



- Our mission is to benefit and help sustain rural communities in Northumberland by:

Promoting Rural Issues – Providing and supporting a ‘rural voice’ to influence policy, programmes and action.

Empowering Communities – Supporting and developing local communities, their key groups and organisations.

Delivering Solutions – Identifying, developing and managing projects to address the needs of individuals.

Addressing Climate Change – delivering projects and influencing behaviours to help meet climate action requirements.

[Community Action Northumberland \(ca-north.org.uk\)](http://ca-north.org.uk)

Hello,

I’m Leanne Shipley and I work as the Warm Hubs Co-Ordinator for Community Action Northumberland.

We are a charity that has worked in rural Northumberland for over 70 years.

My job is to support the Northumberland Warm hubs but to also share information and support other organisations across the UK who would like to develop a Warm Hub Scheme across their region



Leanne Shipley
Warm Hub Co-Ordinator

Warm Hubs have been established in Northumberland for 8 years and they are not the same as the Warm spots and warm spaces that opened over last winter. They are by design long-term and sustainable and build resilience in communities so that they are able to meet their current and future needs.

Today's focus is around the diversity of uses for village halls. One of the key elements for a Warm Hub is that it meets the needs of its community. Some of them are traditional lunch clubs but others are everything from visually impaired singing groups to Petanque teams and kids cookery clubs.

Warm Hubs build the resilience of local communities and help them to adapt to changing needs.

Warm Hub Principles



Communities – meet the needs of each community

Volunteers – Supported & trained

Community Buildings – Fit for purpose & Sustainable

There are 3 main elements to the Warm Hubs model with Energy as a theme running through each of them

Energy -Fuel Poverty isn't a new issue in Northumberland, similarly to many other rural communities in the UK. A large proportion is off the mains gas grid and over 300 households have no mains electricity. A large proportion of the housing stock and community buildings are inefficient.

The theme of ENERGY runs through all 3 Warm Hub principles

Volunteers Supported & Trained

- First Aid (pediatric)
- Safe Guarding / DBS
- Dementia Awareness
- Food Safety
- **CO Awareness**
- Volunteer needs
- **Funding Training**
- **Community Energy Agents**



Training and support to is key in building community capacity and resilience.

Training should be specific and meet the needs of the volunteers and the communities that they are part of e.g. pediatric first aid if there are play groups or driver training so that volunteer drivers can help people to attend.

Village Halls are a great place to share information and knowledge with communities. For example a number of the Warm Hub volunteers have undertaken 'Energy Agent' and Carbon Monoxide awareness training.

Energy Agents are Warm Hub volunteers that have a good understanding of fuel poverty, energy related issues and solutions. Energy agents are able to offer help and support to people in their communities and people that attend their Warm Hubs or sign post them to relevant organisations who can help them. The information can be shared through formal events or just be part of informal chats that crop up during activities or over coffee.

Community Buildings – Sustainable / Fit for Purpose

- Energy Audits
- Accessibility Audits
- Kitchens – Utensils/Perches/Crockery
- Renewables
- Emergency Centers
- Licensing /Policies/governance checks.



Buildings –

Energy audits, Accessibility Audits and Dementia audits are carried out.

Ensuring that community buildings are energy efficient has helped activities to continue despite rising energy costs.

Accessibility audits and Dementia audits can help the building to be more accessible to a wider range of the community. This doesn't always mean making big changes, some older buildings are really hard to make wheelchair accessible but dementia friendly signage could be an easy win as could making changes to the hot water temperature or installing mixer taps. Maybe moving a mat or using coloured or patterned crockery could help or having some adapted crockery such as double handed mugs.

