

THE LIVING ROOM

England & Wales · Charity number 1080634

Details

Status Registered

Legal form Other

Registered 2000-05-09

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address The Living Room
8-10 The Glebe
Stevenage
SG2 0DJ

Phone 01438355649

Email enquiries@thelivingroom.org.uk

Website www.thelivingroom.org.uk

Activities

Objects: TO PRESERVE AND SAFEGUARD THE HEALTH OF ALL PERSONS WHO ARE IN DANGER OF BECOMING ADDICTED OR DEPENDANT UPON DRUGS OF ANY DESCRIPTION ALCOHOL, SOLVENTS OR OTHER ADDICTIVE SUBSTANCES AND THE RELIEF OF PERSONS SUFFERING FROM SUCH ADDICTION OR DEPENDENCY.

Activities: The Living Room provides free, structured, daytime group therapy in a supportive community for adults who are abstinent and addressing harmful patterns involving substances or behaviours. We also offer group therapy for families and carers of those affected.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives
- **Who:** Children/young People, Elderly/old People, People With Disabilities, Other Defined Groups, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** STEVENAGE
- Hertfordshire

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£854,438	£880,741	£310,092	19
2024-03-31	£884,245	£855,790	£336,395	20
2023-03-31	£919,966	£908,634	£307,940	23
2022-03-31	£830,296	£858,663	£296,608	24
2021-03-31	£858,510	£757,467	£324,975	23

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Daniel Marshall	Chair	2017-07-06
Akhilesh Nair		2023-07-13
Eddie Mills		2017-07-06
Jenny Brace		2018-04-04
Kacey Elise Watson		2026-01-29
Richard Crofton		2024-04-25
William Roney		2025-01-23

THE LIVING ROOM

England & Wales - Charity number 1080634

Accounts

Annual Report of Trustees 2024–2025



1. Introduction and Key Information

Welcome to The Living Room's Annual Report for 2024-2025. This past year has been defined by an unwavering commitment to fostering **connection**, demonstrating remarkable **resilience** in challenging times, and solidifying a **renewed purpose** in how we serve our community.

As you read through the pages that follow, you will see how connection forms the very heartbeat of our work. From the profound bonds forged in our free, group-based therapy sessions—where lived experience guides every interaction—to the vital partnerships we cultivate across Hertfordshire, **connection** is the catalyst for lasting recovery and healing. This year, we extended our reach, deepened our community ties, and saw countless individuals reconnect with themselves, their families, and a life of fulfilment.

Alongside these successes, 2024-2025 also tested our **resilience**. Navigating a complex economic climate and adapting to leadership transitions required strategic thinking and unwavering dedication. Yet, in every challenge, our team, volunteers, and clients demonstrated remarkable strength and innovation, continually adapting to ensure our life-changing support remained accessible and impactful. This report highlights how we not only sustained our vital services but also evolved, making strategic choices to ensure our stability and future growth.

Crucially, this year has underscored a **renewed purpose** in our approach. We have consciously evolved our language to be more person-centred, affirming the dignity and potential of every individual we serve. Developments like The Living Room Academy and the expansion of our Volunteer Recovery Advocate (VRA) programme exemplify this refreshed vision, empowering more voices and solidifying our unique, peer-led model of care.

This report is a testament to the collective effort that makes The Living Room a place of hope and healing. It lays out our achievements in numbers, showcases inspiring client journeys, and details the robust framework of support that defines our impact. We invite you to explore these pages and witness firsthand how, together, we are building communities where recovery is not just possible but celebrated.

Chair's Welcome

Welcome to our Annual Report for 2024-2025. This report lays out what we've been up to over the past year – the good stuff, the tough bits, and a massive thank you to everyone who made it happen.

This year has been a big one. We've pushed forward on a lot of fronts, getting our work out to more people and making a real difference. Think about how we continued our delivery of free, daily group therapy and extending our service in Watford to five days or enhanced training for counselling staff, continuing to centre lived experience alongside clinical professionalism. Every win is down to the sheer effort and passion of our team. It's clear proof that we're delivering on our mission.

Of course, it wasn't all smooth sailing. We faced our share of challenges, like dealing with the tricky economic climate and its impact on funding or the retirement of two executive team leaders. These moments tested us, but they also showed how resilient and innovative we are. We kept adapting and pushing forward, always focused on our clients.

Looking ahead, we're focused on celebrating our 25th anniversary with a focus on legacy, celebration of recovery stories and increasing awareness of our model. This past year has truly highlighted what we can achieve when we work together, and I'm optimistic about the future.

Honestly, none of this works without our people. A huge shout-out to our **staff** – your skills, dedication, and tireless work are what drive us every single day. And to our amazing **volunteers**, your time, energy, and expertise are incredibly valuable, expanding our reach and making every interaction better.

To our **clients**, thanks for trusting us and for your courage in engaging with our services. Your stories are what keep us going.

And finally, to our **supporters and partners**, your belief in what we do, whether it's through funding, advocating for us, or collaborating, is crucial. Your support means we can keep doing this vital work and keep innovating.

Thanks for being a key part of our journey.

Daniel Marshall

Chair of Trustees

CEO's Reflections

The 2024–2025 financial year has been a remarkable journey for The Living Room. It was a year where **connection** deepened, our **resilience** was truly tested, and our **purpose** became clearer than ever. My heart swells with pride when I reflect on what we've achieved together.

We continued to be a lifeline for people aged 19 to 96, delivering over **2,100 therapeutic sessions** and **260 dedicated family and carer support sessions**. The impact of this work is undeniable: **63% of clients sustained their recovery**, and every single person reported improved physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing. These aren't just numbers; they represent real lives, real families, and real hope. This year, we also took a significant step in how we talk about our work, moving away from 'addiction' towards **person-centred language**. This reflects our core belief: everyone deserves to be seen as a whole person, not defined by past challenges, embodying our **renewed purpose**.

Our foundation remains rooted in community, care, and hope. Of course, staying true to our mission in a tough funding climate demands **resilience**. We've had to make careful choices to ensure we're strong for 2025–2026. This sometimes meant doing more with less, but our commitment to providing free, high-quality support never wavered. We spend **£2,233 each day**—or **£2,600 per person per year**—to provide our services, and we rely on the incredible generosity of funders, partners, and individuals who believe in second chances as much as we do.

With a **100% "good to excellent" satisfaction rating** from our clients, we are incredibly proud. Looking ahead, we'll keep refining our services, listening deeply to those we support. Because **language matters**, and we want every word to reflect the dignity and potential of the people we serve.

Thank you. Thank you to our dedicated staff, our amazing volunteers, our committed trustees, and every single funder and supporter. You make this vital work possible. Your belief fuels our passion, and together, we're changing lives.

Adrienne Arthurs

Chief Executive Officer

Reference And Administrative Details

Status	Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) – Foundation
Also known as	Living Room Herts, The Living Room Hertfordshire, TLR, TLRH
Governing document	Constitution, as adopted on 02 November 2017 amended 26 September 2019
Company number	N/A
Charity number	CIO 1175541 (previously 1080634)
Registered office and operational address	8-10 The Glebe Chells Way Stevenage Hertfordshire SG2 0DJ
Trustees	Daniel Marshall CHAIR Daniel McGovern TREASURER Eddie Mills VICE-CHAIR Akhilesh Nair Jenny Brace Charles King Ramesh Summan Elizabeth Fisher William Roney Jennifer Beard
Chief Executive Officer	Adrienne Arthurs
Banker	HSBC, Town Centre, Danestrete, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 1BY
Chartered Certified Accountants	Hargreaves Owen Ltd Red Sky House, Fairclough Hall, Halls Green, Weston. Hertfordshire SG4 7DP

2. About Us

The Living Room (TLR) is a Hertfordshire-based charity offering **free, group-based therapeutic support** to adults and families impacted by problematic substance use and other self-destructive behaviours. We believe **recovery is possible for everyone**, and that people thrive when they are seen, heard, and supported as whole individuals—not defined by labels, symptoms, or past behaviours. Our approach is rooted in **compassion, clinical professionalism, and community**, creating safe, welcoming spaces where lasting change can take root.

Many of those we support have experienced significant trauma. Therefore, establishing **emotionally and psychologically safe environments** is fundamental to our work. We foster trust, consistency, and mutual respect, enabling clients to feel secure enough to explore painful experiences, develop new coping strategies, and begin to heal.

We are proud that our workforce is largely comprised of individuals with **lived experience of recovery**, either personally or through supporting a loved one. This unique understanding is central to our empathy and credibility, reflecting our deep commitment to person-centred care. Our team—whether counsellors, volunteers, or support staff—walks alongside our clients with authenticity and a steadfast belief in their potential.

Our mission is to **build communities of hope and healing** by delivering accessible, high-quality, group-based therapy for people seeking recovery and reconnection. We help clients address the emotional and relational drivers behind their behaviour, not just the behaviours themselves. For us, recovery isn't about willpower or simply "stopping"; it's about **understanding, growth, and healing in connection with others**.

Our **values** guide everything we do, ensuring our support is authentic and makes a tangible difference.



3. Our Programmes and Impact

Therapy

In 2024–25, The Living Room continued to provide high-quality group therapy from our centres in St Albans, Stevenage, and Watford. Sessions were led by trained counsellors with lived experience or deep personal understanding of recovery—offering both professional expertise and genuine empathy.

Alongside our main mixed therapy groups, we also offered specialist weekly groups focused on drug use, disordered eating, and relationships (until January 2025).

Our flexible, open-ended model means clients stay as long as they need. This consistency supports emotional safety, connection, and long-term recovery for people facing challenges including substance use, disordered eating, gambling, and other compulsive behaviours.

Workshops

This year, we delivered 1,066 workshops, including sessions run by partners such as Family Lives and The Relationships Service. Clients told us:

- “They provide tools for me and help me understand myself more.”

- “Some workshops have been fun and very therapeutic—it’s not all work and no play.”
- “To talk openly about my darkness and flood it with light.”
- “The structure and being accountable for myself has been the most helpful.”

