Welcome is for everyone, not just those who are struggling financially.

## 4. Think carefully about your language and how you communicate about the Warm Welcome Space.

It is often helpful to frame your space in as much of a relaxed way as you can. Rather than a flyer announcing, 'Warm Space, 2-4pm' and then listing a long list of activities. It is more effective to say 'Come and join us for a coffee; feel free to drop in anytime between 2 and 4pm'. Be aware that some words, such as 'knitting' can give people a very specific impression of your space.

## 5. Think about where you will advertise your space

Putting posters in bus stops and local shop windows can help you capture a range of people. It might be worth including a photo or a map on your poster so that people who have never been to the Warm Welcome Space know where to go.

## Accessibility

We want as many people as possible to be able to access a Warm Welcome Space should they wish to do so. According to research from Sense, over a third of disabled people say they'd feel more connected to their community if the public had greater awareness and understanding of disability.

Often stigma and inaccessible spaces can leave disabled people feeling excluded. Below are some important adjustments that you should make to your space, if you don't have them already, to improve accessibility. Remember, not every disability is visible:

- **Signage:** Is it obvious where your space is from the street? Is the font size big enough for people to read? Is it easy to find your way around inside the space? Do you need signs for the toilets?
- **Accessibility:** Can someone in a wheelchair or using a walking stick get through the door and into the space? Is there an accessible toilet available? Could someone in a wheelchair move around easily in the space?
- **Lighting:** Is your space well lit? This can be helpful for those who are partially sighted.
- **Noise:** If possible, try and stop the space from getting too noisy. Could you provide a quiet corner for anyone who needs it?
- **Activities:** Are any activities easy to follow? For activities like craft, do you have a demonstration? Do you have some simple printed instructions? For a movement-based activity like a dance class, are there alterations that could be made for someone with reduced mobility?
- **Communication:** When speaking to someone with an obvious disability, speak directly to them and try to speak clearly. Do you have large-print versions or picture versions of key resources in your space?

The most important thing when it comes to creating an accessible space is to ask, listen, and adapt. Ask your visitors for their feedback and what changes they would like to make to the space. You could do this through having a feedback and suggestions box or asking people in conversation. By giving everyone the opportunity to ask for what they need, you are more likely to be able to offer an accessible space.

You can find out more about accessibility and disability at the [SENSE website](#).

## Activities

Ask people what they might like to try, offer some different activities they might not know about, find out what your guests have and could share, and respect that some people don't want to join in but are happy to watch.

**Some activities that have been popular at Warm Welcome Spaces include:**

- Newspapers and books available to read
- Craft sessions
- Jigsaws
- Children's story time
- Digital support drop-ins
- Gardening
- Book clubs
- Cookery classes

Any activity that you host needs to be optional, and we suggest starting one thing at a time rather than packing out your week with many different activities.

# Section 4: Making Your Space Safe

## What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the practice of promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk, and protecting them from harm, abuse and neglect. You are required to have a safeguarding policy in place if your space is visited by children or adults at risk .

In UK law, a **child** is anyone under the age of 18.

The statutory guidance **Working Together to Safeguard Children** (2018) outlines the key responsibilities for safeguarding children. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- **Protecting** children from maltreatment
- **Preventing** impairment of children's health or development
- **Ensuring** that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- **Taking** action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

These principles are backed by legislation, primarily the **Children Act 1989 and 2004**.

**An adult at risk, as defined by the Care Act 2014, is someone aged 18 or over who:**

- Has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs)
- Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect
- Is unable to protect themselves from the risk or experience of abuse or neglect due to those needs

*If you do not yet have a safeguarding policy, you may use and adapt the Warm Welcome Space Safeguarding Policy Template to fit your needs (see Pullouts and Printables in the dashboard). Below you will find some additional tips to consider as you prepare your warm space to welcome visitors this winter.*

## Preparing the space

- Set up your space so that it feels safe and welcoming for all. See our chapter on 'A Warm and Welcoming Space for Everyone' for guidance on this.
- Carry out a risk assessment for the space and any activities you wish to offer
- Check with your insurance provider that the warm space comes within the provision. When recruiting volunteers, follow the **NCVO guidance on safer recruitment**.
- Staff safety, awareness and training
- Ensure there are a minimum of two staff members/volunteers to provide a welcome at all times
- Provide a safeguarding awareness talk for the team before your space opens. Provide this for any new volunteers that join.
- Offer your team some safeguarding awareness training, such as this free **Level 2 – Understanding safeguarding and prevent course** or this **Safeguarding refresher training video**. You can also find training courses on the **NCVO website** and low cost courses available through **Volunteer Now**.
- Provide a safeguarding policy for the team to follow, including a note of the designated Safeguarding Lead (an existing volunteer or staff member) to whom safeguarding concerns should be reported in the first instance.
- Ensure that any staff members/volunteers who will work directly with children and adults at risk are **DBS checked**.



