



A warm welcome  
across Perth and  
Kinross



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# WARM WELCOME FUND ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

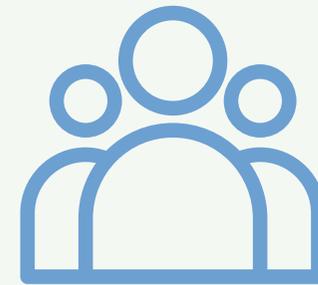
# At a Glance



£200,000 allocated to the provision of warm spaces



105 groups providing a warm space with refreshments, activities and access to support services



835 volunteers involved in the delivery of warm spaces



6,156 people attending warm spaces in Perth & Kinross



67% increase in volunteers since 2023/24

# Comparison to 2023/24

The model of allocating funding was broadly the same as the previous year where local groups came together and negotiated their offer within the 12 ward areas of Perth & Kinross.

There were 2 key differences to the funding process as follows:

- 1.Funding was only for the provision of warm spaces and not warm home packs as in previous years.
- 2.Groups and organisations were asked to include methods of incorporating wider support for attendees of warm spaces.

	2023/24	2024/25	% Difference
Overall Attendances	33,743	45,336	↑ 34%
'Unique' Attendees	4511	6156	↑ 36%
Number of Volunteers involved	500	835	↑ 67%

# Wider Support Services

This year, organisations were asked to incorporate wider support services into their warm spaces through a variety of methods, aiming to provide holistic support beyond just a warm environment and refreshments.



## **Inviting representatives from support organisations to give talks and advice**

This allowed attendees to directly engage with service providers, ask questions, and receive tailored information. Examples include talks on benefits, energy efficiency, fire safety, and health-related topics.



## **Having support service representatives present at the warm space sessions**

This offered a convenient way for attendees to access help on a drop-in basis or easier to book appts. Organisations like Citizens Advice Bureau, Christians Against Poverty, Heat Project, Welfare Rights, and mental health services were often present.



## **Providing information through leaflets, posters, and handouts**

This ensured that information about various services was readily available for attendees to take away and review at their own pace. QR codes linking to council web pages were also used.



## **Signposting individuals to relevant organisations**

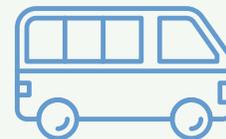
Staff and volunteers were able to identify needs and direct attendees to appropriate external support. This included providing contact details and even making referrals. Accompanying vulnerable individuals to appointments at places like the Citizens Advice Bureau was also undertaken.

# Wider Support Services



## Utilising volunteers with specific expertise

Volunteers from organisations focused on homelessness, recovery, and benefit issues were present to offer guidance. Dementia-friendly and bereavement-trained volunteers also contributed.



## Collaborating with community transport services

This helped attendees with mobility issues access the warm spaces, thereby also enabling them to connect with the support services offered there.



## Using feedback to identify and address needs

By listening to attendees, organisations could better tailor the support services they integrated into their warm spaces.



## Distributing essential items in partnership with other organisations

Collaborations with food banks, clothing donation services, and Scottish Fire & Rescue Service allowed warm spaces to provide practical support alongside information and advice.

The most mentioned support services across the evaluations were Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Christians Against Poverty (CAP), Heat Project/Home Energy Advice, Welfare Rights Team/Advisors, Food Banks/Pantry's, and Mental Health Services. These highlight the key areas of need that warm space initiatives sought to address for their attendees.

# Case Studies

These examples underscore how warm spaces provided not just physical warmth, but also vital social connections, practical assistance, and a sense of community that significantly improved the lives of vulnerable individuals.

*One individual who initially only visited a church sanctuary alone gradually integrated into the warm space, eventually taking soup away and potentially being persuaded to stay longer, demonstrating a slow but meaningful journey out of isolation.*

*A young woman with learning difficulties and poor mental health was facing potential homelessness and found crucial warmth, care, and a sense of being valued at the warm space, which supported her emotional and physical wellbeing during a very challenging time.*

*A participant was struggling with post-partum depression and received comfort and practical support in contacting mental health services and their child's nursery, leading to a noticeable improvement in her and her family's lives.*

*The case of A and B, who faced illness, loss of confidence, and physical limitations, demonstrated the transformative power of social connection and engagement at the 50+ club, leading to increased happiness, new friendships, and a renewed ability to cope with life's challenges.*

*The comprehensive support offered to D illustrates the impact of warm spaces. Facing challenges with social interaction, anxiety, housing, finances, and health, D received tailored assistance including help with a house move, energy bills, access to nutritious food, and technical support, ultimately leading to increased social engagement and a role as an advocate for others.*

# Impact

Based on the information provided in the evaluations, the warm spaces initiative had a wide-ranging and significant positive impact on individuals and communities. These impacts can be grouped into several key themes:

## **1. Combating Loneliness and Social Isolation:**

- A primary impact was the reduction of loneliness and social isolation, particularly during the colder winter months. Many attendees, especially the elderly, those living alone, and those with limited mobility, stated that the warm spaces provided a crucial opportunity to get out of the house and socialise. For some, it was their only outing of the week.
- The warm spaces facilitated the formation of new friendships and social networks. Attendees connected with neighbours, both old and new, and built relationships with peers.
- The inclusive atmosphere of the warm spaces ensured that people felt part of the community, reducing feelings of being alone. This was particularly noted by recently widowed individuals and new residents.