Support for Families and Carers

We continued to offer themed workshops for families and carers, both in person and online. These provided practical tools, education, and emotional support to help them navigate complex dynamics and look after their own wellbeing. Topics included co-dependency, family roles, trauma, and healthy boundaries. The sessions gave families a safe space to reduce shame, share experiences, and heal together.

Therapeutic and Community Activities

Clients also took part (or led) in a wide range of therapeutic and community-based activities, helping build confidence, connection, and wellbeing. Highlights included:

- Equine therapy
- Canal boat trip
- Music and creative arts workshops
- Community clear-up projects
- Gardening projects in St Albans (including Earthworks and the Community Garden)
- Highfield Park visit
- Visit to St Albans Abbey
- International Women’s Day celebrations
- Community learning sessions

These experiences were deeply valued by clients and provided new opportunities for growth, reflection, and joy.

Connecting Communities

We engaged with communities across Hertfordshire to raise awareness and challenge stigma around substance use. Our outreach included:

- Attending health fairs
- Talks in schools and community groups
- Participation in national campaigns such as Recovery Month

With help from volunteers, partners, and staff, we strengthened our presence locally and opened up more conversations about recovery.

Outreach Impact

- 66 outreach events attended or hosted
 - An estimated 1,675 people reached
- Social media engagement also rose significantly, reflecting growing public interest and support.

We do this because every conversation helps reduce shame, build understanding, and encourage people to seek help. Together, we're building a community where recovery is possible and celebrated.

4. Strategic Developments and Future Vision

Achievements and Performance - Driving Impact in 2024-2025

This year, The Living Room has made significant strides in achieving our organisational goals, demonstrating a profound commitment to our clients and the wider community. We're proud to share the key achievements that highlight our dedication to providing exceptional support and fostering lasting recovery.

Our strategic themes 2024-2027:

- A. We will provide a reliable service for adults with addiction.
- B. We will have a separate support service for their family, caregivers, and friends.
- C. We will expand our training and development opportunities.
- D. We will let people know who we are and what we do.
- E. We will make our services more accessible.
- F. We will focus on our environmental, social and governance goals.

Real-Life Impact: Our Clients' Journeys

At the core of our work are the incredible individuals we serve.

Throughout 2024-2025, we've witnessed powerful transformations, testament to the effectiveness of our therapeutic model. People's recovery stories illustrate the impact of our work against our strategic goals:

Josie, 39 (February 2025)

My name is Josie. I am 39 years old and a mother of one child, and she is my world. From a young age, I knew I was different in many ways; I struggled with life on life's terms. I didn't understand why or what was wrong with me, but I was not the same as my friends.

My childhood was full of abuse and neglect. I felt unloved, not cared about, and that drugs were all my mum and dad cared about. I know that isn't true today because I understand it was an addiction.

My home was very busy, and a lot of crime went on there. Growing up, my mum gave me fags and drink and took me out shoplifting all the time. At the time, I liked it because I wanted the fag or new things, but that just grew, and the drugs got worse until I was smoking crack with her. Shocking, I know. My friends loved her because she was funny and down to earth. All my mates would come and stay with me, and I would party. Today, I hate that.

I have lots of shame for my childhood that I am working on today at The Living Room. This place has changed my life in many ways. I was on crack, heroin, and took Valium for 20 years. They destroyed me and took me down a dark path to where I have lost time with my child.

I am in court now, but I don't think she is coming home. I am nine months clean and work a programme. I do step work, and I have a sponsor. I do service; I come to The Living Room five days a week. Life was really dark, and I couldn't do a full day clean. I had no boundaries or self-respect. I never washed and I let others treat me like rubbish. I was jailed on many occasions for fighting or shoplifting, stealing cars or drug dealing. My life was out of control, and I wanted to die. I did try and take my life but woke up the next day.

My mental health doctor told me about The Living Room. I rang up and they had me in a seat in two days. For the first time, someone listened to me. Others understood me. I had support from people like me. I went on ADHD meds. I show up for appointments and I show up for others. I won't lie; this place will change people's lives; it has mine. I am so grateful to this place, and I am ready to graduate now. I need a leaving date, then I am out into the big wide world.

Thank you.

Richard, 51 (January 2025)

There was a time when waking up each day felt like a battle I had already lost. I barely left the house. I had no interest in meeting people, no motivation, and no vision of a future beyond alcohol and a relationship that had long ended. My sleep was broken, my eating disordered, and my finances in ruins. I was stuck—feeling like a burden to my family, ashamed of who I'd become, and constantly lying to hide the truth.

Alcohol and love were my main addictions. I clung to them both, even as they eroded my health, my confidence, and my ability to live. My mental and physical health were deteriorating, and suicidal thoughts lingered in the background. Most days, I would just sleep and cry, feeling utterly alone and useless.

But something shifted.

With the support of Colne House, CGL, my GP, and most importantly, my family, I found the courage to walk into The Living Room. That decision began to change everything.

Sharing my feelings in group for the first time gave me a sense of purpose I hadn't felt in years. I started connecting with others—slowly at first—but with each session, I opened-up more. The counsellors helped me face things I'd always tried to avoid. The feedback, the tools, and even the fun in some workshops began lifting my mood and shifting my thinking.

I joined a peer support WhatsApp group, stayed close to my family, and for the first time, felt I wasn't alone.

Now, over 100 days alcohol-free, I feel more resilient than I ever imagined. The obsessive thoughts about my ex have faded. I feel more positive, productive, and energetic. My mood, though still up and down, has stabilised. I engage more easily with others. My mind is clearer, my relationships are improving, and I'm finally climbing out of the financial hole I was in.

These days, I wake up with purpose—especially on the days I come to The Living Room. I don't feel as stuck anymore. I've realised I can help others, and I *want* to. I want to build healthier relationships in the future, return to work when I'm ready, and keep developing myself.

Above all, I want to continue my journey of recovery—not just to stay abstinent, but to thrive.

Because I'm not alone anymore.
And I'm not the same person I once was.

Empowering Through Education - The Living Room Academy

- A major highlight of the past year has been the **development of The Living Room Academy**. This new initiative is designed to be a hub for learning and growth, not just for our internal team but also for the wider community.
- In 2024-2025, we laid robust foundations for the Academy, beginning with the creation of comprehensive training modules and resources. We also successfully launched a series of **public workshops**, bringing vital education and awareness directly to community members. These workshops covered a range of topics related to substance use, mental well-being, and recovery, empowering attendees with knowledge and practical strategies. The Academy's development

represents our commitment to proactive engagement and building a more informed, supportive society.

Elevating Our Services - Enhanced Counselling and Support

We continuously strive to offer the highest quality of care, and this year saw significant **improvements to our counselling services**. We listened to feedback, identified areas for growth, and implemented changes that directly benefited our clients.

These improvements included providing an extra day of service in Watford, focusing on our safeguarding confidence with monthly staff clinics and updated training for all staff, improving accessibility to services, setting up the newcomer groups to help with acclimatisation and familiarisation for people who are new to our service and fixing our graduate groups in each centre into our monthly diaries.

Our goal is always to ensure that our clients receive timely, effective, and compassionate support tailored to their individual needs. These enhancements underscore our dedication to clinical excellence and client-centred care.

The Power of Lived Experience - Volunteer Recovery Advocates Pilot

A truly exciting development this year was the initial piloting of our **Volunteer Recovery Advocate (VRA) programme**. This groundbreaking initiative empowers former clients to become mentors and advocates, sharing their lived experience to support others in early recovery.

The **VRA pilot outcomes** have been incredibly promising, resulting in a successful bid to roll out the programme across all centres. This programme is a testament to the transformative power of lived experience and our commitment to creating pathways for meaningful volunteering and community contribution. We are thrilled by the early success and the potential of this programme to further enhance our peer-led model.

Building Bridges - Feedback from Our Community

Our success is deeply intertwined with the relationships we build. Throughout 2024-2025, we actively sought and received invaluable feedback from families and partner agencies, affirming the profound impact of our collaborative approach.

This feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the significant difference our work makes in the lives of clients' families and underscoring the powerful strength of our partnerships. We are incredibly grateful for these insights, which not only validate our efforts but also provide crucial guidance for future growth and continuous improvement.

Our strong relationships with families and partner agencies are fundamental to creating a truly holistic and supportive recovery ecosystem.

Driving Impact Through Collaborative Partnerships

Our success is deeply intertwined with the relationships we build. Throughout 2024-2025, we actively sought and received invaluable feedback from families and partner agencies, affirming the profound impact of our collaborative approach. This positive feedback highlights the significant difference our work makes and the powerful strength of our partnerships. We are incredibly grateful for these insights, which not only validate our efforts but also provide crucial guidance for continuous improvement.

We offer **holistic support**, recognising that recovery extends beyond addiction treatment. Our vital partnerships with **Family Lives** and **The Relationships Service** (formerly RELATE LNW&Chiltern) continued to deliver invaluable workshops, family work, couples counselling, and practical advice, consistently fostering enhanced communication and stronger bonds within families. Similarly, **TurningPoint's Complex Needs Service** regularly visited our centres, providing crucial mental health support and helping clients navigate barriers like housing, employment, and benefits. The **Local Citizens Advice** team also supported financial well-being, offering advice on money management and energy costs.

We ensure **seamless transitions and peer-led inspiration** by forging stronger links with **CGL Detox pods**, visiting their facilities to speak directly with clients nearing detox completion. Our **Volunteer Recovery Advocates (VRAs)** often joined these visits, sharing personal experiences to help clients feel confident about their next steps.

Our collaborations also foster **creative engagement and community connection**. Thanks to the **Community Learning Partnership**, clients participated in an engaging art course, while clients themselves led fantastic peer-led workshops, such as an inspiring visit to the St Albans South Signal Box. Members of various **recovery fellowships** regularly visited our centres, conducting 'chairs' to connect clients with vital long-term support. Furthermore, **Groundwork** engaged clients in meaningful community gardening projects across Hertfordshire, promoting teamwork and engagement with the local environment. We also regularly visited local food banks to raise awareness of our services. Finally, our collaboration with **Emerging Futures** ensured their clients could access our services and provided invaluable assistance to our clients facing housing issues.

The positive feedback from these collaborations underscores our shared commitment to creating a compassionate and effective recovery ecosystem. As one client eloquently put it: *"The support I received from The Living Room, especially with the help from their*

partners, has been a game-changer. It's not just about stopping addiction; it's about rebuilding every part of your life."

