

# Impact Report

2025-26



## A Chain of Hope

# Introduction

Warm Welcome has a bold ambition to enable a more deeply connected society where we all have free access to welcoming community spaces, made by and for everyone.

When we first embarked on our journey, we couldn't have imagined the transformational impact that Warm Welcome Spaces would make in our communities. Over just four years, we've witnessed an outpouring of community spirit from spaces, volunteers, partners, and funders to build a Chain of Hope.



The Warm Welcome story is a love story. It's full of **kindness** and **compassion** and **powered by thousands and thousands of volunteers**. It's reviving communities and giving millions of people a new sense of hope. These community spaces are a lifeline and life-changing for so many.

As one volunteer recently shared, "We did not envisage the depth of connection that has developed. It's grown into a family of supportive friends who care about and look after each other." Warm Welcome guests say that these spaces are the only places where they feel wanted, valued, and comfortable and where they can truly be themselves.

Our **Chain of Hope** is growing day by day, each new link forged by more spaces, more partners, and more funders joining us. We are edging closer to our **100% Pledge** for a Warm Welcome for All; now nearly three-quarters (72%) of the population has a Warm Welcome Space within a 30-minute walk of their home. But we are not stopping there; we have so much more to do.

There's so much to be thankful for and to celebrate. Behind the doors of every Warm Welcome Space are real people and real stories of lives that have been touched by kindness and compassion. That's why we launched the **Warm Welcome Awards** to celebrate these spaces and the people that make them.

We are indebted to everyone who is part of our story, a rich tapestry of people that makes our campaign a unique and diverse force for good. Our heartfelt thanks to our generous funders, supporters, and corporate partners who have stepped up their support, investing in deeper connections with community spaces. With your continued support, we can empower more community spaces and strengthen our Chain of Hope.

**David Barclay**  
Warm Welcome Campaign Director

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The Warm Welcome Campaign is hosted by the Good Faith Foundation, a charity focused on cross-sector collaboration for social inclusion. Registered Charity No 1188639.

# Foreword

Warm Welcome Spaces are Britain's Chain of Hope, they stretch across the country, lighting up the lives of thousands of people who may otherwise be lonely. And the emphasis in Warm Welcome is warmth. The warmth of the person who will meet and greet you, and the warmth of the people you will encounter when visiting one of the spaces.

From humble beginnings, the Warm Welcome Campaign has grown into a national movement; reviving buildings that were once just bricks and mortar into community spaces that now provide hope. Here, small acts of kindness and compassion ripple out across villages, towns and cities.

The Warm Welcome Campaign, under the leadership of David Barclay, has worked tirelessly to raise awareness and crowd in support for an expansion of community spaces. And it's getting noticed. 44% of the public has heard of the campaign, and awareness is growing.

In January 2026, during Warm Welcome Week, we celebrated the Welcome Café at Leicester Cathedral as the 6,000th Warm Welcome Space to join us. And in that same week, I had the great pleasure of visiting the Salvation Army Warm Welcome Space in Kirkcaldy, my hometown, to show my personal appreciation for the tireless dedication of the team that does so much for their community. And to thank them personally for their public service.

Partnership is at the bedrock of Warm Welcome. I'm heartened that a growing number of household brands are lining up to support them. Corporates like **Sky, SGN, Co-op, OVO, SSEN, Arup, NGED, UKPN, Barratt Redrow** and so many more. This year, **National Grid** became the founding funder for the Spaces Support Fund, offering vital support to make sure spaces have the funds to keep their doors open.

As a result, the Chain of Hope is growing stronger. So much so that last year **we welcomed 3.5 million people into what are now a record 6,300 community spaces. The number of these spaces has grown by 1,000 this year**, thanks to the work of volunteers who are the life blood of these spaces. Warm Welcome is not stopping there, by the end of the year they want to grow the number to 7,000 and have a long-term ambition to ensure that 100% of the country has a Warm Welcome Space in their community. These spaces remind us that warmth isn't just about temperature; it's about feeling valued and supported. And warmth when expressed is not restricted to one person, it extends to everyone.

Sadly, in these tumultuous times of war, division, and uncertainty, many people will need a local place of hope and support more than ever. So, I urge all of us, in whatever position we find ourselves in, to get behind Warm Welcome, and expand the **Chain of Hope** to create an unbreakable web of support in our communities. Thank you for your ongoing support.

