

# Setting up a Warm Welcome Space



The following guide offers a simple step-by-step journey you can follow – or consider – as you set up a new Warm Welcome Space. Before you start, have a look at the Warm Welcome Charter, which sets out the basis of what every Warm Welcome Space should be.

## 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 by.

### Did you know?

The most successful and sustainable Warm Welcome Spaces are designed to nurture a sense of community ownership over the space. These projects slowly mature into spaces that are cared for and developed by multiple people in the community, avoiding total reliance on paid staff only. By considering people first in your space design and thinking about what community ownership may look like in your space, you can ensure that your project has the right ingredients to offer a welcoming, safe and inclusive environment that has a long-term impact.

### Guests

- Define potential Warm Welcome guest profiles in your community. Based on your experience, who would appreciate accessing a warm and welcoming space offered by your organisation this winter?
- Consider your highest potential contribution; who are the people in your local community who have the highest need for a warm and welcoming space this winter and whose need is least met elsewhere –by other spaces, initiatives or organisations– in your local context?

### 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, word-of-mouth marketing, welcoming and integrating new members, listening and befriending, communications and social media, group game facilitation and entertainment, cooking, logistics, safeguarding, research and learning. How can you involve the right number and mix of volunteers to ensure your Space stays fresh, sustainable, trainable, flexible and inclusive?
- What can you do to make sure the volunteering experience is fulfilling for those doing it? How can you invest in the growth and development of your volunteering team?

Read 'How to care for Warm Welcome Volunteers' by the Relationships Project:  
<https://www.warmwelcome.uk/blog/how-to-care-for-warm-welcome-volunteers>

Read 'The Value of Volunteers at Wooler Warm Hub' by space leader Fliss Baker:  
<https://www.warmwelcome.uk/blog/the-value-of-volunteers-at-wooler-warm-hub>

### 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, the campaign runs training webinars that will be announced via the newsletter. Past webinars (available in the [resources section](#) on your dashboard) covered topics such as mental health, trauma-informed spaces, how to make your space welcoming, and fundraising.

### Partners

Identify potential partners who may share mutual interest with you in creating a Warm Welcome Space. This can be a local bakery that may want to donate pastries for the space, a congregation member who may want to donate to support your costs, a local community organiser who is great at making sure the space leads to real change in the community or an organisation/charity that you can signpost to or invite experts from for talks/games/activities. The possibilities are endless, as long as you identify potential in your local context.

### Your Local Warm Welcome Network

- Use our map (on [warmwelcome.uk](https://www.warmwelcome.uk)) 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 where other warm spaces are near you 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 can consider having your opening days/hours be different than theirs. You can also address geographical gaps in provision by choosing a location for your space where no one else is offering a Warm Welcome.

Once you have a list of potential guests, volunteers, leaders and partners, we would encourage you to have a brief conversation with some of them to gauge interest and scope out your options, possibilities and limitations as far as human resources are concerned.

## Step 2: Facts

Now that you have a better idea about who your space may be for and by, 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 actually possible.

### Organisational resources & limitations

- Identify tangible resources within your organisation that you can use for your Warm Welcome Space; e.g. furniture in your space, signposting resources, games or toys, coffee/tea, a community kitchen, accessible entrances, wifi, funding sources...etc.
- Define key organisational limitations and restrictions you must keep in mind, such as the cost/budget, number of employees you can allocate to this project, maximum guest capacity, or any other elements or scenarios that will limit you.

### Context-specific challenges

- Identify challenges in your local context that may inhibit the success of your Warm Welcome Space, such as weak public transportation links that make 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

Armed with a potential idea and technical limitations, you may now be ready to arrive at a design for your Warm Welcome Space this winter.

Imagination is helpful at this stage so do not be afraid to envision original ideas that best suit your context and resources. Think about how your Warm Welcome Space can contribute a new example for your national Warm Welcome peers and society at large. Consider what makes your Warm Welcome Space unique, and make sure to put that in writing - for you and your team to refer back to, even if it's just a couple of sentences!

### The Basics

By the end of this stage, you should have a brief document that outlines the following:

- When will your Warm Welcome Space be open (days and times)?
- 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?
- Define the type of culture you want your space to have.
- How will people find out about your space? (e.g. local newspapers and magazines, notice boards, word-of-mouth, partner networks)

**Did you know?**

The Warm Welcome Campaign will share information about funding opportunities for warm spaces via our newsletter and [website](#)

Read 'Serving Refugees' by Paul Blakey whose organisation was a Warm Welcome micro-grant recipient in 2022:

<https://www.warmwelcome.uk/blog/local-story-in-focus-serving-refugees>

## Communications

Giving guests a platform to own and voice their narratives of transformation is a powerful tool to uplift and give agency to communities. How will you document and share meaningful stories that unfold in your space? (e.g. on social media)

### Did you know?

The Warm Welcome Campaign is keen to connect with spaces who have stories of impact and transformation. The team may be able to write a blog post about your space, include you in a Warm Welcome video, or even connect you with well-matched and thoughtful press and media opportunities. To reach out to us about a story in your space, please email us at [press@warmwelcome.uk](mailto:press@warmwelcome.uk).

Read 'More than 500,000 people in UK visited 'warm rooms' during the winter' in The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/apr/26/warm-rooms-winter-loneliness>

## Monitoring and Evaluation

What is your monitoring and evaluation strategy? How will you evaluate the impact of your Warm Welcome Space on guests and the community at large by the end of the winter? How will you make sure you are listening to your community in order to improve your space? (e.g. you can run listening focus group at the beginning and end of the winter to give your community space to share information with you)

### Did you know?

While the campaign is running, we will share surveys with you via our newsletter to collect information that helps us provide the right resources based on your actual needs. It may be a good idea to assign one person the task of counting the number of guests that attend each session and input that each week into the pulse poll on your [Warm Welcome dashboard](#). This helps you track demand on your space while also assisting the campaign's development.

## Step 4: Preparing for Launch

Now that you have your theoretical space design document ready, it's time to start preparing for execution.

### Register your Warm Welcome Space

- Make sure your space is registered on the Warm Welcome website. You will gain access to our network, 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!
- Make sure that your Warm Welcome Space Leader has access to the account on our website and is subscribed to our newsletter, as practical updates will be shared.

## Logistics

- Make sure you have a safeguarding strategy in place.
- Make sure your volunteers receive any necessary training before your space opens.

## Spread the word

- Begin executing your marketing strategy. Create and print posters and banners for your Warm Welcome Space using templates we've made available for you on our [website](#) 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.

## Step 5: Action

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

## Go Live

By the end of October our online map will be live. Make sure your space is on it so that people near you can search for and find it. If it's not, login to your dashboard and follow the steps to make it live.

## Plan Ahead

During the campaign, you can keep an eye out for where you want your Warm Welcome Space to land by the end of winter – both in terms of organisational capacity and in terms of the space's story. The Warm Welcome campaign believes that spaces have the potential to create real social change in their communities. We encourage you to continue exploring the power and potential of community in your space and to keep us in the loop by tagging us and using the hashtag

**#WarmWelcomeSpace.**