A Difficult Goodbye to a Vital Group – Disordered Eating

Our weekly disordered eating groups in Stevenage and St Albans have quietly been changing lives.

Often overlooked or misunderstood, disordered eating is about far more than food or weight — it's about the relationship with food, control, shame, and emotion. For many, these groups were the first safe space to explore those feelings without judgement. Week after week, people showed up — at least 12 in each centre — and did the brave work of recovery, together.

Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, these specialist groups offered something not found elsewhere: peer connection, therapeutic support, and an understanding that food issues are not just about BMI or diagnosis, but about life.

As the funding comes to an end in **July 2025**, we've had to make the very difficult decision to close the groups (when setting our budget for 2025-2026). It's never easy to end something that is working — but like many charities, we are having to prioritise our core services in an increasingly challenging funding climate.

We want to thank every person who walked through the door of those groups. You've helped show that recovery is possible — not just for those with substance use, but for anyone who feels stuck in a cycle with food.

This is not the end of the story, just the end of a chapter.

6. Financials and Governance

Fundraising Regulations

The Living Room engages in public fundraising without employing professional fundraisers or commercial participators. We remain fully compliant with all relevant fundraising regulations and the Code of Fundraising Practice. Throughout the year ending 31 March 2025, The Living Room received no complaints related to its fundraising activities. We continue to maintain high standards of integrity, transparency, and accountability in all supporter engagement and income generation efforts.

Gratitude to Funders, Donors, and Local Supporters

The Living Room is deeply grateful for the continued generosity of our funders, donors, and local communities throughout 2024–2025. Their support has enabled us to deliver free, life-changing support to individuals and families across Hertfordshire, helping people move towards sustained recovery and healthier futures.

We are grateful for new funding agreements with Martin Geddes, Kind2Mind, The Sackler Trust, Sir Jules Thorne Charitable Trust, The MD & SD Burton Charitable Trust, Souter Charitable Trust and The Archer Trust.

Fundraising Highlights and Community Giving

This year saw a positive mix of grant income, regular giving, and local fundraising activity. We secured funding from a range of charitable trusts, statutory partners, and community foundations — all recognising the value and impact of our abstinence-based, group-led therapeutic services. Our supporters also organised fundraising events, took on sponsored challenges, and helped raise awareness through schools, workplaces, and faith groups. These collective efforts have directly supported the delivery and sustainability of our core programmes.

Use of Digital Tools

We continued to use digital tools to engage supporters and streamline our fundraising activity. Salesforce which has been launched as our new CRM in 2024-2025 has quickly become a vital system for managing donor relationships and tracking income, while Mailchimp enabled us to send targeted and timely updates to our mailing list. Our social media presence grew steadily over the year, helping us to share stories of hope and recovery, promote fundraising events, and connect with new audiences across our region.

Gratitude to Our Supporters

On behalf of the entire team at The Living Room, we extend our sincere thanks to every individual, organisation, and partner who has supported us this year. Whether through financial contributions, volunteering time, or championing our work in the community, your involvement makes a meaningful difference. Your generosity has helped more people access the tools and support they need to rebuild their lives and move forward with hope.

Structure, Governance and Management

Annual Report Statement

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

The Board of Trustees is satisfied with the charity's performance during the year and with its financial and operational position as of 31 March 2025. The trustees consider that The Living Room is well placed to continue its services over the coming year and that its assets are sufficient to meet current and foreseeable obligations.

Trustee Board and Governance Processes

None of the trustees receives remuneration or any other personal benefit for their role with the charity. Trustees are asked to declare any potential conflicts of interest at the start of each board meeting and are formally required to complete an annual register of interests. No relevant interests or transactions have been reported during the year.

It is noted for transparency that the CEO is the mother of the spouse of the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees. This relationship has been declared and recorded in accordance with the charity's conflict of interest policy, and appropriate safeguards are in place to ensure transparency and good governance. The Treasurer resigned 22/05/2025.

Reserves Policy Statement

The Living Room maintains a Reserves Policy to safeguard the charity's long-term financial sustainability, ensure operational continuity, and manage potential financial risks. This policy underpins our commitment to responsible stewardship of charitable funds and our ability to respond to changing circumstances.

Our reserves serve three key purposes:

1. To cover the immediate costs of winding down the organisation in the event of closure.
2. To ensure adequate liquidity for meeting day-to-day obligations and maintaining cash flow—particularly during delayed funder payments.
3. To provide resilience against financial shocks, such as the loss of a major funder or unforeseen one-off costs.

Free Reserves

The charity monitors its unrestricted reserves against three key levels:

Reserve Level	Amount	Purpose
Minimum	£154,803	To meet immediate closure costs, including staff redundancy, notice pay, lease obligations, and other essential wind-down expenses.
Median	£237,715	Equivalent to three months of running costs as of April 2025, this level supports continuity of all services, including specialist groups, and helps manage foreseeable cash flow pressures.
Maximum	£400,000	A prudent ceiling that reflects TLR's current reliance on a single, statutory service contract. This level ensures TLR can navigate a significant reduction or loss of this funding stream.

Designated Reserves

In addition to free reserves, The Living Room sets aside **designated reserves** for specific strategic and operational purposes. These include:

- **Future Commitments**
 - Planned asset purchases (e.g., property, vehicles, IT systems)
 - Matched funding required by external grants
- **Multi-Year Projects**
 - Projects spanning more than one financial year
 - Strategic developments to expand or enhance services

Designated reserves are reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees to ensure they remain aligned with organisational priorities. Any surplus or released funds are reallocated based on emerging needs and strategic direction.

Reserve Movements During the Reporting Year

During 2024–2025, The Living Room managed its reserves in line with the Reserves Policy, maintaining stability despite inflationary pressures and the upcoming loss of specific project funding. Key developments included:

- **Maintaining Free Reserves** within the target range, with careful monitoring of cash flow considering delayed funder payments.

- **Drawdown from Designated Reserves** to support planned capital investments in IT infrastructure and to meet matched funding requirements for time-limited grants.
- **Review and Reallocation** of older designated reserves no longer required for their original purpose, allowing funds to be redirected to support future strategic planning and programme development.
- **Preparation for Income Risk** by gradually building reserves toward the maximum threshold in recognition of our dependence on a single, large-scale contract due for re-tendering.

This proactive reserves management ensures The Living Room remains financially resilient while continuing to prioritise service delivery and long-term impact.

Trustees Responsibilities Statement

The Trustees of The Living Room are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Charity law in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of its incoming resources and application of resources during the year.

In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently.
- Observe the methods and principles of the Charities SORP (Statement of Recommended Practice) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS 102.
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures; and
- Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are also responsible for:

- Keeping proper accounting records that disclose, with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the charity.

- Ensuring that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 (or any subsequent applicable regulations), and the provisions of the charity’s governing document.
- Safeguarding the assets of the charity; and
- Taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In addition to these statutory responsibilities, The Living Room is committed to high standards of governance. The charity aligns its governance practices with the Charity Governance Code, which is used as a framework for continuous improvement and to ensure the effective delivery of our mission.

Our Board of Trustees and Executive Leadership Team work together to promote:

- Regular self-assessment against the Governance Code.
- Ongoing trustee training and development.
- Strategic leadership and oversight.
- Transparency and accountability at all levels.
- Robust risk management processes; and
- A commitment to diversity, inclusion, and ethical conduct.


With the leadership of our CEO, we continue to strengthen our governance culture and ensure that The Living Room remains a credible, resilient, and impactful organisation.

Trustees' confirmation

The Trustees confirm that:

- So far as each Trustee is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charity’s auditor (or independent examiner) is unaware; and
- Each Trustee has taken all steps that they ought to have taken as a Trustee to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to ensure that the charity’s auditor (or independent examiner) is aware of that information.

By order of the Board of Trustees



Daniel Marshall

Chair of Trustees

31st July 2025

Financial Review

Total Income for 24/25 was £854,438 (23/24: £884,245) with expenditure of £880,741 (23/24: £855,790) resulting in a small operating deficit of £26,303 (2023-24: surplus of £28,455). Total funds at year end were £310,092 of which £293,450 were Unrestricted Funds for our Core Service (23/24: Total Funds £336,395 of which £ 318,590 were Unrestricted).

For the 373 clients attending our service in 24/25 this represents an average cost per client of £2,361 for one year's treatment, or £45 per client per week, which represents exceptional value.

Income

The external funding environment remains highly competitive, with many grant-making foundations either reducing their funding commitments or redirecting support towards cost-of-living initiatives and smaller charities with annual incomes below £500k.

Despite these challenges, we successfully secured several additional funding commitments for the 2025/26 financial year, including:

- A two-year grant from the Martin Geddes Trust totaling £33k, to support the continuation of our Drug Group (£16k per annum).
- A £10k grant from Hertfordshire Community Foundation (HCF), to be received in 2025/26.
- An additional £64k in funding from Hertfordshire County Council, also to be received in 2025/26.

Despite the ongoing challenges posed by the cost-of-living crisis, we were grateful to receive over £39k in individual donations. Income from our Charity Shop also saw a strong recovery, following the successful refurbishment and consolidation of two locations into a single, more efficient space. This resulted in a donation of £31k. Looking ahead, we anticipate further growth, with a projected donation in the region of £35k next year.

Expenditure

As a Real Living Wage employer, the charity implemented a 5% salary uplift for all staff on the lowest pay scale, ensuring continued alignment with fair pay standards. All other staff received a 3% increase in line with our commitment to equitable remuneration. As a result of these adjustments—alongside the introduction of an additional day of service at our Watford hub—overall salary expenditure rose by 5% compared to the 2023/24 financial year.

Our second highest cost in 24/25 was the rental cost of our premises, due in main to a 25% rent increase for our St Albans Hub. As a result of the above increases, expenditure as a total, rose by 3% versus 23/24.

Reserves Policy

The trustees have carefully reviewed the charity's free reserves to ensure it maintains financial stability, supports future growth, and can continue delivering services in the event of unforeseen financial pressures. This assessment considered the reliability and timing of future income, working capital requirements, and the potential need for emergency repairs or premises-related costs.