**Rt Hon Gordon Brown**  
Founding Patron for the Warm Welcome Campaign and former UK Prime Minister



# Impact in numbers

**3.5 million visitors**

(up from 2.6 million)

**6,300 spaces**

(up from 5,300)



**50%** of the public have interacted with a Warm Space in the past

**80%** agree that Warm Spaces can help them spend time with people in their community

**79%** of people agree that Warm Spaces can help people feel less lonely

**72%** of people live within 30 minutes of a warm space (up from 68%)



**339,300 visits to the Warm Welcome website**

(up from 305,900)

**63,833 people visited the interactive map on our website**

(up from 58,212)



**1.86bn media impressions**

(up from 1.4bn)

**10,801 Newsletter subscribers**

(up from 8,502)

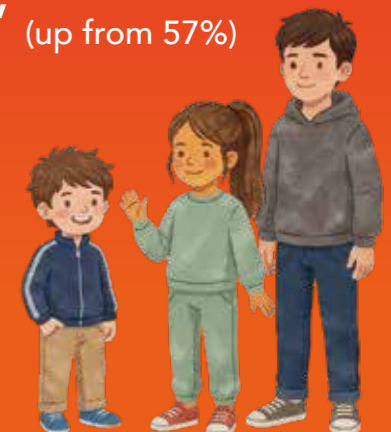
**88%** of people would recommend a Warm Space to people they know

**26%** of people are aware of a Warm Space within a 30-minute walk (up from 23%)



**70%** of the general population have heard of 'Warm Spaces' (up from 57%)

**73%** of Warm Welcome Spaces say joining the Warm Welcome Campaign has helped them raise awareness



# Creating Communities of Connection

The Warm Welcome Campaign resources, connects, and champions a growing network of over 6,300 Warm Welcome Spaces and brings together a coalition of local, regional, and national partners.

From church halls in rural villages to libraries, mosques, community and sports centres, cafés, and even pubs in bustling cities, local spaces are opening their doors to offer warmth, friendship, and a place where everyone belongs. Warm Welcome Spaces form one of the largest community-led support networks in the country, and last year they welcomed around 3.5 million visitors. Nearly 90% of Warm Welcome Spaces are open all year long, and one in four spaces offer a “Cool Space” to guests in the summer months.

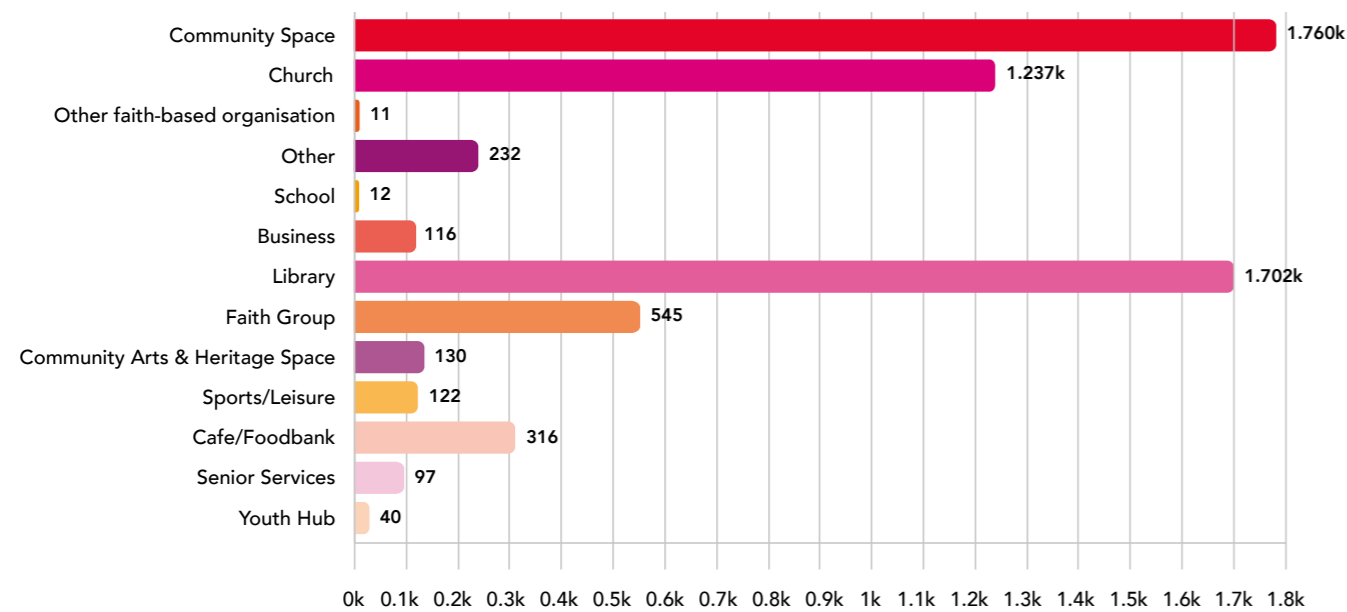
Warm Welcome Spaces are a chain of hope, welcoming people of all ages and backgrounds: older neighbours living alone, young people struggling with energy bills, parents with small children, and anyone simply looking for a warm, safe, friendly place to be.

Over the last year we have grown that chain of hope, with 1,000 new Warm Welcome Spaces joining us. In January, we were thrilled to announce Leicester Cathedral's Welcome Café as the 6,000th Warm Welcome Space.

