

Warm Spaces Warm Welcome

How to host Warm Spaces, Warm Welcome sessions
or support Warm Spaces elsewhere



How to Host a Warm Space

The approaching cost of living crisis means that this Autumn many more people will experience fuel poverty. It is highly likely that vulnerable people may find themselves unable to heat their homes, access hot water or even boil a kettle. Councils across the country are looking to provide people with 'warm spaces' - places during the week where they can come for warmth and company. Churches are ideal places for people to come and find warmth, hot drinks, etc. as part of serving the community.

There are several ways in which this might happen:

1. Advertising existing services and events as opportunities for warmth. Coffee mornings, weekday services and church activities could all become places where people who need to gather in the warmth might be invited. If you offer coffee after a weekday service for example, it might be possible to have an extended 'coffee time' afterwards enabling people to remain and chat for a couple of hours in the warmth.

2. Churches might want to set up a specific time of the week when they consciously invite people who are struggling with the cold at home to come in to get warm for a while.

3. If opening up a building is not practical then you could consider making up boxes of warm clothing, gloves, hats blankets etc for families who are in need and distributing them around the Parish

4. It is possible that your local Council is looking to set up networks of warm spaces within the community. Look at the Council website, speak to your local councillors, talk to other local groups such as CAB, CVS

5. There may be other churches locally that you could work with to co-ordinate times or to draw on a wider pool of volunteers. Or maybe the local library will be open and people from the church can volunteer to help.

6. If your church is not in an area with a high level of need perhaps you might consider partnering with a church which has higher community needs and fewer resources available, to enable them to be able to afford to open and finance a 'warm space' in their premises.





What do we need to think about?

- You will need to be clear about what you are going to offer. Will it be simply a space for people to sit and read, have a cup of coffee, etc.? Will you want to offer Wi-Fi and office equipment for people to work? What about running activities for young children? Think about different zones: quiet spaces / social spaces / board games area, etc. Consider lighting, can you make it feel 'home like'? Signposting people towards other support?
- You will need to be sure that you have the capacity to sustain the service you want to offer. Do you have sufficient volunteers to staff the warm space and how long can you offer realistically each week? Many of the people who may most need access to warm spaces are likely to be vulnerable, elderly or disabled, so will the space you are able to provide be sufficiently accessible?
- You will need to complete a risk assessment and consider any additional safeguarding precautions that might be needed. If you have questions or concerns about safeguarding, please contact your church safeguarding officer who in turn can liaise with our Diocesan safeguarding team.
- Is this something we want to do ourselves, or would we be more effective working in partnership with others? Who else in the community might be offering a similar service, are there other churches we could work with? Or if we can't do it ourselves, who might we support elsewhere?

Questions to Consider

- Physical accessibility – are there any changes to the building needed? Signage, ramps, seating, toilets?
- Can we afford the extra costs of heating the building for longer?
- Inclusivity of the spaces for all, e.g., language – do we need signs in different languages?
- Are there any extra safeguarding requirements?
- How will we ensure a Covid Safe space as the winter may bring increased infection rates?
- How will we recruit volunteers, how many do we need? Is there a limit on the numbers who can attend depending on how many volunteers are available?
- How will you promote your warm spaces within the community?
- What about the language you use (welcoming spaces, warm hubs etc) and how will it be received?
- Is this outside the normal work of the church, will it require extra insurance? (Advice from Ecclesiastical Insurance: as long as these daytime events are run and managed by the PCC then this type of event is covered by the policy as standard.)
- What existing events or activities could also become Warm Spaces? (e.g., Places of Welcome – liaise with Transforming Notts Together)



Resources

[Transforming Notts Together](#)

[Jubilee Plus - Warm Banks](#)

[Mental Health UK](#)

[Citizens Advice](#)

[Warm Welcome](#)

[Warm Spaces](#)

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