Free reserves are defined as unrestricted funds, excluding those subject to donor-imposed restrictions. Determining an appropriate level of reserves is a key element of the charity's strategic planning and risk management. This includes evaluating risks across core income and expenditure areas, such as:

- Working capital requirements
- Financial risk mitigation
- Future strategic development

The trustees conduct an annual review of the reserves policy and associated risk assessments to ensure the charity holds an appropriate level of free reserves. For the 2025/26 financial year, they have determined that a prudent level of reserves should be equivalent to three to four months of planned expenditure—estimated at between £214,000 and £285,000.

As of 31 March 2025, the charity held free reserves of £293,450, equating to approximately 4.0 months of planned expenditure based on 24/25 reserves figures. This is within the target range set out in the reserves policy. Accordingly, the trustees are satisfied that the charity remains a going concern.

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The Living Room

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2025, which are set out on pages 23 to 30.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (revised 2022 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- To follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the next statement.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which give me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act (revised 2022 Act)

have not been met or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

TM Haggerty

**Trina Haggerty FCCA
Hargreaves Owen Ltd
Chartered Certified Accountants
Red Sky House
Fairclough Hall
Halls Green
Weston
Herts
SG4 7DP**

The date upon which my opinion is expressed is: *31st July 2025*

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2025 £	Restricted Funds 2025 £	Total Funds 2025 £	Total Funds 2024 £
Incoming Resources					
Incoming Resources from generated funds					
Voluntary Income	2	774,949	57,882	832,831	860,797
Activities for generating funds	3	16,989	-	16,989	19,646
Investment income	4	4,618	-	4,618	3,802
Total incoming resources		796,556	57,882	854,438	884,245
Resources Expended					
Cost of generating funds					
Costs of generating voluntary income and undertaking charitable activities	5	808,332	57,187	865,519	838,255
Governance costs		14,166	1,056	15,222	17,535
Total resources expended		821,696	59,045	880,741	855,790
Net Incoming / (Outgoing) Resources		(25,140)	(1,163)	(26,303)	28,455
Reconciliation of Funds					
Transfer between funds		-	-	-	-
Total funds brought forward		318,590	17,805	336,395	307,940
Total Funds Carried Forward		293,450	16,642	310,092	336,395

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2025 £	Restricted Funds 2025 £	Total Funds 2025 £	Total Funds 2024 £
Fixed Assets					
Tangible Assets	8	348	-	348	464
Current Assets					
Debtors	9	33,430	-	33,430	75,985
Rent Deposit		6,250	-	6,250	6,250
Prepayments and accrued income		12,611	-	12,611	8,158
Cash at bank and in hand		260,749	16,642	277,391	260,724
Total Current Assets		313,040	16,642	329,682	351,117
Creditors					
Amounts falling due within one year	10	19,938	-	19,938	15,186
Net Current Assets		293,102	16,642	309,744	335,931
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities		293,450	16,642	310,092	336,395
Net Assets		293,450	16,642	310,092	336,395
Funds					
Unrestricted funds				293,450	318,590
Restricted funds				16,642	17,805
Total Funds				310,092	336,395

The financial statements were approved by the Board on 31st July 2025 and were signed on its behalf by:



Daniel Marshall

Chair

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025

1. Accounting Policies

Basis of preparation of the accounts

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant notes to these accounts.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice Accounting and Reporting by Charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) issued on 16 July 2014 and with the Charities Act.

The accounting policies adopted are set out below:

Transition to FRS 102

No restatement of items has been required in making the transition to FRS 102. The transition date was 1 April 2016.

Incoming Resources

Incoming resources are accounted for on a receivable basis deferred as described below where appropriate.

Resources Expended

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to specific headings, they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Investment Income

Bank interest received is included on a receipts basis.

Recognition of Liabilities

Liabilities are recognised on the accrual basis in accordance with normal accounting principles, modified where necessary in accordance with the guidance given in the Statement of Recommended Practice for Accounting and Reporting (revised June 2008) issued by the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales.

Fixed Assets and Depreciation

All tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation has been provided at the following rates in order to write off the assets (less their estimated residual value) over their estimated useful economic lives:

Fixtures and Fittings 25% on reducing balance.

Computer Equipment 25% on reducing balance.

Taxation

As a registered charity, the charity is exempt from Corporation Tax on its charitable activities.

Fund Accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for specific restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when stated by the donor or when the funds are raised for specific purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Hire Purchase and Leasing Commitments

Rental paid under operating leases are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities on a straight-line basis over the period of the lease.

2. Voluntary Income	2025	2024
	£	£
Grants	297,750	327,943
Contract	449,742	446,412
Places of Worship Donations	1,758	3,971
General Donations	44,735	52,409
Gift Aid	5,325	5,060
Corporate Donations	2,316	9,344
Donated Services and Facilities	31,205	15,658
	832,831	860,797

3. Activities for Generating Funds	2025	2024
	£	£
Fundraising Events	12,679	12,084
Earned Income	4,310	7,562
	16,989	19,646

4. Investment Income	2025	2024
	£	£
Interest Receivable	4,618	3,802

5. Costs of Generating Voluntary Income and Undertaking Charitable Activities	2025	2024
	£	£
Support Costs	865,519	838,254

6. Trustees' Remuneration and Benefits

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2025 (2024: nil).

Trustees' Expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2025 (2024: nil).

7. Staff Costs	2025	2024
	£	£
Wages and salaries (including pensions)	718,367	682,308

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2025	2024
Full time equivalents (FTE)	19	20

No employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000.

8. Tangible Fixed Assets	Fixtures & fittings £	Computer equipment £	Totals £
Cost			
At 1 April 2024	21,086	18,681	39,767
At 31 March 2025	21,086	18,681	39,767
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2024	20,905	18,397	39,303
Charge for the year	45	71	116
At 31 March 2025	20,950	18,468	39,419
Net Book Value			
At 31 March 2025	136	213	348
At 31 March 2024	181	284	464

9. Debtors	2025 £	2024 £
Debtors	33,430	75,985

10. Creditors	2025 £	2024 £
Taxation and social security	10,689	12,500
Other creditors	7,776	1,846
Accrued expenses	1,473	840
	19,938	15,186

11. Movement in Funds	At 01/04/24 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31/03/25 £
Unrestricted Funds	318,590	(25,140)	293,450
Restricted Funds	17,805	(1,163)	16,642
Total Funds	336,395	(26,303)	310,092

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted Funds	854,438	880,741	(25,140)
Restricted Funds	57,882	59,045	(1,163)
Total Funds	912,320	939,786	(26,303)

Schedule to the Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2025

	2025	2024
	£	£
Incoming Resources		
Voluntary Income		
Contracts	449,742	446,412
Grants	297,750	327,943
General donations	44,735	52,409
Donated services and facilities	31,205	15,658
Places of Worship donations	1,758	3,971
Corporate donations	2,316	9,344
Gift Aid	5,325	5,060
	832,831	860,797
Activities for generating funds		
Fundraising events	12,679	12,084
Earned income	4,310	7,562
	16,989	19,646
Investment income		
Interest receivable	4,618	3,802
Total incoming resources	854,438	884,245
Resources Expended		
Governance costs		
Accountancy fees	590	590
Independent examination	250	250
Other professional fees	14,382	16,695
	15,222	17,535
Support costs		
Rent and Compliance charges	50,904	46,853
Partnerships	25,500	25,500
Heat and Light	16,239	12,120
Telephone	5,279	4,813
Refreshments	617	1,161
Water	960	828
Depreciation	116	155
	99,615	91,430
Information Technology		
IT Support and consumables	7,004	7,270
Website	6,343	5,967
	13,347	13,237

	2025	2024
	£	£
Human resources		
Wages (incl. pensions)	718,367	682,308
Training	1,812	1,926
	720,179	684,234
Other		
Repairs and maintenance	15,304	24,858
Insurance	5,832	8,197
Office expenses	2,689	3,920
Memberships	1,496	1,389
Staff Travel	3,695	3,607
Recruitment and DBS checks	829	1,031
Equipment	1,653	5,119
Sundries	823	1,110
Marketing	57	123
	32,378	49,354
Total resources expended	880,741	855,790
Net income / (expenditure)	(26,303)	28,455

Leadership team and internal structure

Executive Team

- **Adrienne Arthurs** – Chief Executive (also Safeguarding Designated Person)
- **Mark Wiseman** – Deputy CEO (formerly External Relations Director)
- **Debbie Coote** – Therapeutic Services Director
- *Note: Rita Cooper (Operations Director/Deputy CEO) and Susan Hudson (Director of Finance and Asset Management) both retired during the year.*

Senior Leadership Team

- **Michelle Smale** – Counselling Services Lead (joined SLT during the year)
- **Lucy Roe** – Business Manager and Data Protection Officer (DPO)
- **Varsha Valluru** – Fundraising and Marketing Manager
- **Nicola Roope** – Finance and Personnel Manager
- *Note: Lindsey Culver – Head of Finance (joined 09/04/2025)*

Staff and Volunteers

The Living Room's vital services across its three centres and online platforms are powered by the unwavering commitment and expertise of our dedicated team. This includes a robust group of professional counsellors and administrative staff, alongside a passionate network of active volunteers. Their collective efforts are fundamental to our mission and the high quality of support we provide to those in need.

Team Composition

- We currently operate with **11 FTE counsellors and administrative staff**, who form the backbone of our operational and therapeutic delivery.
- Our work is significantly bolstered by **9 FTE active volunteers** and **5 active volunteers**, whose selfless contributions extend our reach and enhance our service offerings. We also benefit from the dedication of **11 placement counsellors** (in training).

Risk Management

Ensuring the safety and well-being of our staff, volunteers, and service users is paramount. The Living Room maintains a comprehensive risk management framework, diligently adhering to all relevant health and safety regulations. A key component of this commitment is our utilisation of **Bright Safe**, a robust platform that facilitates efficient management of our Health & Safety protocols, ensuring a secure environment for all.