We are getting closer to our ‘Warm Welcome for All’ 100% pledge of enabling everyone to find a place of connection close to home. Now, almost three quarters (72%) of the population live within a 30-minute walk of a local space. We’ve worked hard to remove any barriers so more people can access spaces.

Partnership is at the heart of Warm Welcome, amplifying our ambitions and helping us grow the network. This year we were thrilled to launch new partnerships with so many new organisations including In Kind Direct and the RSPCA.

## Warm Welcome Spaces



Other faith-based organisations include mosques, a buddhist centre, a Hindu community centre and a Quaker meeting house. Faith groups are mostly churches including Methodist churches

## A winter's tail

Last winter we joined with the RSPCA on a pioneering initiative to help dogs and their owners access more Warm Welcome Spaces. Many dog owners regard their four-legged friend as their closest friend – and would rather remain in a freezing house or flat than leave them behind by venturing out to seek warmth elsewhere.

We created a new pet-friendly icon on our **Warm Welcome online map** so guests can find a nearby space to go with their dogs. One such space is the **Changing Lives Together – Buddy & Befriending Scheme**, supporting those who are lonely and isolated in our communities. The Buddy and Befriending scheme supports adults across Cheshire who are experiencing loneliness or social isolation.

Rosie is a therapy dog, and in the two years that Graham has attended with Rosie, she has never been heard to bark. Rosie comes in on her lead and sits beside Graham on the cushion he brings. Graham is grateful that the dog is allowed to visit.

“I love attending the group, but if I couldn't bring Rosie, I wouldn't have the confidence to come out – I go everywhere I can with her; she keeps me going.”



# 3,160

Our RSPCA partnership story was one of the most popular stories shared this year, with over 3,160 unique views.



## Our 6,000th space – Leicester Cathedral’s Welcome Café

Leicester Cathedral’s Welcome Café was inspired by a desire to support individuals who may feel isolated, particularly older residents and those facing financial challenges. During the colder months, the Cathedral’s Heritage & Learning Centre offers a perfect setting for warmth and community.

The Welcome Café offers hospitality, conversation, activities, and even skill-sharing opportunities like knitting and jigsaw puzzles. There are no strings attached – guests can drop in anytime between 10.30am and 12.00pm on Fridays. Since opening on 5 December, the Café has seen attendance ranging from 10 to 30 people weekly, attracting a diverse mix of visitors from Leicester and beyond.

“**We know we are a welcoming place, but for some, a friendly face, a hot drink, and a chat can be a lifeline in a lonely week.**”

Elaine Smith, who along with Marian Kandi lead the volunteer team as two of the Cathedral’s licensed lay ministers.



Leicester Cathedral  
**Welcome Café**  
Fancy a cuppa and a chat?  
Or perhaps a knit and natter?  
A game of dominoes, a listening ear  
or just a nice warm space to sit?  
Even 5:00pm

“Our hope is that the Welcome Café will be a place where everyone feels valued and connected, especially during these colder months when isolation can be hardest.”

## Working in Partnership

Partnerships are central to the Warm Welcome Campaign, and to the strength of the movement we are building together.

**Warm Welcome began with a simple idea: that everyone should have somewhere to go for warmth, connection, and a friendly face.** Today, more than 6,300 Spaces are part of that movement, and our Partners and Friends help us make it possible. By sharing our story, connecting us with new communities, and working alongside us to support Spaces, they amplify the impact we have together.

We are so very grateful to everyone who contributes to this work. The commitment, expertise, and generosity help ensure that our ethos – kindness, openness, and inclusion – reaches every corner of the country. Together, we are creating a network of Spaces, a chain of hope, where people feel welcome, supported, and connected.

Looking ahead, we are excited to continue building these relationships and to welcome new partners into the movement.

If your organisation would like to explore partnering with Warm Welcome, please get in touch with **Helena Russell, Partnerships Manager**, at [helena.russell@warmwelcome.uk](mailto:helena.russell@warmwelcome.uk)

**Thank you to everyone who has worked with us, past and present, to help communities feel a little warmer and more connected.**

“**Working with the Warm Welcome Campaign is a real privilege. Partnering with them lets us combine strengths and share expertise to reach even more individuals and local communities.**”

Emma Aldridge, In Kind Direct



# Helping Spaces to Thrive

Space volunteers know how a simple cup of tea, offered with a smile, can ease loneliness for someone who hasn't spoken to anyone all week. Guests who arrive withdrawn and anxious who, over time, become regulars, chatting with others, rediscovering their confidence and sense of purpose. They are a lifeline, but many spaces struggle to keep their doors open. With rising costs, it's hard to keep pace with paying for rent, heating, lighting, and everyday essentials.

We want every Warm Welcome Space to thrive and strengthen the chain of hope they offer to communities every day. We've stepped up our support for Warm Welcome Spaces with funding and volunteering opportunities, sharing good practice and toolkits, and bringing spaces together through our Champions Programme.

