# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Warm Hubs** |
| **DATE**  | **15 December 2022** |
| **BY** | **Jane Hutt MS, Minister for Social Justice** |

On the 20th September we announced an initial £1m of funding to support communities to develop Warm Hubs or expand and enhance existing Warm Hub provision. We know that many people will struggle to keep their homes at a healthy temperature this winter, particularly those people at home all day, the elderly and the vulnerable. Warm Hubs offer a safe, accessible and warm environment during the day to help those facing extreme fuel poverty this winter.

On the 12th October I confirmed that our £1m Warm Hubs funding would be distributed via local authorities who would work with local partners in the development and delivery of Warm Hubs. This recognised that much of the expertise on where Warm Hubs should be placed, and what should be provided within Warm Hubs, rests within local communities and that local authorities, working in partnership with the public sector, voluntary sector and community partners are best placed to gauge and understand local needs, existing provision and to design and deliver local solutions.

Our investment in Warm Hubs is part of a wider Welsh Government package of support during this cost-of-living crisis which includes our Fuel Support Scheme, Fuel Vouchers, Discretionary Assistance Fund and Cost of Living payments. In total we will be investing over £1.6bn this year to support people through this cost-of-living crisis by providing targeted help to those who need it the most and through programmes and schemes which put money back in people’s pockets.

Today I am pleased to be able to provide an update on the Warm Hubs across Wales.

Many organisations including local authorities, town and community councils, faith groups, sports clubs, community centres, housing associations and Trade Unions are engaging with or establishing Warm Hubs within local communities. Our funding has helped build on these existing efforts to enhance and expand the Warm Hubs network across Wales. I am also grateful to partners such as the National Lottery who are also supporting Warm Hubs across Wales.

There are already over 300 Warm Hub / Warm Welcome / Warm Spaces across Wales and with many local authorities running grant schemes for community and voluntary groups to develop Warm Hubs, supported by Welsh Government funding, this number is expected to grow.

I met with local authority leaders earlier this month and I was pleased to hear about the progress which had been made on Warm Hubs across Wales. A number of local authorities publish information on their web sites on the location of the Warm Hubs in their community. The Croeso Cynnes web site used by the local authorities in North Wales lists over 120 Warm Hubs across North Wales.

Warm Hubs offer a range of support depending on their location and their facilities. This includes a simple warm space with refreshments to more substantive food, activities, free access to computers and wi-fi and charging points for phones and tablets. A number offer the opportunity to meet with financial and welfare advisors, supporting people to access the benefits and support they are entitled to. This includes giving cost-of-living advice, signposting people to additional help and providing real practical support through activities such as helping people to fill in forms to apply for benefits.

I will be visiting Warm Hubs in Caerphilly and Cardiff on the 20th of December to see first hand the valuable work that these hubs are doing in our community and to support people through this cost-of-living crisis. We will continue to work with local authorities to support our collective efforts to help those hardest hit by the cost-of-living crisis to stay warm this winter.