Staff and Volunteer Support Systems

We recognise the demanding nature of the work undertaken by our team and are committed to providing strong support systems. To foster effective communication, collaboration, and professional development, The Living Room leverages key platforms such as **BrightHR** for HR management and employee support, and **Microsoft Teams** (and **Zoom**) for seamless internal communication, virtual meetings, and collaborative project work.

Additionally, we provide comprehensive employee assistance through **Peninsula UK EAP (Wisdom)**, offering confidential support and resources. Our HR support and compliance are further reinforced by the expertise of **Peninsula UK**. In addition, we provide clinical supervision to therapeutic staff. These systems ensure our team members feel supported, connected, and equipped to deliver their best.

History of TLR

The Living Room Story: 2000–2025

Our Mission

Since opening our doors in 2000, The Living Room has provided life-changing, community-based recovery services for individuals and families affected by addiction. We believe in healing the whole person—mind, body, and family—through group therapy, one-on-one support, and a strong peer-led model.

Milestones & Growth

- **2000** – The Living Room opens in Stevenage with one room and six volunteers
- **2001–2005** – Permanent base established; crèche and specialist groups launched
- **2006** – *Revival*, our first charity shop, opens to support long-term sustainability
- **2010** – Janis Feely awarded **MBE** for Services to Disadvantaged People
- **2012** – St Albans centre opens, expanding reach across Hertfordshire
- **2016** – Leadership transitions to CEO Adrienne Arthurs; Janis becomes Honorary President
- **2019** – Watford centre opens, expanding reach across Hertfordshire
- **2020 - 2021** – Rapid digital adaptation during COVID-19; online hubs launched
- **2023** – Charity shops merged for improved efficiency and reach
- **2024** – Watford service grew to 5 days a week

Awards & Recognition

- Founder is a Member of the British Empire (MBE)
- Centre for Social Justice Awards (x2)
- Maxie Richards Award
- High Sheriff of Hertfordshire Awards (multiple)
- Pride of Stevenage Award
- Comet Lifetime Achievement & Charity Champion Awards

Charity Shops: Revival

- Opened 2006; merged two shops into a single shop in 2023
- Provides critical revenue (circa £35k) and client and local community volunteer opportunities and employment
- Supports sustainability, skill-building, and community integration

Recent Highlights (2020–2025)

- **Virtual therapy hubs**-maintained access during pandemic
- **63% sustained recovery rate**—well above national benchmarks
- Over **1,700 enquiries** handled annually, 100% contacted within 48 hours
- Investment in **staff wellbeing** and **digital infrastructure**
- **Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce**: Highly Commended finalist (2022)

Looking Ahead

As we move into our next chapter, we remain committed to:

- Expanding our services in response to growing need
- Investing in our people and infrastructure
- Strengthening our community partnerships
- Delivering high-impact recovery outcomes for individuals and families

THE LIVING ROOM

England & Wales - Charity number 1080634

Accounts



Annual Report of Trustees

2023 - 2024

Breaking the cycle of addiction



www.livingroomherts.org
0300 365 0304
enquiries@livingroomherts.org



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Introduction: Leading the Way in Recovery

The Living Room has consistently adapted its services to support individuals overcoming dependencies on drugs, alcohol, and addictive behaviours. With 63% of our clients achieving sustained recovery, significantly above the national average of 52%, our success rates over the past four years highlight the unwavering dedication and expertise of our staff, as well as the resilience of our clients.

As experts in recovery, we collaborate with partners to deliver exceptional support. We are committed to our staff's wellbeing, striving for Level 2 accreditation in the [Herts Healthy Workplace](#) initiative and maintaining our status as a [Mindful Employer](#) since 2019, but also being committed to the [Real Living Wage](#). This ethos of care extends to our clients, emphasising the importance of supporting poor mental health, and embodying our core values.

This annual report highlights The Living Room's transformative impact through therapeutic interventions, breaking the generational cycle of addiction. At an average cost of £2,326 per client per year for 2023-24, our services yield substantial long-term benefits. Treasury-approved models show that for each client who secures employment, society gains a benefit of £22,000, even accounting for those who might have found employment independently. Initially, only 20% of our clients were employed, but a year later, this number increased to 70%, including those in employment or volunteering.

We believe our approach—sharing feelings, connecting with others who have similar experiences, and offering new coping tools—leads to significant behavioural changes. Additionally, our graduates' groups have seen steadily increasing attendance, becoming a vital part of our calendar.

Since 2000, The Living Room has been dedicated to breaking the cycle of addiction for social good. As we conclude our strategic priorities this year, we have re-evaluated our goals with input from consultants, stakeholders, staff, and clients to ensure our roadmap remains relevant and effective for the future.

Join us in celebrating our achievements and looking ahead to continued success in fostering recovery and resilience.



Breaking the cycle of addiction

Our Purpose: To provide group therapy, support and connections for adults, in a safe community space.

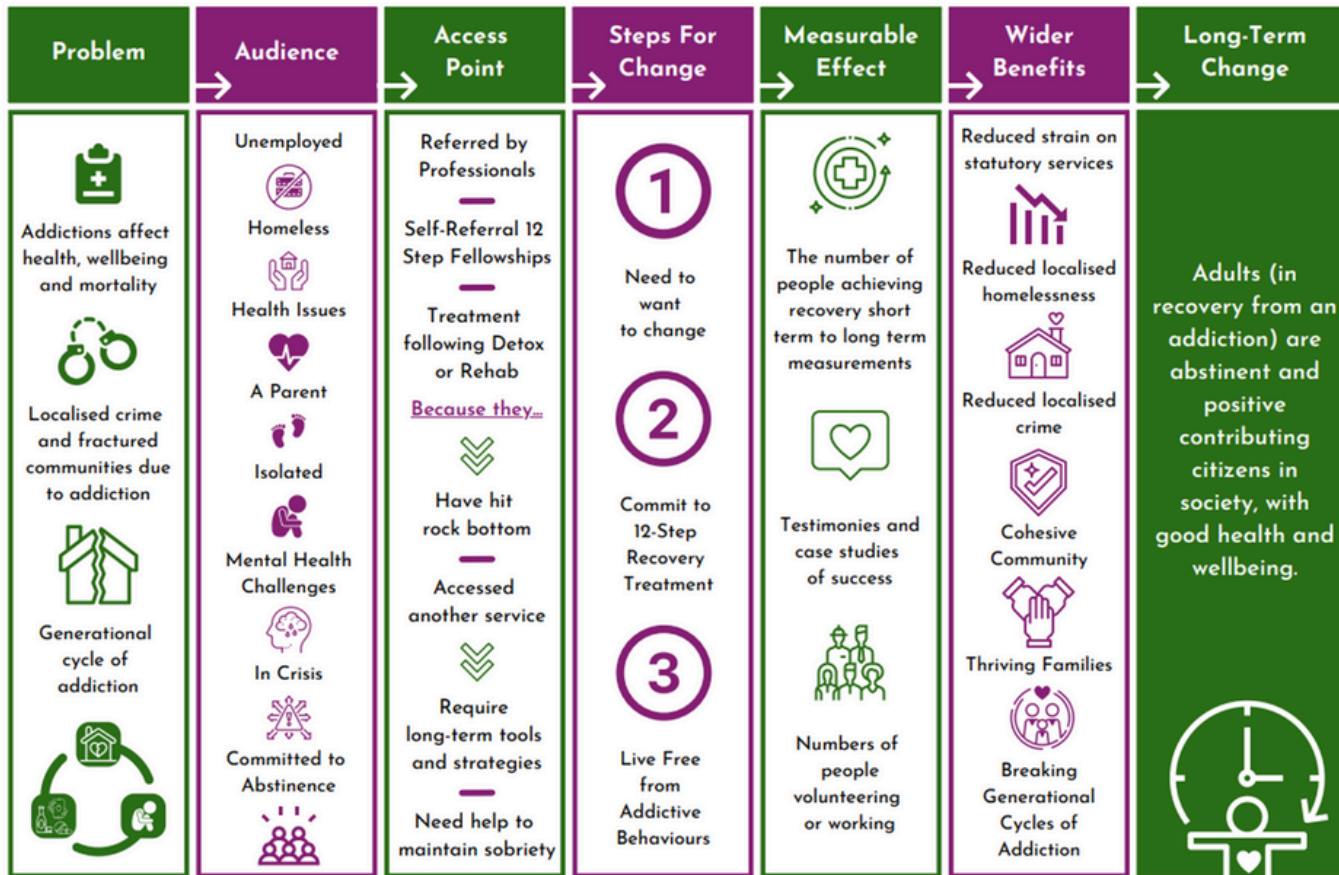
Our Mission: We help families to understand and heal the pain that drives addiction, building brighter futures for generations.

Our Vision: Is a future where people with the illness of addiction live their lives free from an addiction to drugs, alcohol or behaviours, emerging as positive contributors to society.

Theory of Change for the Client



The Living Room - Theory of Change for the Client





Annual Report Statement

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

The board of Trustees are satisfied with the performance of the charity during the year and the position on 31st March 2024 and consider that the charity is in a good position to continue its activities during the coming year and that the charity's assets are adequate to fulfil its obligations.

Compliance with the Charity Governance Code

The Charity Governance Code aims to support charities and their trustees in achieving high standards of governance. We, as a sector, have a responsibility to our beneficiaries, stakeholders, and supporters to exemplify outstanding leadership and governance. At The Living Room, we are committed to using the Code as a framework for continual improvement in our Board of Trustees' practices and the support provided by our leadership Executive Team.

To ensure alignment with the Code, we undertake the following specific actions:

Bi-Annual Review and Self-Assessment Board Development

We conduct a bi-annual review of our governance practices against the principles of the Charity Governance Code. This review includes a thorough self-assessment to identify strengths and areas for improvement. We prioritise the development of our Board of Trustees by providing ongoing opportunities for training and resources to enhance their skills and knowledge. This includes regular workshops, seminars, and access to governance best practices.

Leadership and Oversight

Our leadership Executive Team works closely with the Board to ensure effective oversight and strategic direction. We hold regular joint meetings to discuss governance issues, review progress, and set future goals.

Transparency and Accountability

We maintain high levels of transparency and accountability by regularly publishing our governance policies, financial statements, and impact reports. We also engage with our stakeholders through consultations and feedback mechanisms.