Throughout the year we've worked tirelessly to raise awareness of Warm Welcome Spaces through our campaigns. As a result, **over 63,800 people have used our online map to find a local space.** We've supported spaces with the funding opportunities, with **over 12,800 people accessing our online fundraising resource dashboard.** This year, working with Warm Welcome Spaces, we've co-created a new **Inclusion Toolkit**, offering practical guidance and resources for creating spaces where everyone belongs.

With their generous support, **National Grid plc became the founding funder of our new Spaces Support Fund**, a dedicated pot of funding to help Warm Welcome Spaces cover essentials like heating, lighting, and rent.

We are indebted to all our partners and corporate supporters for strengthening the Chain of Hope that spaces offer every day. From In Kind Direct unlocking £302,000 in savings to Warm Welcome Spaces, Co-op gifting £60,000 for #CoopCuppa vouchers for tea and coffee, OVO and SGN offering free warm packs and energy advice to thousands of guests, Arup supporting those spaces looking to renovate their buildings, Sky hosting our Warm Welcome Awards as well as tea parties in spaces, the Chelsea Foundation providing gifts for guests and NGED supporting spaces through volunteering.

“They have included me and accepted me as I am. They've seen me on my up and down days, but I always leave with a smile. Spaces like this bring communities together.”

Guest at the Nourish Hub, London



# Energy Safeguarding in the Heart of the Community

In January, we launched a new three-month pilot project with SGN to bring vital energy-safeguarding support directly into the heart of local communities across SGN's regions in Scotland and the South of England.

The pioneering project piloted new ways to identify and support those most at risk of living in a cold and unhealthy home with skills and resources to help alleviate fuel poverty, provide energy safeguarding services, and increase energy safety awareness.

Through the coldest months of the year, 15 community based Warm Welcome Spaces, spread across Scotland and the South of England, provided a range of energy safeguarding support, advice and gave out warm packs to over 1,185 people. The warm packs were greatly valued as an opportunity to start conversation about people's wider needs. The project also helped to strengthen collaboration between community organisations and external services, creating new referral pathways and improved local support networks.

“Lovely packs! A lot of stuff in them; the flasks were a very good idea. If you don't want to get up in the night for a hot drink, you can have it by your bed. It saves on electricity, not needing to boil the kettle several times!” Warm Welcome Space guest.

Angie, who is one of many homeless guests at the New Church Central Hall Warm Welcome Space in Southampton, greatly valued the support, “I've been living on a boat on and off over the winter and it's been really cold most of the time. I can get wood to make a fire, which has helped a bit to get warm. I love everything in the Warm Pack and am pleased to have the [carbon monoxide] alarm.”

Angie was given a carbon monoxide alarm, which was set up for instant use, and SGN explained why it was important in a small, confined space and using wood fires.

The partnership with SGN is equipping spaces and volunteers with the knowledge and skills to help communities to stay safe and warm at home.



## Championing a group of Warm Welcome Spaces

The Champions programme was developed to deepen support for a small group of Warm Welcome spaces and open a pathway for spaces to contribute directly to the strategic direction of Warm Welcome. We currently have 52 Spaces on the programme, and these Spaces were identified as leaders in their regions. All Warm Welcome Spaces were given the opportunity to apply to be a Champion Space.

As part of the programme, Champions got extra resources, training, and chances to amplify their impact. Champion spaces had the opportunity to apply for the Spaces support fund to sustain their continued participation in the Champions programme.

Champion Spaces connect through online and in-person meetings, sharing expertise, challenges, and solutions with each other and the wider Warm Welcome network. They advocate for the Warm Welcome Campaign, promoting the mission and values locally, and inspire others by telling the story of their Space through blogs, videos, and media visits.

The impact of the programme for spaces is evident through both tangible and personal outcomes. For example, one of our corporate partners, Arup, donated three laptops to The Hub at Westhoughton in Bolton. The space leader said: **“That was amazing because we haven’t been able to replace any of ours for at least 5 years.”**

At the in-person Champions meeting in November, Space leader Fran from the Old Fire Station in Leeds sat next to Jenny from Cosy Cafe in Manchester, connecting over shared experiences from their Warm Welcome Spaces. They had lots in common, learnt from each other and organised a visit. Jenny said they chatted about Warm Welcome Week and their space activities and said, **“I came away with a full heart, and lots of ideas.”** This is what we hoped for the Champions programme, for Space leaders to collaborate, learn from each other and share ideas.

Steve from the Sutton Methodist Church commented, **“Being a Champion Space is rewarding. Listening to different Warm Welcome Spaces that are seemingly very different, but we all have supporting the community in common.”** Inspired by the Champions programme, he hosted a local Warm Welcome Week event called Sharing the Warmth, where each Warm Space presented their work.

The Champions programme has empowered Spaces to share their expertise, inspire the wider network, and create a platform for innovation and learning within the Warm Welcome Campaign.

## The transformative role of corporate and partner support

Corporate and partner support continues to play a vital and transformative role in helping Warm Welcome Spaces to thrive. This support goes far beyond funding, bringing practical tools, professional skills, and meaningful relationships that help strengthen spaces for the long term.