## In the UK, there are different levels of DBS checks:

Basic (showing unspent convictions), Standard (showing both spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings), and Enhanced (which also includes information held by local police that may be relevant). For roles involving regulated activity with children or adults at risk, an enhanced check with a barred list check is usually required.

*Many organisations may not be eligible for an enhanced DBS check unless there is specific provision for work with children in the absence of a parent or carer, for example a children's club which runs events between certain hours.*

### Ensure staff any volunteers are familiar with:

- Types and signs of abuse (see below)
- The six principles of safeguarding (see below)
- Reporting procedures and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

### The Six Principles of Safeguarding (Care Act 2014)

- **Empowerment** – People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions
- **Prevention** – Taking action before harm occurs
- **Proportionality** – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk
- **Protection** – Offering support and representation to those in greatest need
- **Partnership** – Working with communities to prevent and respond to abuse
- **Accountability** – Clear roles and transparency in delivering safeguarding

### Types and Signs of Abuse

- **Physical** – Unexplained injuries or bruises
- **Emotional/Psychological** – Anxiety, withdrawal, low self-esteem
- **Sexual** – Inappropriate behaviour or disclosures
- **Neglect** – Poor hygiene, malnutrition, lack of supervision
- **Financial** – Unexplained loss of money or possessions
- **Discriminatory** – Harassment due to race, gender, disability, etc.
- **Organisational** – Abusive practices within institutions or groups
- **Self-neglect** – Neglecting personal hygiene, health or surroundings

## Display Information

- Display a safeguarding policy, including the name and contact details of the person to whom any safeguarding concerns should be reported.
- Remind parents that they are responsible for their children.
- Have information available on other sources of help, eg, debt advice, mental health, and food banks. You could use our 'Signposting for Guests' resource and add specific local services.
- Consider advertising helplines for self-harm, suicide ideation and domestic abuse.

## Further Resources

**Charity Commission – Safeguarding Guidance**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees>

**Home Office – Safeguarding Adults (Protecting People)**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-policy-protecting-vulnerable-adults>

**Home Office – Safeguarding Children**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

**NSPCC – Child Protection and Safeguarding**

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/>

**NCVO – Safeguarding Guidance and Training for Charities**

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

**Volunteer Now – Safeguarding Training and Resources (Northern Ireland)**

<https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/training/safeguarding/>

## Risk Assessment

Most Warm Welcome Spaces will likely already have a risk assessment in place, however this section will help you create one if you don't.

### What is a risk assessment?

A risk assessment is the process of identifying which hazards exist, how likely they are to occur and how you can minimise them.

### Does our space need a risk assessment?

Yes! The purpose of a workplace risk assessment is to improve workplace health and safety. Having a risk assessment will enable you to protect your employees, volunteers and any visitors to your space.

### How it works in 4 easy steps

Our risk assessment template (in the Pullout and Printables section of the dashboard) uses a numerical system to assess risk. It is based on the likelihood of something happening and the severity of the consequence if it does.

**Step 1:** For each identified risk or hazard, you give a rating between 1 and 5 for: Severity (S) If the identified risk happened, how serious would the consequence be? The rating ranges from a negligible outcome to a potential fatality.

Likelihood (L) How likely is the identified risk to happen? The rating ranges from improbable to guaranteed.

**Step 2:** You then multiply the 2 numbers together to give a Risk Rating. Using the coloured table below you can see whether the Risk Rating indicates that you need to take further action to keep people safe.

Severity	Likelihood ➡				
↓	1. Improbable	2. Possible	3. Even chance	4. Very likely	5. Guaranteed
1. Negligible	1	2	3	4	5
2. Minor injury	2	4	6	8	10
3. Minor injury (RIDDOR)	3	6	9	12	15
4. Admitted as in-patient	4	8	12	16	20
5. Fatality or life changing injury	5	10	15	20	25

### Risk Rating Key

Acceptable, no further action required	G
Acceptable, with suitable controls	Y
Acceptable, only with high level controls in place	O
Unacceptable risk, plan out or add further controls	R

**Step 3:** Put measures in place to minimise the likelihood and impact of each hazard.

**Step 4:** Make it someone's responsibility to monitor and report on each risk area.

## Food safety guidance

If your Warm Welcome Space is planning on providing food, it's important you follow the guidelines on "Providing food at community and charity events" from the Food Standards Agency.