## **2. Providing Warm, Safe, and Comfortable Environments:**

- The funding enabled organisations to open and heat spaces that would otherwise have been inaccessible due to rising energy costs. This provided a safe and warm refuge during the coldest period.
- The provision of comfortable facilities, including log fires, comfortable chairs, and welcoming décor, enhanced the experience for attendees.
- For some attendees, the warm spaces offered a place to go where they didn't have to worry about the cost of heating their own homes, leading to potential fuel savings.

# Impact

## **3. Alleviating Financial Pressures and Food Insecurity:**

- Many warm spaces provided free refreshments, including tea, coffee, biscuits, cakes, and sometimes more substantial meals like soup, sandwiches, and even full lunches. This was greatly appreciated by attendees, especially those on restricted incomes.
- The provision of food, such as bacon rolls, hot chocolate, and home-cooked meals, went beyond basic refreshments and provided nourishment for attendees. Some attendees relied on the warm space for a regular hot meal.
- Some initiatives also allowed attendees to take home leftover food and soup, further helping with food costs. The collaboration with food banks and larders also increased access to food support.

## **4. Enhancing Mental and Physical Wellbeing:**

- The social interaction and sense of community fostered by the warm spaces had a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing. Attendees reported improved mood, reduced anxiety and stress, and a feeling of being valued.
- Participation in activities such as games, quizzes, crafts, film screenings, and drama clubs provided mental stimulation and enjoyment.
- Some warm spaces facilitated physical activity through seated exercise and social aerobics.
- The provision of a relaxed and dementia-friendly environment catered to the needs of specific vulnerable groups.

## **5. Fostering Intergenerational Engagement:**

- Several warm spaces encouraged interaction between different age groups, from toddlers to the elderly. Activities like playing with children, intergenerational crafting, and performances by young people for older attendees created positive experiences for all involved.

# Impact

## **6. Providing Access to Support, Information, and Signposting:**

- Warm spaces facilitated access to advice and support services. For instance, the Dementia Café had professionals present to offer guidance. One warm space identified individuals in financial difficulty and connected them with the Anti-poverty Support Group.
- Information sharing occurred organically through conversations, with topics such as scam awareness being discussed.
- Libraries, as warm spaces, encouraged more conversations about library resources and services.

## **7. Supporting Specific Vulnerable Groups:**

- The initiatives specifically targeted and benefited various vulnerable groups, including older people, families with young children, individuals with mental health and addiction issues, people living with dementia, those with disabilities, new mums, bereaved individuals, and ethnic minority communities. Tailored support, such as driving theory test practice and advocacy sessions for ethnic minorities, demonstrated a targeted approach.

## **8. Positive Impacts on Local Organisations and the Wider Community:**

- The funding enabled local organisations to continue their activities and extend their reach.
- Collaborations between organisations, such as Strathearn Arts and the youth club LOGOS, helped to extend resources and provide tailored services.
- The initiative sometimes led to increased volunteering within the community.
- Local businesses, such as taxi services and cafés, also indirectly benefited from the increased activity. The branding of events as a PKC "Warm Welcome" helped to overcome potential barriers to access.

# Applicant Feedback

Based on the evaluations, an overwhelming majority of respondents found the process of accessing the Warm Welcome Fund to be straightforward, easy, and user-friendly. Many specifically used these terms to describe the application process. The application form was also noted as being easy to complete.

Several respondents highlighted the initial meetings or workshops as invaluable and helpful. These meetings provided an opportunity to:

- Meet other projects and understand the criteria better.
- Hear about other groups' project aspirations and rationales, promoting transparency.
- Facilitate networking and awareness raising between local organisations.
- Engage in discussion to ensure there wasn't duplication of efforts in the community.
- Gain insight into the efforts and ideas of other voluntary groups.
- Hear from other groups seeking funding in an informal and friendly approach.
- Understand what different groups were offering in their local communities, opening eyes to good practice.
- Understand what could be done with the funding.

Communication with the Perth & Kinross Council CLD team was consistently praised as good, helpful, and first class. Regular contact and updates were appreciated. The team's positive attitude was also noted.

The speed of funding arrival was also mentioned positively by some, enabling them to progress quickly with their warm space arrangements.

# Applicant Feedback

However, there were a few points of feedback for potential improvement:

- One respondent felt that the meeting where everyone had to pitch their ideas was confronting and that groups had to change budgets on the spot.
- Another respondent suggested that the funding allocation process could start earlier in future years to allow for better planning, booking events, and marketing, especially before the worst of the winter weather. The timing between receiving the money and the expected start date was considered tight by one respondent, causing a slight delay.
- One respondent thought that the amount of funding awarded to each project should be capped, as one particular project was perceived to have taken a large portion of the ward's funding without benefiting a proportionally large number of people.

Overall, the feedback indicates a high level of satisfaction with the accessibility and administration of the Warm Welcome Fund, with a few constructive suggestions for future improvements, particularly regarding the allocation meeting and the timing of the funding process.

Volunteers contributions were also recognised and celebrated through local events, with each organisation being presented with a certificate of recognition.