Bi-Annual Review and Self-Assessment Board Development

We conduct a bi-annual review of our governance practices against the principles of the Charity Governance Code. This review includes a thorough self-assessment to identify strengths and areas for improvement. We prioritise the development of our Board of Trustees by providing ongoing opportunities for training and resources to enhance their skills and knowledge. This includes regular workshops, seminars, and access to governance best practices.

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Risk Management

We have a robust risk management framework in place to identify, assess, and mitigate potential risks. This includes regular risk assessments and the implementation of strategies to address identified risks.

Diversity and Inclusion

We are committed to fostering diversity and inclusion within our Board and organisation. We actively seek to recruit trustees and staff from diverse backgrounds and ensure that our policies and practices are inclusive.

Ethical Standards

We uphold the highest ethical standards in all our activities. Our code of conduct and ethics policies guide the behaviour of our trustees, staff, and volunteers, ensuring integrity and trustworthiness in everything we do.

Statement on Trustee Remuneration and Conflicts of Interest

None of the trustees receives remuneration or any other benefit from their work with the charity. Trustees are invited to declare any relevant conflicts of interest at each board meeting and are formally requested to submit an annual register of interests' form. Board members have reported no relevant interests or transactions. It is noted that the CEO and the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees are related by marriage.

Annual Report

The board of trustees of The Living Room present its annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2024. The financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011 and SORP regulations.

Fundraising Regulations

The Living Room engages in public fundraising without the use of professional fundraisers or commercial participators. The charity strictly adheres to all relevant fundraising regulations and codes. Throughout the year, The Living Room maintained full compliance with these regulations and codes and received no complaints regarding its fundraising practices.



Public Benefit Statement

“I have not been arrested since I’ve been in recovery. I’ve not had a fight or stolen anything. There is genuinely a timeline from when I was a using addict to since I’ve been in recovery.”

The trustees have referred to the Charity Commission’s general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity’s objectives and activities, and in planning its future activities. In particular, the trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the objectives and activities that have been set.

The Living Room delivers public benefit by supporting adults with addictions to stop and stay stopped, and by providing peer support for family members or carers of loved ones with addictions. We achieve this by offering free, time-unlimited, abstinence-based, facilitated group counselling treatment to break the cycle of addiction, as well as peer support groups for family members or carers. All our trained counsellors are in long-term, sustained recovery, bringing invaluable lived experience to their work.

Our programs provide individuals with the opportunity to explore the root causes of their own or their loved one’s addiction and their responsibility in addressing it. We help people understand underlying issues such as trauma and bereavement, enabling them to make connections with others and learn tools and strategies for leading a healthy and happy life. This, in turn, benefits future generations, the economy, and communities by reducing reliance on drugs, alcohol, or other addictive behaviours for comfort.

At The Living Room, we believe that everyone has potential and a life worth living. Our commitment to helping individuals overcome addiction not only improves their lives but also creates a positive ripple effect throughout society.



Reference and Administrative Details

Status	The Living Room is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)	
Also known as	Living Room Herts, The Living Room Hertfordshire, TLR, TLRH	
Governing document	The Living Room is governed by its Constitution, as adopted on 02 November 2017 amended 26 September 2019.	
Company number	N/A	
Charity number	CIO 1175541 (previously 1080634)	
Registered office and operational address	8-10 The Glebe Chells Way Stevenage Hertfordshire SG2 0DJ	
Trustees	Daniel Marshall CHAIR Daniel McGovern TREASURER Eddie Mills VICE-CHAIR Akhilesh Nair	Jenny Brace Charles King Ramesh Summan Elizabeth Fisher
Chief Executive Officer	Adrienne Arthurs	
Banker	HSBC, Town Centre, Danestrete, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 1BY	
Chartered Certified Accountants	Hargreaves Owen Ltd Red Sky House, Fairclough Hall, Halls Green, Weston. Hertfordshire SG4 7DP	



Our People

The Executive Team

Adrienne Arthurs, Chief Executive; (and Safeguarding DP)
Rita Cooper, Operations Director/ Deputy CEO (and Safeguarding RP)
Mark Wiseman, External Relations Director
Susan Hudson, Director of Finance and Asset Management

The Senior Leadership Team

Debbie Coote, Clinical Manager, Counselling Manager Watford
Lucy Roe, Business Manager and Data Protection Officer (DPO)
Varsha Valluru, Fundraising and Marketing Manager
Nicola Roope, Finance and Personnel Manager

Staff

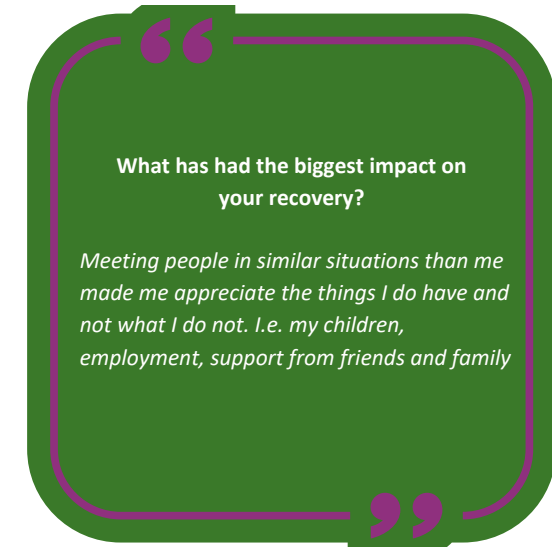
16 FTE Counsellors and administrators support across all three hubs.
16 Volunteers

Volunteer's Contributions

We are deeply grateful for the incredible contributions of our volunteers throughout the year. Our dedicated team includes placement counsellor volunteers (trained above Level 1), peer mentor volunteers, marketing and fundraising volunteers, event volunteers, IT consultants, data analysts, counselling volunteers, and our invaluable trustees—all of whom work tirelessly in a purely voluntary and unpaid capacity.

In the 2023-2024 period, 55 individuals generously dedicated their time to support The Living Room in Stevenage, St Albans, Watford, and our charity shop. Additionally, our paid colleagues have gone above and beyond, offering extra hours voluntarily to bolster our fundraising efforts.

Thank you to all our volunteers for their unwavering commitment and hard work. Your selfless contributions are the backbone of our mission and make a profound difference in our community.





Board Meetings and Governance Structure

Board meetings of the Trustees, CEO, and the Executive Leadership Team (by invitation) occur quarterly. Additional meetings, including extraordinary board meetings, committee meetings, and executive board meetings, are held as needed and on a regular schedule. Decisions are made by majority vote at quorate board meetings, and communication and decisions can also be facilitated via email. Usually, half of the board meetings are conducted in person, while the other half use video conferencing software.

Committees

- Finance Committee
- Sustainability Committee [NEW – including DEEI]
- Income Generation Committee
- Executive Committee

Trustees serve three-year terms, up to a maximum of three terms (nine years in total). They are encouraged to use their skills, experience, and knowledge to guide and support the strategic direction of the organisation. Each trustee takes the lead on specific policy and procedure endorsements required by the Charity Commission, our commissioners, and legal and best practice recommendations. These endorsements are then proposed to the full board for ratification.

The running of the organisation and its operations is delegated to the CEO and the Executive Team.

Trustees are recruited from the general public, with a particular encouragement for individuals with lived experience of recovery and ex-service users to join the board. Two board spaces are specifically allocated for these individuals. The CEO and the Chair or Vice-Chair provide new trustees with an induction and ongoing support to ensure they are well-prepared for their roles.

What has had the biggest impact on your recovery?

*Feeling human again and part of.
Seeing some good in myself and realising I am human and despite making mistakes that is not all that my life is about. Able to feel gratitude and the return of my sense of humour.*



Intro from our Chair of the Board of Trustees, Daniel Marshall



We continue to face unprecedented levels of demand and complexity in our service, but as a service we remain a beacon of hope and stability for our clients. This is testament to the level of quality, resilience, and passion, that Adrienne and her brilliant team of staff and volunteers show every day, and I want to start by thanking them for their commitment, and outstanding results. This year, our graduation rate soared to an impressive 63%, significantly surpassing the national average of 52%.

We are proud to have supported 1,126 individuals this year, a notable increase from previous years, despite facing inflationary cost pressures. Our ability to maintain and even expand our services in such a challenging economic climate underscores the strength and efficiency of our organisational culture.

One of the standout aspects of our work this year has been the continuing cost-effectiveness of our services. At an average cost of £2,326 per client annually, our programs offer substantial long-term benefits on people's health, wellbeing, and stability.

I also want to thank our Trustee Board – we have an excellent, diverse Board, which has welcomed new, high-quality additions again during the year. We continually look at our own performance and how we are ensuring a diverse and high-quality Board which is best placed to oversee the organisation. I can say with certainty that our Board are an enthusiastic group, and importantly, have a great set of skills and experience. It really does give me great pleasure to work alongside the quality of Board that I have the privilege of working with. I also want to nod to Eddie and Danny, who continue to conduct the roles of Vice-Chair and Treasurer brilliantly.

We do not expect the challenges our clients are facing to go away any time soon and remain committed to building on our position of relative strength. It is vital that we continue to look forward, continue building on our service, and our strategic priorities have been carefully put together with input from key stakeholders, staff, and clients to ensure our roadmap remains relevant and effective.

As we continue to face a complex and ever-changing world, we stand strong, resilient, and unwavering in our mission to support individuals on their journey to recovery. Finally, a big thank you to anyone, individual or organisation, which has invested in us. We could not do what we do without your support, and we look forward to continuing this essential work, with your support.



Report from our Treasurer, Danny McGovern



Looking back on the past year, it gives me immense pride to see the charity continue to serve our local communities, providing the highest quality support for those recovering from a wide range of addictions.

I passionately believe that providing a service like ours is only possible through the hard work of our expert staff and exceptional volunteers. As the number of clients who access our crucial services increases, praise should also go to our Chief Executive, Adrienne, and our Chair and Vice-chair, Daniel, and Eddie respectively, for ensuring the smooth operation of The Living Room and the continuing improvement in our graduation rate over recent years.