Food supplied, sold or provided at charity or community events, such as street parties, school fetes or fundraisers, must comply with food law and be safe to eat.

### Registration

You may need to register with your local authority as a food business if you provide food on a regular and organised basis. If you supply food on an occasional and small-scale basis, it is unlikely you will need to register.

The government's [guidance on the application of EU food hygiene law](#) gives practical examples of community and charity events selling or supplying food. It will help you decide whether your events will require registration.

### Allergen information

If you are a registered food business, you will need to follow the [allergen rules](#).

However, even if you are not registered as a food business, we recommend that all spaces provide as much information as possible about allergens orally or in writing for visitors, so that they can make safe choices.

The Warm Welcome [Food Allergen Chart template](#) is a helpful way to list all the products you will serve that contain one or more of the major food allergens. It can be used as a guide for staff and volunteers on which foods should be served or stored separately to avoid contamination and to inform visitors to your space so they could avoid food allergens.

### Food hygiene certificates

You do not need a food hygiene certificate to make and sell food for charity events. However, you need to make sure that you handle food safely.

### Keeping food safe

Following the 4Cs of food hygiene will help you prepare, make and store food safely.

**The 4Cs of food hygiene are:**

**Cleaning:** wash your hands regularly and ensure that food preparation areas are clean

**Cooking:** read cooking instructions and ensure food is properly cooked before you serve it

**Chilling:** keep food out of the fridge for the shortest time possible

**Cross-contamination:** keep raw and ready-to-eat foods apart

**Use-by dates:** Use-by dates show how long the food remains safe to eat or drink. Food cannot be supplied in any circumstances if its use by date has passed. This also applies if you are supplying people with packaged food from a food bank. [WRAP date labelling guidance](#) provides advice on how to safely redistribute surplus food and avoid food waste.

**Foods that need extra care:** Some foods are more likely to cause food poisoning than others. These include:

- raw milk
- raw shellfish
- soft cheeses
- pâté
- foods containing raw egg
- cooked sliced meats

If you serve any of these foods, consult the 'Foods which need extra care' section in the [Safer food better business pack](#).

## Cakes

You can serve homemade cakes at community events. They should be safe to eat if the recipe comes from a reputable source and the people who make them follow good food hygiene advice. In addition, the cakes must be stored and transported safely.

## Using jam jars

It is safe to reuse glass jam jars occasionally to supply homemade jam or chutney as long as the jars are properly washed and sterilized prior to each use.

## Mental Health Awareness

Warm Welcome spaces are not mental health drop-ins, however, it is important that we are able to create inclusive and supportive environments and that we know how to signpost people to other organisations that can provide individual support when necessary. Here are 4 steps to creating a safe and inclusive space for your visitors, staff and volunteers:

### Step 1. Understanding Mental Health

The World Health Organisation defines mental health as a "state of well-being in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community" ([Myndup](#)). However, mental health is a spectrum and everyone can experience challenges from time to time. 1 in 8 people in the world live with a mental health condition and over 1 in 4 people in the UK will experience a mental health disorder each year.

For more information on understanding mental health, please read the mental health Q&A which has been prepared by Warm Welcome partner Kintsugi Hope, a charity based in the UK that is striving to make a difference to people's mental wellbeing. More detailed information on mental health conditions is available at [Mental Health Foundation](#).

## Step 2. Creating a Welcoming Environment

Ensure that your staff and volunteers understand the importance of creating a stigma-free, respectful and non-judgmental atmosphere.

- Encourage your staff and volunteers to give people space to talk and to listen to how people are feeling.
- Ensure the staff and volunteers who are welcoming visitors feel able to listen to those seeking help, who may be feeling lonely or scared.

## Step 3: Providing training

Support your staff and volunteers by providing them with mental health awareness training. There are a number of courses available online including these free courses: [TLG Emotional first aid training](#).

- Zero Suicide Alliance training for crisis prevention
- [Mental Health First Aid](#), some fully funded places are [available here](#). [MindEd online resources](#).