### In-Kind Support, Grant Funding and Public Sector Backing

In-kind and resource partnerships have also made a real difference on the ground. Through In Kind Direct, spaces have gained access to vital supplies that enhance their day-to-day provision, while initiatives such as Co-op’s Co-op Cuppa have created thousands of welcoming moments through the simple but powerful offer of free tea and coffee.

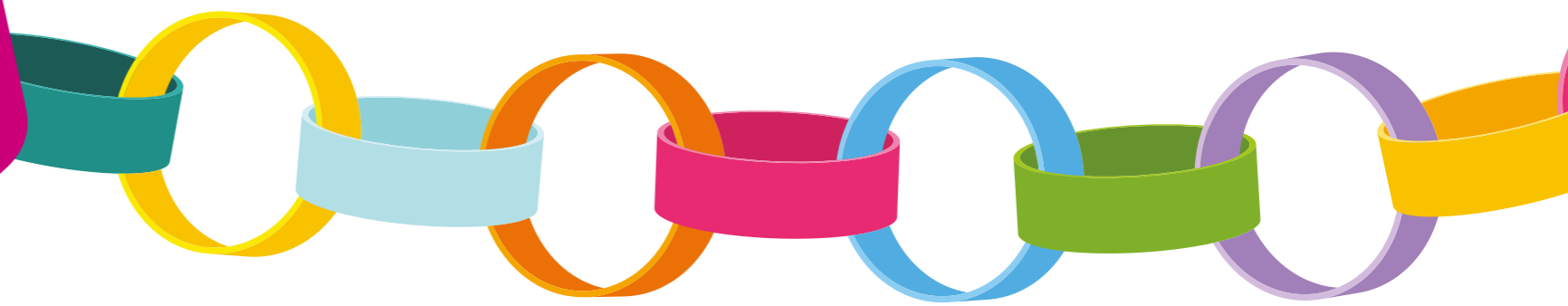
Alongside this, we have launched targeted support grants through our Spaces Support Fund and funders such as the Laing Family Trusts have provided targeted grants to church-based spaces, helping them sustain and grow their offer within local communities. Public sector backing has further strengthened this impact, with the Welsh Government investing £1.5 million into over 400 warm hubs across Wales, alongside additional support for spaces from Local Authorities across the UK.

### Energy Sector Partnerships Driving Local Impact

Partners including SGN, National Grid, OVO Energy, National Grid Electricity Distribution, Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks and UK Power Networks have supported spaces to respond directly to local need through essential items like Warm Packs, financial contributions, volunteering or wider infrastructure connections. Initiatives such as NGED’s “Visit Every Space” have actively encouraged teams to build relationships with their local Warm Welcome Spaces, with both NGED and National Grid championing daily volunteering throughout Warm Welcome Week. This way of working is helping to foster meaningful, place-based connections between employees and communities, leaving spaces better equipped and more confident in delivering their vital community offer.



**“Our Co-op voucher raised morale and made it a memorable session for all. Some participants said they’d never had a hot chocolate like that before!”**



## The transformative role of corporate and partner support



### Corporate Partnerships Creating Deeper Community Engagement

Corporate partnerships have also opened up valuable opportunities for spaces to benefit from time, expertise, and deeper engagement. Sky, through Sky Cares, has worked closely with spaces near their key locations, to provide digital equipment and connectivity, alongside volunteering and fundraising support. OVO Energy has brought communities together through roadshows and events, boosting visibility, support, and engagement, while Barratt Redrow has worked to connect regional teams with local spaces, aiming to build lasting, community-rooted relationships, delivering their vital community offer.



### Skilled Volunteering and Professional Expertise

A particularly exciting area of growth has been skilled volunteering, with partners sharing their professional expertise to help spaces grow and evolve. Pagefield has supported a local space with a communications strategy, strengthening its reach and profile, while Arup has committed pro bono technical support, from engineering advice to planning, helping spaces enhance their buildings and expand their services. Meanwhile, community-focused initiatives from organisations such as the Chelsea Foundation have brought moments of generosity and joy directly into spaces through large-scale gift drives.

“  
The Warm Welcome partnership is extremely valuable to NGED. Relationships with space leads can help us build community resilience to power cuts and ensure we reach people who would benefit from being added to our Priority Services Register.  
”

Emma Davies, NGED Welfare Lead



### Training, Guidance and Long-Term Sustainability

Alongside this, we have continued to provide targeted training and support to spaces, including regional webinars delivered with Postcode Lottery teams and additional guidance through the fundraising portal in the Spaces section of our website – all helping to build resilience, capability, and long-term sustainability across the network.