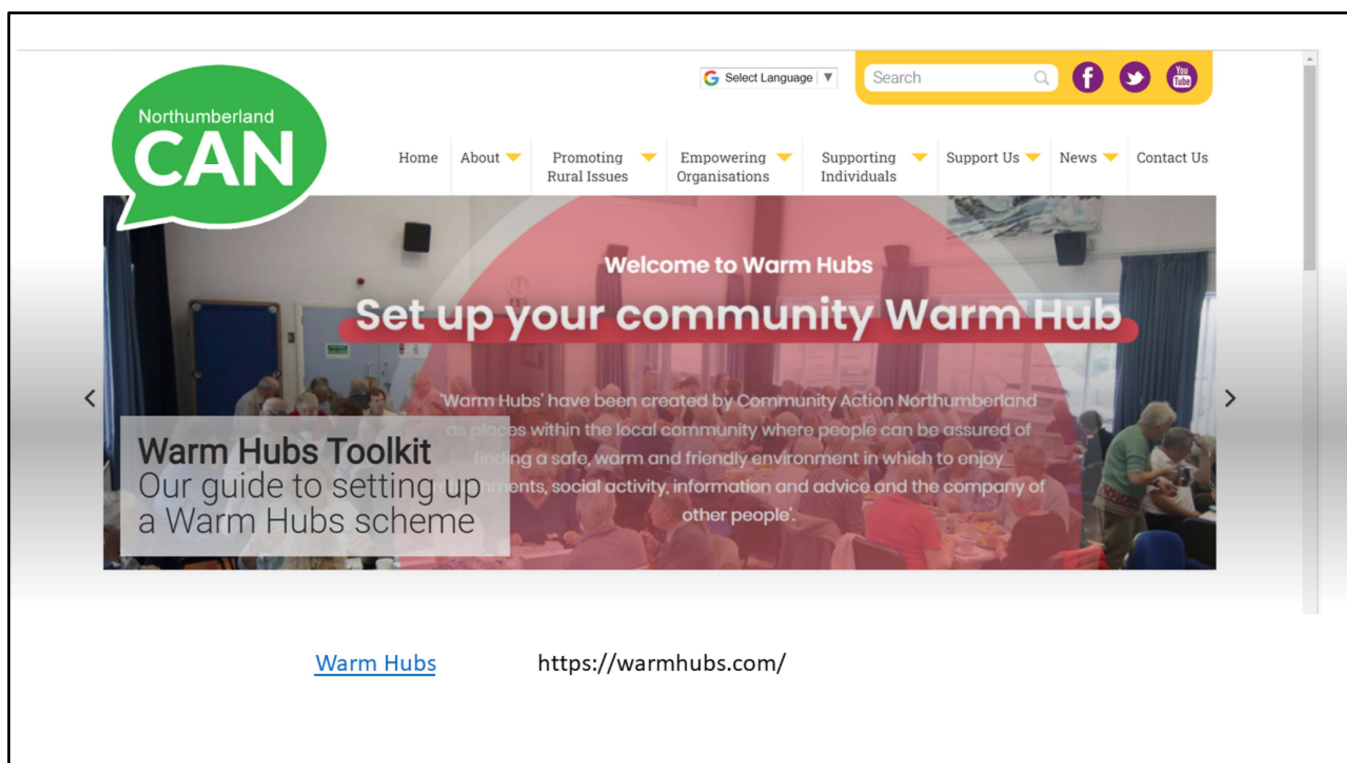


Communities is one of the 3 elements of the Warm Hub model. Each Warm Hub is different and its community has different needs,

There are 43 Warm Hubs Across Northumberland, and they have many different offers. Some have traditional coffee mornings, some film clubs, some choirs, we have cookery groups, intergenerational groups, playgroup, sports activities and various others. Some Warm Hubs have run cycle maintenance course for young people, hold regular pub nights, run craft activities among others.

Some of the Warm Hubs now have generators or solar and battery systems so that they can become emergency centers in the event of power outages, a lot of these have been developed since Storm Arwen where some communities were without power for several weeks and blocked roads and flooding prevented even the army from reaching them for several days.

Some of the community buildings also provide work spaces and facilities for their communities, This isn't strictly speaking a 'Warm Hub' activity but thought it might be interesting to you given the focus of the meeting. This is sometimes a desk space and access to broadband or renting out kitchens to local caterers, another has a pottery and also a bunk house providing overnight accommodation to visitors and pilgrims.



The last thing I need to mention, as this is how I'm funded is the Warm Hub Toolkit.

As well as co-ordinating the Warm Hub scheme in Northumberland my job also includes promoting a national roll out.

Because of the success of the Northumberland Warm Hub scheme we have been contacted by organisation across the UK looking for advice on developing similar schemes so we have developed a completely FREE Warm Hubs toolkit to share with organisations that support communities (it is not intended for use by individual village halls though).

The toolkit can be found at [www.warmhubs.com](https://warmhubs.com/)