## Step 4: Signposting

In our resource 'Signposting for Guests', you can see general mental health resources that are available across the UK.

You can add additional local services to this resource. To find out what is available in your area, go to [Hub of Hope](#) - an online directory of mental health services searchable by postcode.

### Community Crisis Response

Sometimes, a community experiences a traumatic event, as happened in the summer of 2024 following the shocking murder of three young girls in Southport. The community response to the riots that followed the murders was heartening, after such devastating unrest.

You might find the following resources useful to help you navigate similar events that are traumatic for the local community.

[Faith Communities Guide to Engaging with the Police](#)

[National Youth Agency Guidance on supporting young people after a traumatic event 20](#)

# Section 5: Resources for your Space

The following chapter outlines additional support you can draw on as a Warm Welcome space.

## Support for Guests

Many visitors will come to your space facing different challenges, here are some trusted organisations you can direct them to:

To help people in need access essentials (e.g. food, white goods, clothing, study materials)

- Acts435. You submit requests on behalf of guests, and donors fund the items. See A Guide to Partnering with Acts 435 in the **Partner's Corner**.
- Neighbourly. They work to connect charities with local businesses to receive surplus food and donations. **Register for free online here**.
- Fare Share. Work across the UK to redistribute surplus food to charities and community centres. Register here <https://fareshare.org.uk>
- Check out Trussell Trust, a UK-wide community of food banks to get emergency food at a food bank near you. <https://www.trussell.org.uk>

**Tip:** Some spaces also arrange food collections directly with their local supermarket.

## Digital Inclusion

Good Things Foundation (Digital Inclusion) supports people who can't afford internet or devices. By joining their network, your space can access free mobile data and refurbished devices for your visitors. See Helping Digitally Excluded People in Your Community in the Partner's Corner.

## Tackling Social Isolation

3.83 million people 'often' or 'sometimes' feel lonely in the UK. Prioritise connection in your space through activities, having a welcoming team and building in times for a chat. For more resources and advice on building connection and tackling loneliness in your space check out the **Jo Cox Foundation** in our partner corner and Campaign to End Loneliness [campaigntoendloneliness.org](https://campaigntoendloneliness.org).

If your guests could benefit from connecting with others outside of your Space opening hours here are some organisations to suggest:

- For anyone feeling isolated: **CALM's guide to loneliness**, Omega's befriending service and pen-pal scheme, or SupportLine for people feeling anxious or isolated.
- For Older guests: Re-engage [reengage.org.uk](https://reengage.org.uk) and Silver-line (a free, 24-hour helpline providing friendship and advice). 0800 470 80 90 [thesilverline.org.uk](https://thesilverline.org.uk).
- For anyone feeling anxious, isolated or lonely: suggest SupportLine. 01708 765200 or go to [supportline.org.uk](https://supportline.org.uk).
- For guests with disabilities: [sense.org.uk](https://sense.org.uk) runs a buddying service for online companionship and offer in person activities.

Signposting to Specialist Help: Some guests will need advice beyond what you can give. Use the **Signposting for Guests booklet** to find relevant local and national services.

There may also be other Warm Welcome spaces or activities in your area that may open on different days, that you could suggest to your guests.



## Support for Your Space

A thriving Warm Welcome Space also means supporting your team and building connections:

### Build a Local Network

Connect with other Warm Welcome Spaces and organisations in your area to share advice and ideas, coordinate opening times, and pool resources. Check out our resource on building strong partnerships [WW Building Partnerships Resource](#).

You can find the spaces near you through the Warm Welcome map, possibly through your local authority website, or through your local VSCE coordinator.

### Staff and Volunteer Wellbeing

We know that running a space can be challenging. Check out our [wellbeing resource](#) to help your team stay supported, rested, and encouraged.

### Inclusive Spaces

Being a warm and welcoming space for all extends to working with different people and even creating inclusive volunteering options. Check out our resources on Confident Cultural Sensitivity ([also available as a pull out here](#)) and Inclusive volunteering ([pull out here](#)) to help you.

## Explore the Dashboard

This section is just the start. Check out the full Warm Welcome Dashboard for more guides, templates, and partner resources to help you run confidently run your space.

# Section 6: Working with Volunteers

Volunteers are the backbone of Warm Welcome Spaces. Whether you are a small volunteer-led community group or have paid staff, volunteers are key to running activities sustainably. More than 10,000 volunteers have supported Warm Welcome Spaces so far, but recruiting and retaining volunteers can be a challenge.

