

Cheshire West and Chester Welcoming Spaces Grant Fund 2023-24

Cheshire West and Chester Council are committed to providing support for community buildings, community groups and schools to enable them to open their doors to members of the community as Welcoming Spaces to enable local residents to access help with cost of living challenges and find out about other services and support in a warm, welcoming environment.

Cheshire Community Action is administering the funding on behalf of the Council in the form of **grants up to £2,500**. We would expect one grant per organisation applying but will consider more than one application where multiple spaces are being provided. The funding is to support your organisation in meeting additional running costs involved in setting up a Welcoming Space during the winter period and beyond. Grants can contribute to your organisation's financial sustainability and can therefore be used to fund activities beyond March 2024, and grant recipients will be required to provide monitoring information to assist with evaluation of the programme.

The purpose of the Fund is to support local people to:

- Save money on their energy bills;
- Access advice and information, and share ideas with each other to help with cost of living and other support needs;
- Improve community spirit and wellbeing through increased social interaction, connectivity and sense of belonging;
- Facilitate access to specialist support providers that can further assist those that may need additional support over the winter and beyond.

Who is Eligible to apply?

- Voluntary and community organisation
- Constituted group or club
- Registered charity
- Charitable incorporated organisation (CIO)
- Not-for-profit company
- Community interest company (CIC)
- Parish or Town Council
- School

There are other eligibility conditions that need to be met, which are included on the application form.

We will not fund:

- Individuals
- Retrospective costs (previous expenditure)

Scope of the Fund

The purpose of the Fund is to help your organisation meet the increased running costs involved in setting up a Welcoming Space offer or adding to an existing one. For example, if you are already hosting activities such as lunch clubs, children's clubs, coffee mornings and bingo nights etc. you can use this funding to include additional provision for those groups e.g. additional free hot meals and drinks. Or you can use this funding to set up a new dedicated Welcoming Space offer on a regular basis through the winter and beyond.

These running costs can include (but not limited to):

- Food and refreshments (groceries, tea/coffee etc.);
- Additional use of utilities (gas, electric, water);
- Venue hiring charges;
- Furniture (e.g. new tables, chairs, cooking and water heating equipment, blankets);
- Additional staff costs (e.g. to extend hours to manage Welcoming Space provision);
- Volunteer expenses (e.g. travel and subsistence);
- Marketing (e.g. printing leaflets and posters)

Cheshire West Warm, Welcoming Spaces Charter

All Welcoming Space providers are asked to sign up to the Cheshire West Welcoming Spaces Charter:

1. A **warm welcome** being provided, as well as a warm place
2. Everyone who attends will be **treated equally, with dignity and respect**
3. Providing a **safe place** with any relevant safeguarding, health and safety, and food hygiene policies and regulations adhered to
4. **Confidentiality and discretion** – not telling anyone the reason why some needs a Warm, Welcoming Space, unless an individual gives permission and / or it raises a safeguarding issue
5. **Being non-judgemental** – whatever the reason for attending a Warm, Welcoming Space, people will be treated the same and never judged

Application Process

The application process will be administered by Cheshire Community Action (CCA).

Applications must be sent via email to: enquiries@cheshireaction.org.uk

CCA will carry out initial due diligence checks on applications and may request additional information or clarification before submitting your form to the grants panel, which will make the final funding decision using a scoring system based on the eligibility criteria. You will be informed of the panel's decision at the earliest convenience but no later than 2 weeks from the date when your application is submitted.

All funding offers will be subject to a signed agreement that will include a commitment by the recipient organisations to report on outputs and outcomes of the agreed funding purposes.

There are two panel dates corresponding to the application deadlines. Forms submitted after the first round will be rolled into the second round panel decision. **Any applications submitted after the second and final round deadline will not be considered for funding.**

Data on the usage of the warm spaces will be required for monitoring returns to the Council, and feedback will be requested to inform the evaluation. Details of this will be provided in grant offer letters.

Key Dates:

11th December 2023 - Launch Grant Scheme

26th January 2024 – 1st round application deadline

1st March 2024 – 2nd and final application deadline

If you need any help with your application, please contact Cheshire Community Action on 01244 400222 or email enquiries@cheshireaction.org.uk

Management of Successful Awards

Once awards have been determined by the grants panel (overseen by CCA) standard grant agreements will be entered into with successful applicants, the subsequent monitoring of those agreements, and the issuing of payments, will be managed on behalf of the Council by Cheshire Community Action.

There will be a simple and easy to complete online questionnaire to collect monitoring and evaluation data in relation to the users of your Welcoming Space up to end of March 2024.