In a tricky financial climate, I am pleased to report that The Living Room has had another successful year financially. Mark Wiseman and his fundraising team continue to fruitfully seek new funding routes, while maintaining a stellar relationship with our current financial supporters, and Susan Hudson ensures that every penny is spent wisely, with funding being directed to helping our service users.

Our fundraising team secured more funding than budgeted for over the year and allowed The Living Room to finish the financial year with a small surplus – no mean feat given the financial landscape. I am also enormously proud that The Living Room has kept pace with the Real Living Wage, providing increases of between 3% and 10% for our diligent staff.

Looking towards the 2024/2025 financial year, the Cost-of-Living crisis will continue to impact our grant applications, as foundations prioritise smaller charities and, understandably, charities which support those struggling with increased food and housing costs. Despite this, our tireless fundraising team continue to successfully push into new funding routes, and we expect increased income from our newly renovated charity shop in Stevenage to supplement current and future grant income, leading to another positive financial year for The Living Room.

It is always warming to read testimonies from those who access our services, reminding me how vital the work of our staff truly is. Providing a year's worth of addiction support for an average of £2,326 per client represents exceptional value and I continue to be amazed by the impact that our service provides for those facing up to addiction. I remain proud to be a part of this charity and I have no doubt that the Living Room will continue to offer top quality assistance to those who most need it.



Comments from our Chief Executive, Adrienne Arthurs



As we reflect on the past year, my heartfelt thanks go out to our volunteers, steadfast trustees, and everyone who has supported us in our mission. Your encouragement and dedication have been instrumental in helping us address the barriers to successful recovery faced by those who access our services. We have strategically partnered with other organisations to create safe and familiar environments for our clients, empowering them not only to achieve recovery but also to lay the foundations for a healthier, more connected life equipped with robust coping strategies. Witnessing the transformative impact of these efforts on our clients has been profoundly rewarding, and I commend our teams for fostering such vital inter-organisational relationships.

This year, as our strategic plan approached its renewal in March 2024, we embarked on a thoughtful refresh, collaborating with diverse stakeholders and a consultant through the Lloyds Bank Foundation to pinpoint our priorities for 2024 to 2027. In this process, we also refined our vision, mission, values, aims, and commitments, ensuring they are more accessible, friendly, and reflective of our deep commitment to the community.

Participating in the Hertfordshire Drugs and Alcohol Symposium 2024 has allowed us to advocate for more integrated services, improved communication between providers, and heightened awareness of our successful initiatives. We have reached out across various sectors, delivering talks and training throughout Hertfordshire to enhance our visibility and deepen societal understanding of addiction, striving to dismantle the stigma associated with this condition that can affect anyone.

Our media campaigns, blogs, and fundraising efforts this year have taken a focused approach, highlighting our expertise in addiction recovery, and engaging with well-known figures connected to our cause. The External Relations team has embraced new technologies and innovative strategies to amplify our message to those who need it most.

However, the economic climate has posed significant challenges, making it difficult to secure the necessary funding and support from donors. Despite these hurdles, I am profoundly grateful for the unwavering support from our funders and commissioners, which has enabled us to continue making a tangible difference in the lives of families living with addiction.

Lastly, I extend my deepest appreciation to our staff and volunteers, whose passion and commitment to aiding others through their recovery journeys are truly the backbone of our organisation. Your efforts help countless individuals reclaim control over their futures, free from the devastation wrought by addiction.

Thank you all for another year of dedication and impact. I look forward to continuing our work together, driving change and fostering hope within our community.

Adrienne Arthurs
Chief Executive Officer

Our Values	CARING:	We demonstrate empathy and consideration in our interactions with each other.
	PEOPLE FOCUSED:	We prioritise tasks and activities that align with people’s needs and expectations.
	COMMUNITY:	We engage in activities that contribute to the well-being of the community and align with ESG principles.
	COMPETENT:	We ensure proficiency and skill in carrying out our responsibilities.
	INTEGRITY:	We uphold a strong sense of honesty and ethical behaviour in our professional roles.
Our Commitment to Inclusion	We want to find intentional ways to grow our understanding and support of others, by committing to equality, equity, diversity, and inclusion both within and outside our organisation. We value people for who they are and actively stop discrimination.	



Objectives and Activities

Charitable Objectives

The charity's main objective for the year was to promote the objects set out in its governing document, 02 November 2017 (refreshed 19 September 2019) when the charity was registered as a CIO No 1175541 (formerly 1080634).

(a) to preserve and protect the health of all persons who are in danger of becoming addicted to, or dependent upon, drugs of any description, alcohol, solvents or other addictive substances or behaviours as well as their family members within the County of Hertfordshire and such other places as the trustees shall from time to time decide by the provision of counselling and recovery and support services.

(b) to advance the education of professionals working in the field of addiction treatment by the provision of professional training, support services and information.

Our Offer

We offer free, time unlimited group therapy sessions, led by trained counsellors who have personally experienced addiction recovery. Our approach includes person-centred therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy, dialectical behaviour therapy, psycho-educational and psycho-social counselling, psychodynamic counselling, and the first four steps of the AA 12-step program.

Talks, training, and event presence to raise awareness.

Holistic support in partnership with voluntary and statutory organisations.

[Our Services | The Living Room \(livingroomherts.org\)](https://livingroomherts.org)



Who We Support

We support Hertfordshire residents committed to abstinence, offering a lifeline through group therapy sessions three to five days a week. Our support extends beyond individuals to embrace family members and friends caring for someone facing addiction. The magic of our groups lies in the deep connections formed among peers and the invaluable guidance from professional counsellors who have walked the path of recovery themselves.

These sessions are not just meetings; they are vibrant communities where shared experiences foster resilience and hope. Our approach ensures that everyone involved, from the individual struggling with addiction to their loved ones, receives the compassionate support they need to navigate their journey to recovery.

Referrals

We accept self-referrals as well as professional referrals, which are easily made via our website or via a phone call to our local number 0300 365 0304. In 2023-2024 we saw 1126 enquiries (2022-23 = 1149, 2021-2022 = 1501) made to our service, including 608 referrals (2022-2023 = 714, 2021-2022 = 903).

Our Locations

Discover the heart of recovery at The Living Room's vibrant group therapy hubs located in Stevenage, St Albans, and Watford. Each hub serves as a sanctuary where individuals committed to overcoming addiction can find a supportive community and professional guidance. These community located spaces are more than just therapy centres—they are beacons of hope and healing, where lives are transformed, and lasting connections are forged.



Families Living in Recovery Project



Contracted to deliver drugs and alcohol daytime community rehabilitation in partnership with Relate and Family Lives. Addiction recovery journey including relationship and parenting support,

Out of Hours Helpline for Families 0808 800 2222 (Family Lives)

One number 0300 365 0304 – self or professional referrals.

Case Study A

“When I started the sessions with the counsellor from Family Lives, I was feeling sceptical and very anxious. I wasn't sure how it would help. It's very difficult, as a parent of a child with an addiction, knowing how to live any sort of normal life. The sessions were very beneficial for me and really helped me to see situations from a different perspective.

They helped me gain confidence, be more assertive, and provided advice for setting appropriate boundaries. The counsellor from Family Lives enabled me to reflect on some honest truths and realities, and with awareness has come change and choice. I was feeling overwhelmed by everything that was out of my control. The counsellor was a firm voice, reminding me of what's realistic, that it's time to put myself first, and that it's okay to be there when, or if, my son is ready to ask for help.

They supported me, understood my emotions, and challenged negative patterns of thinking, all at the same time. This has given me the tools to hopefully continue helping myself in the future. I benefited from the sessions with them, and in just a short space of time, they have helped me make massive changes in my way of thinking and dealing with my situation. I can't put into words how grateful I am.”

Case Study B - Breaker of Chains

I owe my sanity and life to TLR. After struggling with alcohol addiction for a number of years and trying everything to stop alone, I was given hope.

Taking advice from a friend in the fellowship, I made the call to TLR. I was broken, lost, and alone, and I didn't want to continue living life as I was anymore. I also have mental health issues that were exacerbated when I drank, leading me to do crazy and dangerous things. Sometimes, I'm amazed I even got through that alive.

A welcoming counsellor talked me through the service and made me feel heard for the first time ever. It was so reassuring, supportive, empathic, and understanding.

I began to have hope that I might be able to find a way to be well again, especially since I was so unwell in my early days. TLR opened their doors to me daily, and I became an important member of the group therapy sessions. It really helped to talk about the trauma I have been through and to listen to others in similar situations share their experiences, pain, and hope in the group. Slowly, I began to feel more alive again, like a part of something, connected to life.

The morning feeling sessions always provide an opportunity to talk and get things out. I really enjoyed the afternoon sessions, which provided educational time to explore addiction and also taught me tools to manage difficult emotions that used to lead me to relapse. Art sessions are my favourite, followed closely by music therapy with a fellow also in recovery.

I have learned to live again on life's terms, whether good, bad, or ugly, but I couldn't have done it alone. My heart belongs to TLR.

Case Study C

Life before TLR was dark and chaotic. I never knew what was coming next: my next mood, my next adventure, my next drama, even down to my next meal or wash. I just never knew. However, I did know when my next drink was—straight after I had finished the last one. Alcohol and cocaine got me through difficult times, but before I knew it, I needed them to do everything and anything.

My first day at TLR is possibly the strangest day of my life, walking into a "hello" and a smile, sitting down, and talking about addiction with someone who is a counsellor—but not just any counsellor, an addict herself. That was bizarre. Then, into a room, where slowly individuals came in, came to say hello—to me. I mean, who are all these people! It turns out, these people had stories, experiences, thinking patterns, and so on, just like me! They were, in fact, addicts, and for the first time, I discovered I was an addict, and I wasn't alone, and more importantly, I could get better. My first few weeks were a constant battle between anxiety, fear, and emotional exhaustion, and the love, support, and understanding I received at TLR and through the connections I was making.