This section provides practical advice and resources to help you find, support, and celebrate volunteers.

## Recruiting Volunteers

There are many reasons why someone may want to volunteer: some people want to do something to help others, some people may want to meet new people, some people volunteer to fulfill an external programme like Duke of Edinburgh Awards. Recruiting new volunteers may take time, and you can look for volunteers all year round. Keep motivation in mind when recruiting and advertising opportunities.

### How to find new volunteers:

- Put up posters locally – low effort, will find local people, but usually a low success rate
- Get the story out – see if you can get on the local radio, write an article for the local free newspaper, and use our [press release template](#) to help you share the story or goals of your space. Share your story with [info@warmwelcome.uk](mailto:info@warmwelcome.uk) to be featured in a blog or social media post.
- Advertise on online community groups – you can aim this at the groups you talk to, such as Facebook or WhatsApp groups for parents, local clubs, or other community groups. Don't forget to post that you are recruiting on your website or social media.
- Leafleting is likely to have a better success rate if you do the advert right, but it costs more time and effort.

### Did you know?

Some people don't see themselves as a volunteer and might be lacking in confidence initially. Think about providing short-term or easy volunteering to help people get started. Remember, people who initially come along as guests may want to volunteer.

## Onboarding Volunteers

The entire volunteer experience is an important part of the success of Warm Welcome Spaces. A positive experience begins with having clear processes in place.

We strongly encourage you to follow the [NCVO's guidance](#) on safer recruitment. In order to be part of the Warm Welcome Campaign, we require you to have a safeguarding policy in place and to adhere to best practice regarding safeguarding. You can find a template safeguarding policy in the [pullouts and printables section](#) of the website.

### Guidelines to follow:

- **Identity Check:** Do a simple identity check of your volunteer, e.g., passport or driving licence to ensure they are who they say they are. Ensure the handling of any personal information collected is compliant with the General Data Protection Regulations.
- **Volunteer Agreement:** Work with potential volunteers to draft and sign a volunteer agreement that makes clear what everyone can expect from the experience (you can see a template in the pullouts and printables section of the website).
- **Induction and Training** Provide appropriate induction and training for volunteers. This may include them having a 'buddy' to start with.
- **Communication:** Respond to volunteering enquiries within one week of receiving them.
- **Safeguarding and Health & Safety:** Follow best practice in regard to safeguarding at all times in relation to volunteers and all others. Ensure you have the correct insurance, health and safety procedures in place.
- **Complaints Policy:** Have a clear complaints policy for volunteers in case something goes wrong (N.B the Warm Welcome Campaign is not able to mediate any complaints or disputes relating to volunteers).

Templates for volunteer agreements, contact forms and training handouts are in the [pullouts and printables section](#) of the dashboard. We recommend that you make use of all three of these when recruiting your volunteers.

## Supporting Volunteers

Giving volunteers adequate training, looking after volunteer wellbeing and celebrating volunteer contributions are key to ensuring your volunteers feel supported, motivated, and valued.

### Here are some training opportunities we recommend:

- **TLG Emotional First Aid** - This free online training will enable volunteers to spot signs of emotional distress in children and adults and respond appropriately.
- **Good Conversations Training** – This training from Linking Lives provides volunteers with a basic foundation for welcoming people and starting good conversations in Warm Welcome Spaces.
- **Zero Suicide Alliance** – This free 20-minute online training equips individuals to respond to visitors who may be in crisis.

Check out our resource on [Staff and Volunteer Wellbeing \[saved here\]](#) for more detailed guidance and resources.

Celebrate the contributions of volunteers by saying thank you, recognising achievements and organising events to say thank you. One way of recognising achievements is to give volunteers opportunities new responsibilities and opportunities to develop.

### Checklist (download the simple list here)

- What is the task that you need volunteers to help with? Do you have a role description or a list of activities?
- Do you have the training in place to support them (see above)?
- Do you need your volunteer to commit long-term, or can it be short-term or more flexible? Does the role need to be done at particular times in the week?
- Is there a start date? An end date? A minimum number of hours?
- Do you have a risk assessment?
- Do you have a data protection policy and privacy notice?

- Do you have a safeguarding policy? Is this known by all staff and existing volunteers?  
Do you comply with relevant health and safety requirements?
- Do you have public liability insurance?
- Do you have a complaints policy in place?
- Do you have a named person who the volunteer can be supported by and accountable to?
- Do you have a volunteer agreement ready for you and the volunteer(s) to sign? Do you have a mechanism in place for a Volunteer advising if they are sick, not able to attend a particular session or no longer being able to give their time?