“  
Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) is pleased to partner with Warm Welcome Spaces to support their hubs offer a place of safety, warmth and companionship. This can be especially useful during colder, winter months.  
”

Susan Duncan, Partnerships and Vulnerability Engagement Manager, SSEN



### The Power of Partnership

Together, this breadth of support highlights the power of partnership at its best. Our collaborations demonstrate that organisations who share resources, skills, investment and time, are creating a stronger network of thriving community spaces and reaching more people to connect, share experiences, and receive the support they need in their local communities.

For corporate partnership discussions please contact

**Louise Franklin:**

[louise.franklin@warmwelcome.uk](mailto:louise.franklin@warmwelcome.uk)

# Telling the Warm Welcome Story

Millions of lives are touched and transformed by Warm Welcome Spaces. They are the heartbeat of communities. Our Founding Patron, the Rt Hon Gordon Brown, calls Warm Welcome Spaces a “Chain of Hope” stretching across the country, bringing light and human warmth to people’s lives. We want everyone to experience the joy and magic found in every Warm Welcome Space; that’s why we’ve invested more in awareness raising, public affairs, and campaigns so more people can find a place of connection close to home.

In January we delivered our second Warm Welcome Week campaign. We’ve supported Warm Welcome Spaces to tell their story by creating new storytelling and PR toolkits. We published 36 new stories this year and worked with the media to tell the Warm Welcome story for positive change. Over the year we secured 504 items of media coverage and 1.86 billion media impressions. Warm Welcome awareness is growing year on year, with 44% of the public saying they heard of the Warm Welcome Campaign, up from 39% last year. Our Warm Welcome website receives a high level of traffic with 339,300 views (up 11% on last year). Half of Britons (50%) say they have been to a Warm Space in the past.

**Almost three-quarters (73%) of community spaces that have registered with Warm Welcome says it has helped them to raise awareness, and 42% say it’s helped them to lever more funding.**

**Patron and ambassador visits in the past year included:**

- The **Rt Hon Gordon Brown** again visiting his local Warm Welcome Space at Kirkcaldy in Scotland;
- Presenter **Gaby Roslin** and actor **Arabella Weir** visiting Swansea MAD in Wales; and
- Broadcaster **Jane Garvey** presented a BBC Radio 4 Appeal for Warm Welcome in January 2026.

In April 2026, we held our second **Choral Evensong celebration at St Paul’s cathedral**, attended by many Warm Welcome Spaces, partners and funders.

We launched our inaugural **Warm Welcome Awards Programme**, to celebrate spaces and the people that make them. We are all looking forward to the Warm Welcome Awards Celebration Event in June, generously hosted by Sky.



## Our year in images



# Warm Welcome Week

## 19–25 January 2026

In January 2026, we delivered our second Warm Welcome Week campaign. Warm Welcome Week began on Blue Monday, 19 January, and ran until Sunday, 25 January. We were blown away by the outstanding support for Warm Welcome Week from Warm Welcome Spaces, our partners, supporters, and corporate partners. Warm Welcome Spaces and our partners dressed up, knitted, crafted, decorated, cooked up delicious cakes and soups, and celebrated the week with all kinds of fun and colourful activities.

During Warm Welcome Week our social media channels were flooded by a kaleidoscope of **orange, red, purple, and pink!** Together we chased away the blues with Warm Welcome's vibrant colours. The majority of spaces said the week had increased awareness to some extent, and **86% said that the campaign had led to good or high levels of awareness.** And **75% said they had received financial donations or in-kind donations as a result of the campaign.**

This year, building on our learning from our first Warm Welcome Week, the response and engagement from spaces and partners were far greater than we ever imagined. The evaluation shows that Warm Welcome Spaces love the simplicity of the campaign; the simple act of dressing up or decorating their space in Warm Welcome's colours is an easy win and has a feel-good factor.



“ Warm Welcome Week brought a touch of brightness to a dull week in January; we lifted people's spirits and celebrated our community. We increased opportunities for guest to make positive change, and we had a lot of fun. ”

The Hubhub at Lockleaze Neighbourhood Trust



“ This was the first Warm Welcome Week we have participated in, and so we were able to increase the awareness to over 300 people who came to various activities during that week in our building. We connected with other warm spaces and participated in a Co-op community network with other spaces in our area. It will now be an annual event in our calendar. ”

Edmund St, Milnrow, Rochdale

Chase the blues away...  
with red, orange, purple & pink!

### Surrounded by laughter at East Ham Library

As soon as I walked into East Ham Library, I was surrounded by sound: children's laughter drifting from a school class learning about new books; music playing softly at the back of the room where a chair aerobics class was underway; and the cheerful chatter of staff laughing with women gathered for knit and natter. On a cold January morning, it wasn't just the warmth of the building that struck me, but the warmth of the atmosphere itself.

One young woman I spoke to told me she had just completed an interview for a job she was really excited about. "I was so nervous," she said, "but I've been coming to this library since I was young. I know the staff, they've been with me through this journey, so doing it here makes me feel calmer."

