



Warm Hubs

Summary Evaluation Report for Warm Hubs in Winter in East and South Cambridgeshire



Warm Hubs in Winter were delivered by:



Warm Hubs in Winter were funded by:



This summary report aims to share the key learning points from the evaluation of the Warm Hubs in Winter initiative. The full evaluation report is available on Cambridgeshire ACRE's website at: https://www.cambsacre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Warm_Hubs_Evaluation_Report.pdf



Why were Warm Hubs needed?

Warm Hubs were rapidly established in September 2022 in response to cost-of-living pressures where there were concerns that residents would be unable to heat their homes and would be struggling over the winter months to afford other essentials such as food.

"It is nice and warm here, good to warm up. It's so cold in the morning in my flat. The heating doesn't work in my bedroom. I've reported it to the Housing Association but they haven't done anything."

Attendee at Soham Warm Hub

What are Warm Hubs?

Operating at the heart of local communities, and led by volunteers, **Warm Hubs have offered warm, friendly and inclusive places for people to stay warm and meet others.**

All have offered free refreshments, somewhere to socialise, participate in activities, access Wi-Fi and receive information on how to stay 'warm and well'.



"I come here for the company...I like that it's friendly and relaxed, everyone just chats, there's no pressure". Anonymous attendee



How have Warm Hubs been funded and supported?

Commissioned by East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire District Councils and **funded by NHS Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, part of our local Integrated Care System.**

Each Warm Hub was provided with set-up and ongoing support from rural development charity, Cambridgeshire ACRE.

"Helping people to stay well this winter is a priority for us all this year, which is why we are pleased to support Warm Hubs across East and South Cambridgeshire and beyond." Kit Connick, Chief Officer Strategy and Partnerships, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System



How many Warm Hubs were there?

38 Warm Hubs operated across East and South Cambridgeshire between October 2022 and March 2023.

In East Cambridgeshire there were 13 Warm Hubs and in South Cambridgeshire there were 25. There was a good geographical spread of Hubs between rural villages and more market towns.



*“Attendees are not necessarily in need of a warm hub, they are in need of a social hub which provides security and a safe and welcoming place to be.”*Volunteer, Willingham Warm Hub



How many hours have Hubs operated for?

Warm Hubs opened for a total of 5,150 hours between October and March.

Just 61% of these hours (3,156) were funded through the project. The remaining hours were additional provision funded by communities themselves to extend their offer.

*“Certainly, the Warm Hub has highlighted issues within our village and we can point them [attendees] in the right direction to get help... As well as being a warm place to meet, we provide a listening ear and help people to form friendships.”*Haddenham & Wilburton Warm Hub volunteer

What funding was provided to Hubs?

£66,580 has been paid to the community buildings hosting Warm Hubs to cover their operating costs.

As Warm Hubs have mostly been hosted in charitably-run community buildings, it was vital that funding was provided to help cover the additional costs incurred.



*“I think some of the families have found the free hot food – particularly being able to feed their children before going home – really valuable.”*Comberton Warm Hub volunteer





How many people have attended?

16,552 visits have been recorded at Warm Hubs this winter.

It is estimated that 10,924 of those attending Warm Hubs have been regular visitors.

"A few [attendees] who have bravely stepped over the threshold and admitted to their loneliness have been so taken by the warmth of welcome they have joined our team of volunteers and become a great asset." Anonymous volunteer

What difference have Hubs made?

When asked, **100% of regular attendees at Warm Hubs said that being there was helping them get through winter.**

Warm Hubs have been supporting attendees with multiple and complex needs including homelessness, dementia, alcohol issues, depression and bereavement. Many attendees have been struggling with cost of living pressures.



"I bring my husband. He has dementia. I've seen a real change in him since we started coming here. He didn't want to go anywhere before this...Now he asks if we're going out most days which he just wasn't interested in before." Attendee at Fordham Warm Hub



How many people have volunteered?

156 volunteers recruited and trained to safely run a Warm Hub. 35% of volunteers reported that the Warm Hub is their only volunteering activity, meaning new volunteers have been recruited.

28 volunteers achieved an accredited training qualification to assist in running their hub (food hygiene, first aid, safeguarding).

"We have a great group of volunteers who support each other. The visitors are very chatty and inclusive of other visitors making the whole experience of volunteering a joy." Anonymous volunteer



What's that volunteering time worth?

If volunteers had been paid for all the time they have spent volunteering at the median pay rate for their District, it would have cost **nearly £368,000**.

88% reported that volunteering at a Warm Hub had been a **positive experience**.



"This is a wonderful, shared experience...an amazing community collaboration. We have tapped into a reservoir of goodwill, compassion and generosity. A few service users have been so taken by the warmth of welcome they have joined our team of volunteers". Anonymous volunteer



What's the social return on investment?

Warm Hubs have increased local volunteering opportunities, reduced winter pressures and helped attendees to obtain energy advice, reduced social isolation, helped people to access other services, and led to better partnership working and collaboration. An analysis of this social return on investment shows **for every £1.00 invested** in Warm Hubs across East and South Cambridgeshire, **£4.50 of social value was generated**.

"We are so busy with our Warm Hub and I feel more people would attend if it was available more days. It has proved to be an essential requirement for our village. But future funding is a must." Anonymous volunteer

What comes next?

Cambridgeshire ACRE will continue to support the volunteers running Warm Hubs, enabling them to evolve their Warm Hubs into year-round Community Hubs; friendly, safe, community-led spaces at the heart of the community where community members support each other leading to better health and wellbeing for all.



"Warm Hubs might evolve into something longer-term that meets the needs of the community and that allows people to support others in their community at a hyper-local level within an integrated health and social care system." Cambridgeshire ACRE