# Section 7: Frequently Asked Questions

## I want to speak to a member of the Warm Welcome team, how can I do this?

For general enquiries (eg. technical help) please email [info@warmwelcome.uk](mailto:info@warmwelcome.uk). For all media and press related enquiries, please email [press@warmwelcome.uk](mailto:press@warmwelcome.uk). We'd love to hear from you!

## Can I use your logo?

Yes, that would be wonderful! Once you have registered as a Warm Welcome Space, you will get access to our branding material, including social media posts, templates, banners, signage, and more! Just visit the 'Resources' tab of your dashboard and go to 'Communications Toolkit' to view and download our materials.

## How do I sign up to the newsletter?

The simplest way to sign up to the newsletter is via the footer on our website at [warmwelcome.uk](https://warmwelcome.uk). Scroll down to the bottom of any page on the website, and you'll see the newsletter sign up button. Enter your details, and you'll be added to the mailing list. You can then manage your preferences by clicking on the link at the bottom of any email.

## How can I receive funding for my Warm Welcome space?

The two most common sources of funding for Warm Spaces are Local Authorities and Community Foundations. So we'd recommend making contact with your Local Authority (you can [use this tool](#) to find your Councillor and approach them in the first instance) and your Community Foundation ([you can use this tool to find it](#)) to see if they might have any relevant funding pots available. Feel free to mention the Warm Welcome Campaign and flag that we have a group especially for people in Local Authorities and Community Foundations to help them work with Warm Spaces in their area – they can email [info@warmwelcome.uk](mailto:info@warmwelcome.uk) to find out more and join.

If your Warm Space is connected to a faith-based space, you may also want to make contact with your relevant regional/national body and see if they have any funding available for Warm Spaces.

Other options you might want to consider include the Awards for All Programme run by the National Lottery, or setting up a Crowdfunder account.

Please also refer to the longer section on funding your space in this handbook.

## I want to offer additional support in my Warm Welcome Space, what could I do?

We're so thankful for your involvement in Warm Welcome through offering a safe, free, and welcoming space for everyone who needs it. If you want to offer other support in your space, such as debt advice, access to social prescribing teams, mental health courses, or citizens advice clinics, you are welcome to do so. Information from our partners who can provide guidance and resources on these things can be found in our 'partners corner' of the resources section.

## How do I register a new space or relaunch one from last year?

If you are struggling to register your space, please have a look at our registration video on your resources dashboard to guide you through the process. You can find the [How to Register a New Space Wiki here](#) and [How to Relaunch Your Space Wiki here](#). [Here](#) is a video tutorial of the registration process.

## How do I change the details for my Warm Welcome Space?

To update your details, login to your account, then go to 'My Spaces' in the 'Spaces' tab on the left of the page. There will be a button called 'Edit Space' and from there, you can update any details that you need to, such as opening times.

## How do I register more than one Warm Welcome Space?

Some organisations may want to register multiple spaces; to do this, login to your account, then go to 'Add a New Space' in the 'Spaces' tab on the left of the page. From there you can create a new space, which will appear in your 'My Spaces' tab.

## How can I add another user to manage my Space?

If you would like to give another person access to manage your Space:

1. Have the person sign up for a Warm Welcome account on [www.warmwelcome.uk/login](http://www.warmwelcome.uk/login)
2. Send us a [support message](#) from your dashboard with the email address of the person you want to add.
3. We'll be in touch to let you know when they've been added.
4. They will then have your Space show up on their dashboard and will be able to change any details they want.

## How can I contact you to make a donation, offer support, or talk about a gift I have already made?

You can [donate directly to us here](#). If you have any queries about past support or future gifts, please do contact us.

If you would like to talk about helping us through your business or organisation or you would like to become a supporting partner yourself, please email [gifts@warmwelcome.uk](mailto:gifts@warmwelcome.uk).

With thanks to [Good Practice Mentors](#) for their support in putting together this Handbook.

The Warm Welcome Campaign is hosted by the Good Faith Foundation, a charity focused on cross-sector collaboration for social inclusion.

Warm Welcome, The Courtyard, High Street, Ascot, Berkshire SL5 7HP

[info@warmwelcome.uk](mailto:info@warmwelcome.uk)