



## Warm Spaces

Warm spaces need to be safe spaces.

If your church is opening up as a 'Warm Space' over the winter months, then you'll want to make sure that those who volunteer and host the space are safe, as well as those who come along as guests.

We recommend that you ensure all volunteers are familiar with your church safeguarding policy, that you have used your safer recruitment policy and provided volunteers with a checklist of what is expected of them.

As you'll know, warm spaces should be inclusive, non-judgmental spaces where everyone can expect a warm welcome and possibly basic refreshments. We would encourage you to complete a risk assessment specifically for this outreach to demonstrate that you have considered potential hazards, risks or health and safety requirements as you host potentially unknown adults, adults at risk and parents with children in your warm space.

Churches may wish to make basic signposting information available to people who need further support and help, such as housing

### Health & Safety Considerations (depending on your church and your warm space)

- 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 of your policy.
- Ensure there are a minimum of two workers/volunteers to provide a welcome.
- Give your volunteers a checklist of what to expect and what is expected of them.

### Suggested Role of Volunteers at Warm Spaces

A volunteer in a Warm Space is likely to be asked to:

- Open and close the building;
- Ensure building and areas used are left clean and tidy;
- Ensure agreed drinks / snacks are available;
- Ensure agreed activities are available (eg TV, radio, books, games, colouring);
- Welcome any visitors and make sure they know where things are / offer refreshments;
- Point out any expectations in terms of behaviour;



- Provide a listening ear;
- Ensure that the identities of visitors are kept confidential and not shared outside of the warm space;
- Signpost to services if needed (Social Care, Foodbank, local A&E, local Citizens Advice);
- Ensure any accidents or incidents are recorded correctly;
- Report any concerns of a safeguarding nature to the church DPS as soon as possible after the session. The DPS will follow church policy and procedures in responding.

#### The role of the volunteer would normally not include:

- Giving financial help to people present;
- Providing childcare to people who attend;
- Providing food or drink beyond what has been agreed.
- Providing counselling or advice to people present beyond pastoral and prayer support at the time.

#### Expectations of behaviour

- Everyone attending would be expected to be welcoming to other people who attend
- Everyone to be asked to be polite and friendly to other people
- Everyone to be asked to respect the space and show each other kindness
- Everyone attending to be asked to keep the space reasonably tidy
- The volunteers from the church may ask someone to leave if they are not keeping to the expectations of behaviour. Let the team know who they should report safeguarding concerns to and provide an email and contact number if possible.

#### Simple processes to keep everyone safe

- Use a sign in sheet so you know who is in the building , just in case there is an emergency and you need to evacuate. A sign in sheet just needs a list of first names, and it can be destroyed at the end of the session.
- Children need to be with a parent / carer adult to enter the building. Consider what actions you will take if a child attends unsupervised.
- If a parent / carer attends with a child, then the volunteer needs to ensure the parent / carer understand they are responsible for their child(children) at all times.
- If meals are being served, volunteers will need to comply with food hygiene regulations.
- If someone refuses to leave at the end of the session, discuss with them what other options are available for them and signpost to support organisations if agreed. If the person continues to refuse to leave, advise that the police are called.

We hope that your 'Warm Space' offers warmth, shelter and a friendly place to be for all who attend in the months ahead.

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