The library offers private booths for just £1, giving people a quiet, affordable space to work or take important calls if they can't do so at home. As we spoke, a member of staff came over and gave her a big hug, telling her they had been nervous for her too. That moment of genuine care showed how this space offers far more than just a place to sit; it offers support and belonging.

The knit and natter group meets twice a week, providing a space for creativity and connection. Whether they are sewing for Great Ormond Street, creating heritage pieces for museums, or donating their work to charity, there is always a project on the go. One regular attendee, who has been coming to the library for eight years, spoke about how important this space is to the ladies. She lost her husband just over a year ago and said that the women in this group understood exactly how lonely it is and helped bring routine and normality back into her life. "I couldn't thank the staff enough for their support," she said. "We always greet everyone with a smile here. That's part of it – we look out for one another."



## Corporate support for Warm Welcome Week

Warm Welcome Week 2026 built on strong foundations and demonstrated the continued appetite from corporate partners to come together in support of Warm Welcome spaces. The place of our corporate partners in the week felt supportive rather than dominating over the surge of activity happening in spaces.

A key highlight was the depth of engagement from those partners who embedded Warm Welcome Week into their plans well in advance. In particular, **Co-op** played a leading role in championing the campaign, helping to drive awareness and participation across communities as well as delivering a benefit to spaces.

We also saw meaningful contributions from partners including **National Grid, National Grid Electricity Distribution, OVO Energy, Sky,** and **SGN**, each bringing different strengths – from volunteering and events to communications, storytelling, and community activation.



## A Love Story: The Warm Welcome Space at St. Andrew's Church, Alford

The Friendship Café can be found in the small rural village of Alford, Aberdeenshire. Over the last four years, it's grown into a mutually caring atmosphere that has developed from a formerly disparate group of people, many of whom live alone. When it first opened its doors, it was very much about providing a warm space, a bowl of soup, and space to chat. The group of volunteers say they did not envisage the depth of connection that has developed or the number of people it would attract. It's grown into a family of supportive friends who care about and look after each other. It's a love story.

This story is shared in honour of three stalwart ladies, Ruth, Joan, and Lorna, who all died within six weeks of each other. They were at the heart of the Friendship Café, attending from the very beginning; they had all, in their different ways, made their mark by sharing their laughter, sorrows, and lives, and their friendship will be missed by everyone. The Friendship Café was one of the few places where they felt comfortable. Their loss has been felt deeply by all at the Friendship Café, and the guests too are only too aware of the three empty places.

So deep is the connection that both volunteers and café regulars attended all three funeral services, and in two of them, the departed's love of the café was referred to in the obituary. It only goes to show that we never quite realise the difference we are making to people's lives.

There's a special kind of magic found at the Friendship Café, the magic of love and compassion. It's one of the 6,300-plus Warm Welcome Spaces that form a Chain of Hope stretching out right across the UK.



## Taking our Chain of Hope to Parliament

Our second Warm Welcome Week Campaign brought communities together, shining a colourful light on spaces at the coldest and darkest time of year. During the week, we took a physical paper Chain of Hope on a road trip to Parliament to celebrate community spaces and share the impact they have on people's lives right across the country. Our Parliamentary reception was generously hosted by Lord Bailey of Paddington and Paul Davies MP. What an amazing way to shine a light on the power of community in Warm Welcome Week.

This year, we have stepped up Warm Welcome's engagement with parliamentarians both in the UK Parliament, the Senedd and in Holyrood. This has taken the form of sharing briefings, holding 1:1 meetings, working with spaces to organise MP visits and hosting our first ever Warm Welcome event in Parliament!

As a result, **more than 20 politicians visited their local Warm Welcome Space**, strengthening relationships with space leads and offering guests the chance to speak directly to their local MP about issues affecting them. We have worked with Champion Spaces, offering a public affairs training session to suggest ways to engage with their local politicians. Space visit highlights have included Bridge Church in Wales welcoming the **Chair of the Senedd's Cross Party Group of Fuel Poverty, Mark Isherwood MS** to their space for a chat and a school choir performance; **Ellie Reeves MP** visiting **LinkAge Southwark** for their lunch time gathering, bringing her case worker along to make note of guests' feedback; and **Utilita's Warm Welcome Space in Leith** opening their doors to **Ben Macpherson MSP** to learn about their energy support offer.



## Taking our Chain of Hope to Parliament (continued)

Alongside this, the Warm Welcome team have held meetings with politicians seated in 'cold spots' on our map. This allowed us to explain more about what Warm Welcome is and encourage MPs to use their local knowledge to reach out to community groups in their area that could sign up as a Warm Welcome Space. We have also met with ministers to share our work and explore how our priorities align with Government priorities, looking at how we can work better together in the future.



“Lots of what you do can't be done by government. You help people move on, little by little. The human cost of your work and the benefit to your community is immeasurable. What starts as physical warmth grows into intellectual warmth and into emotional warmth.”

Lord Bailey of Paddington

## From an empty building to a space that welcomes the community

The Warm Welcome Space at Earl's Court in West London is based in a community centre on the West Kensington side of the Earl's Court development site.

