**Warm Hub Safeguarding Guidance**

**Introduction**

The increasing costs of energy will affect many people over the winter period who may not be able to afford to heat their homes and stay warm. There are numerous initiatives aimed at helping those most in need during this difficult time. Parishes and community groups may wish to support those suffering most from the cost of living crisis in their community by opening up spaces and providing warm places for people to spend time. It is essential that Warm Hubs are safe places and protect those attending and the staff and volunteers who are supporting. It is likely that those going along to Warm Hubs will have low, fixed or no income and some may be vulnerable by virtue of their circumstance or have vulnerabilities due to disability, physical or mental ill health. The below is intended as general guidance and not a complete list of actions to be undertaken. Every location will have its own unique set of circumstances to be considered. Any safeguarding concerns must be referred to your safeguarding representative, or if there is immediate concern, contact the police or local adult/child social care.

**Guidance for staff and volunteers:**

Prior to operating Warm Hubs a full risk assessment should be carried out using the Risk Assessment section on page 5 of the “*Creating a Safer Environment*” practice guidance available on the CSSA website or by clicking the link here: [Practice-Guidance-Creating-a-Safer-Environment (1).docx](file:///C:\Users\jane.callagher\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\4PE1SULM\Practice-Guidance-Creating-a-Safer-Environment%20(1).docx). When considering safeguarding, ask yourself whether vulnerable adults and children will be kept safe from anyone with the potential to harm them. It is recommended that:

* You never have staff or volunteers working alone. At least two staff or volunteers should be present at any one time.
* All staff and volunteers supporting must have been recruited safely.
* At least one of the supporters should have a current and valid DBS certificate covering both child and adult work force.
* All staff and volunteers should have completed relevant training or been briefed in the role.
* One person should be nominated as supervisor each time the Warm Hub is operating.
* Staff and volunteers are aware of the need to safeguard and protect Warm Hub attendees and themselves and know how to report concerns.
* A working telephone must be accessible to staff and volunteers in case of an emergency.
* Be mindful of those visiting toilet facilities or spending time with others in quieter areas or rooms.
* Keep a record of those volunteers and staff present at each session.
* Make a list of people attending if they are happy to give their name. Be mindful of Data Protection.
* Briefing and debrief of staff should take place and any learning used to improve future sessions.
* Plan where, and to whom, any incidents will be reported.
* Consult third party insurance and fire safety regulations to ensure you covered in the event of an incident and verify that you will be within capacity. *Is your fire evacuation plan and periodic risk assessment up to date?*
* Consider volunteer levels / rotas and their experience.
* Management of toilet facilities (this will depend on number of attendees and facilities available but a more frequent checking/cleaning routine may need to be considered).

*Are you providing solely a warm space or are you planning on supplying activities where people will interact?* If so, this may mean volunteers are occupied in other areas and out of view of those attending the hubs. Consider this in your planning and risk assessments.

It is suggested that the anticipated opening and closing times of Warm Hubs is advertised as far as possible in advance and that safe opening and closing procedures are adopted.

It is important that everyone is treated with dignity and respect and a zero-tolerance approach to dealing with verbal and/or physical abuse should be considered with any expectations clearly displayed. Advising of unacceptable behaviour will help set boundaries.

Remember to keep a record of incidents which should be recorded on a CASE 6 form available to download from the CSSA website and retained in line with the CSSA retention schedule. Completion of this form will enable details of information shared, actions taken and any services people have been signposted to, to be recorded.

**Safeguarding – what to look out for**

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to report or intervene in safeguarding matters when they are identified. With the introduction of Warm Hubs it is likely there will be increased exposure to vulnerable groups of people. *So how do we spot the signs of Safeguarding concerns and what action do we need to take?* Below are some signs to look out for and consider. It is not an exhaustive list:

* Does a person present as having problematic mental health?
* Are they able to care for themselves effectively?
* Are they dressed appropriately?
* Are you concerned for their health?
* Are you concerned for a child’s safety?
* Has someone disclosed and/or are showing signs of Domestic Abuse?
* Does someone appear to be in crisis or distress?
* How are people interacting together in Warm Hubs?
* Is there any inappropriate sexual interaction?
* Are there any cultural concerns i.e. FGM or modern-day slavery?
* Is someone extremely withdrawn?
* Do you feel they are accessing inappropriate material on their mobile telephones or other devices?
* Are young people accompanied?

If you have a concern you should seek advice from the Safeguarding Coordinator or Religious Safeguarding Lead immediately. Do not wait, it is better to tell someone rather than hold the risk yourself. However, if the concern is too great or arises out of hours and an imminent risk is posed, call 999 or the local social services. Gain as much information and evidence as possible. Share your concerns as soon as possible and treat information sensitively.

Remember, if someone discloses something to you, you must advise them that you will need to share anything that indicates a crime or a safeguarding concern.

**Other considerations:**

Alcohol and substance misuse can exacerbate problem behaviour and increase the risk posed towards vulnerable people. Aggressive behaviour arising from substance misuse should be considered in-line with any zero tolerance towards violent and abusive behaviour policies that are enforced.

**Useful resources**

Click the link below or visit the CSSA website (www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk) for further advice and guidance on Safeguarding:

[National Safeguarding Policy - CSSA (catholicsafeguarding.org.uk)](https://www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/national-safeguarding-standards/national-safeguarding-policy/)

Support and information on volunteers:

<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/involving-volunteers/#/>

Tips on managing problem behavior:

<https://hsi.com/resources/conflict-de-escalation-techniques>

What to do with safeguarding concerns:

