



Welcome Spaces

Did you know that last winter Durham County Council and County Durham Community Foundation funded over 100 Warm Spaces across County Durham?

Community groups can once again apply for funding to go towards their welcoming and warm space for their local community.

Welcome Spaces are places where people can go to keep warm and well and get signposted to various support, help or confidential advice. You can find welcome spaces in venues such as community centres, village halls and churches. All those who receive funding from County Durham Community Foundation will sign up to the Welcome Spaces Charter. Through the charter, the welcome space is committing to working to the following standards: treat everyone equally, that the space will be free to use, safe, confidential and that someone will be on hand to help guests if needed.

All Welcome Spaces offer a warm cup of tea or coffee, free of charge and many offer snacks or even a hot meal. It's a great opportunity for people to enjoy food and drink whilst chatting to other people. Community groups who run a Welcome Space do an amazing job at making other facilities available too. There may be options to charge a mobile phone, use the internet, read the paper or even do some laundry. In some spaces there are optional activities to get involved with, but there is always the option to have some quiet to sit and 'just be'.

Ferryhill Ladder Centre is just one of the community spaces who has received funding from the Welcome Spaces Fund. Kath Merrington, development worker at the centre said:

"The Welcome Spaces funding has encouraged new people to come to the centre without any stigma attached. You could be coming in for absolutely anything, whether it be to get some advice, to socialise or keep warm.

The funding has also helped with social isolation too. People who visit the centre are making new friends as well as keeping warm and having refreshments.

It has made a big impact in our community. It's a win-win really to apply for funding for your centre and local community!"

The fund was initially called Warm Spaces last winter. The name was changed to Welcome Spaces to reflect the full impact of these community spaces. Keeping warm is just one aspect of the fund, the community spaces are also great places to connect with others, find out about local support and create a great sense of community spirit.

More information on applying for funding can be found on [CDCF's website](#). Groups can apply for up to £3000 and funding must be used by the end of April 2024.