The building that houses the space was previously left empty for many years by the previous site owners, and the Earl's Court Development Company, tasked with creating a new plan for the site, transformed it into an asset for the community. Key to the success of the space is the involvement of local people in the development journey, keeping them up-to-date with workshops for residents to hear their views on the future of the site, and a focus on better understanding the history and heritage and how local people think the site can be brought back to life.

The team running the space wants it to be the best community centre in London, driven by a spirit of excellence, and this approach has helped the Hub and its team develop strong connections throughout the local area.

A key part of the offer is a wellbeing hub, promoting physical, mental, and social health. Hub Manager Wasim says: **“I love watching friendships develop. People who didn't know each other become friends outside of our activities.”** And they come back again and again because of the culture of warmth and welcome in the space.

The Community Hub supports local residents and people from across Hammersmith and Fulham and Kensington and Chelsea, from a variety of different backgrounds and of different ages.



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# Looking forward with ambition

Across the UK, millions of people are still facing the daily reality of an extreme affordability crisis and the need for connection has never been greater. Yet, alongside this challenge, something powerful is growing. In communities everywhere, Warm Welcome Spaces are proving what's possible when people come together: offering not just warmth, but friendship, dignity, and a sense of belonging. Each conversation shared, each cup of tea poured, and each door held open is helping to rebuild community, making up the links in the "Chain of Hope" that is Warm Welcome.

## Hope in times of crisis

Warm Welcome began during the last energy crisis as a seasonal campaign supporting communities through the coldest time of the year. Today, it has grown into a year-round movement, with more than 6,300 spaces forming a nationwide network of connection reaching millions of people. But as we write this, in April 2026, we are facing the prospect of another global energy crisis. We do not yet know how these challenges will unfold, but we do know this: community spaces have never been under more pressure, both in terms of their own resilience and the increasing levels of need they are seeing every day.

We are getting closer to our vision of a Warm Welcome for All, where everyone knows there is a space nearby where they will be welcomed. But there is still more to do. Too many people remain beyond reach, and too many spaces are struggling with rising costs, growing demand, and limited resources to keep their doors open.



## Help us grow the Chain of Hope

**The next phase of our work is critical.** We must not only grow the network, but strengthen it to ensure every space has the funding, tools, and support it needs to thrive all year round. From keeping the lights on and the heating running, to supporting volunteers – the people who greet every guest with a smile and a simple, welcoming question: "how do you like your cuppa?" Small investments can make a profound difference.

Without support, spaces risk scaling back or closing at the very moment they are needed most.

We are committed to continuing to connect, resource, and champion this network ensuring funding opportunities, sharing learning, and amplifying the incredible work happening at grassroots level.

**But we cannot do this alone.**



## Now is the moment to step in

- Partner with us at a national level to create bespoke, high-impact collaborations that deliver real change in communities.
- Work with us to fund local spaces through our Spaces Support Fund providing rapid, flexible grants of up to £2,000 that keep doors open, sustain volunteers, and ensure communities have somewhere to turn. We can direct support to the places and people who need it most.

This is a pivotal moment. By investing in Warm Welcome's national work and in the spaces at the heart of communities, you can help protect and grow a movement that is tackling loneliness and poverty at their roots.

Together, we can ensure that no one is left out in the cold and that every community has a place where people can connect, belong, and find hope.

For more information regarding partnerships contact:  
[info@warmwelcome.uk](mailto:info@warmwelcome.uk)



# With thanks to our funders and partners



## About the Warm Welcome Campaign

Vision – Warm Welcome enables a more deeply connected society where we all have free access to welcoming community spaces

Purpose – Warm Welcome unlocks the power of community spaces made by and for everyone

### Strategic cornerstones

- Create local, regional and national communities of connection.
- Help spaces access the resources they need to thrive.
- Tell the story of Warm Welcome for positive change.
- Be a sustainable, inclusive and trusted organisation.



For more information and to support the Warm Welcome Campaign, contact: Ellie Palmer, Development Director [ellie.palmer@warmwelcome.uk](mailto:ellie.palmer@warmwelcome.uk)

## Campaign History

In 2022, as a response to the cost-of-living crisis, we set up the Warm Welcome Campaign. Its aim was simple: to provide places where people could go to be warm. In that first winter, it was clear that many Warm Welcome Spaces were having a positive impact in easing the cost-of-living crisis for people, but they were doing so much more. People came for the warmth, but they stayed for the welcome.

Since then, Warm Welcome has grown into a network of over 6,300 community spaces, and most are open all year long. That number is growing every day, bringing more and more communities together. From church halls in rural villages to libraries, mosques, community centres, sports centres and cafés in bustling cities, local spaces are opening their doors to offer warmth, friendship, and a place where everyone belongs. Warm Welcome Spaces form one of the largest community-led support networks in the country, and last year they welcomed around 3.5 million visitors.





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