TLR didn't just give me healthy connections to people who are in recovery, warmth, love, and understanding. It has taught me about myself, explored things deep inside such as traumas, and ways to keep me safe such as boundaries—all of which were alien. TLR also acted like a key to a whole world that is out there—that is recovery. Meetings, events, and meditation, actively practicing self-love talk in groups, etc., and only through being in TLR did I realize, with the help of counsellors and others in the room, that yes, I'm addicted to alcohol and cocaine, but what about my disordered eating (binge eating for me), and my shopping addiction, and whilst I'm at it, my love relationships were not healthy either. I would be so co-dependent on those individuals. These one or two problems were deep, I was, and I am, an addict and it was far bigger than I thought. The issues that were created wreaked havoc in my life, the life of my son, and the life of those I loved dearly.

These days, I have focus. I keep myself and my son safe. I have hope and, most importantly for me and those around me, I have peace. I work on these daily—sometimes hourly, but I keep working on them, as it is my way forward.

And that is what TLR has brought me—peace and hope.

Breaking the Cycle of Addiction

The generational cycle of addiction refers to the pattern where substance abuse problems, such as alcoholism or drug addiction, are passed down from one generation to the next within a family. This cycle can be influenced by a combination of genetic, environmental, psychological, and social factors. Key elements of this cycle include:




- 1 **Genetic Predisposition:** There may be hereditary factors that increase the susceptibility to addiction. Children of parents with addiction issues may inherit a genetic vulnerability to substance abuse.
- 2 **Environmental Influence:** Growing up in a household where substance abuse is present can normalise such behaviour. Children may witness substance use as a coping mechanism for stress or emotional pain, making it more likely they will adopt similar habits.
- 3 **Psychological Impact:** The trauma and emotional distress associated with living in a household with addiction can contribute to mental health issues, which may, in turn, lead to self-medication through substance use.
- 4 **Social and Behavioural Modelling:** Children learn behaviours by observing and mimicking the actions of their parents and other close family members. If substance use is modelled by parents as an acceptable or necessary part of life, children are more likely to follow suit.
- 5 **Cultural and Societal Factors:** Cultural attitudes towards substance use and societal stressors, such as poverty and lack of access to mental health services, can also perpetuate the cycle of addiction across generations.

What has had the biggest impact on your recovery?

*No excuses but reasons.
My deteriorating mental health played a significant role in my alcoholism and drug taking. I do accept full responsibility.*



Contractual Targets Review 2023 - 2024

Target		Outcomes 2023 - 2024
Service Delivery		
	63% of people achieve sustained recovery	63% of people achieved successful graduation overall. Target achieved. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 59% alcohol (nationally 52%) • 59% drugs (nationally 36%) • 60% disordered eating • 86% behavioural addictions • 33% opiates (nationally 25%) • 85% family and carers
Access and Reach		
	700 people in Hertfordshire helped each year	1126 people supported in total. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice and guidance • Services • Signposting elsewhere
Organisational Improvement		
	100% good to excellent client satisfaction	100% good → excellent client feedback



Strategy 2021 - 2024 Outcomes

1

Review and refine our services to ensure they are inclusive, effective, efficient, and creating long-lasting impact on the lives of our clients.

Refined impact report and client monitoring data collection methods.

Introduced graduate groups for people who have used our services in the past, to maintain recovery and connection.

Started newcomers' groups in all centres to support integration to established groups.

2

Develop and nurture external relationships, to grow our partnerships and profile within communities and Hertfordshire.

Involved in Hertfordshire wide awareness raising projects such as the Hertfordshire Symposium.

Involvement in professional strategic locality networks.

Strengthening partnerships by positioning our organisation to be a joint partner for bids and projects.

3

Invest in digital solutions to reduce the impact on the environment and improve efficiency, accessibility, impact measurement and the reach of our services.

Converted to VoIP telephone system in all buildings.

Invested in new CRM for income generation and partnership tracking.

Transformed our use of social media platforms to communicate to new audiences.

4

Position our organisation to successfully bid for long-term contracts and grants.

Restructured and strengthened the External Relations Team.

Involved our clients in relevant focus groups for external change makers.

Awarded a place on SSE Public Contracting in Depth training.



Strategy 2024 - 2027 Objectives

We are committed to consistently excelling in our core competencies, enhancing our visibility, providing training to others, assuming responsibility, and governing our services with utmost effectiveness.

1

By 2027, increase the number of joint initiatives with statutory agencies by 15% through impactful storytelling about our recovery support.

We will let people know who we are and what we do.

2

By 2027, be a trusted addiction training partner, equipping professionals to make a real difference in people's lives.

We will expand our training and development opportunities.

3

Increase successful graduations to 63%, by supporting people in their recovery journey beyond abstinence, promoting personal growth, meaningful relationships, and reintegration into the community.

We will provide a reliable service for adults with addiction.

We will have a separate support service for their family, caregivers, and friends.

4

Foster a more inclusive and equitable approach to addiction recovery by promoting access through providing a digital therapy platform by 2027.

We will provide online therapy options.

We will make our services more accessible and inclusive.

5

Embed ESG principles into every aspect of our operations by 2027, ensuring continuous improvement in environmental responsibility, social impact, and good governance.

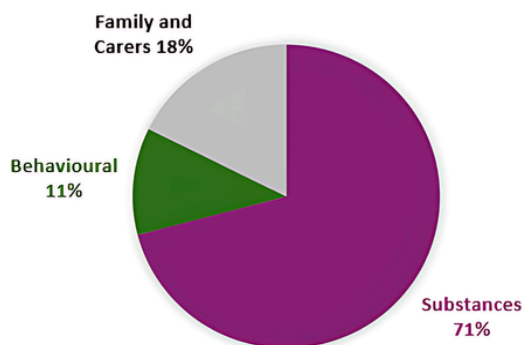
We will focus on our environmental, social and governance goals.

We will improve our sustainability.

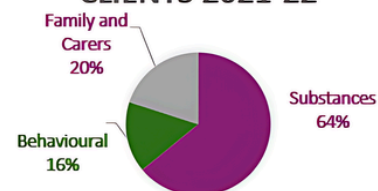


Achievements and Performance

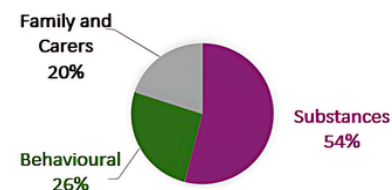
CLIENTS 2023-24



CLIENTS 2021-22



CLIENTS 2022-23



OUTCOMES

2023 - 2024		2022 - 2023	2021 - 2022
368	Number of people accessing treatment therapy	354	340
65	Number of family and carers supported via group therapy	69	68
1126	Brief Interventions via enquiries – in-person, phone, or email	1149	1541
72	'Families Living in Recovery' sessions delivered by Family Lives or Relate	90	96
224	Graduate groups (started Feb 2022) – people attended	156	27
63%	Graduation rate (Nationally 52%)	59%	65%
6%	Transferred to clinical interventions (e.g., Spectrum CGL)	16%	5%

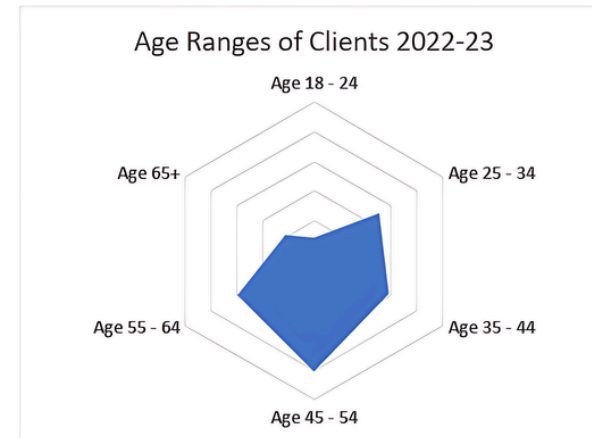
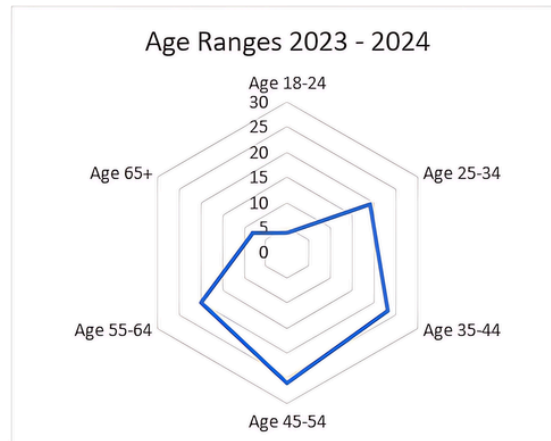


Achievements and Performance

OUTPUTS

30	Main group sessions per week
5	Family and carer sessions per week
8	Specialist group sessions per week
1.5	Families Living in Recovery support hours per week
18	Placement (in training) counsellor hours provided per week
343	Counselling hours provided per week

AGE RANGES



*Recovery Rate Reference

The national recovery rate for drug and alcohol addiction in the UK varies depending on the substance and type of treatment received. According to the latest data from the National Drug Treatment Monitoring System (NDTMS), approximately 52% of individuals who enter treatment for alcohol dependence complete their treatment successfully. For drug addiction, the completion rates are lower, with about 36% of individuals with non-opiate drug problems (such as cannabis or cocaine) and 25% of individuals with opiate problems (such as heroin) completing treatment successfully.

These statistics reflect the complexities and challenges associated with treating different types of substance dependencies. The figures are based on data collected from April 2022 to March 2023 and provide insight into the effectiveness of treatment programs across England ([GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk))



Responding to Need

- ♥ We secured additional funding to support the opening of Watford for a total of 5 days a week, in response to the increasing demand for community rehabilitation.
- ♥ Consortium working with RELATE Northwest, Hertfordshire, Mid-Thames, and Buckinghamshire as well as Family Lives Hertfordshire to deliver our 'Families Living in Recovery Project' providing relationship support.
- ♥ Goga - (Go Outdoors Get Active) horticultural project with Watford clients.
- ♥ Client gardening projects in collaboration with Groundwork UK.
- ♥ Keeping Safe, Sexually delivered to clients by METRO.
- ♥ Client mental health support in-house provided by Turning Point.
- ♥ Motivational personal story 'chairs' from fellowships such as Cocaine Anonymous.
- ♥ Equine Therapy sessions for St Albans clients.
- ♥ Art Therapy from Step 2 Skills.
- ♥ Nutrition in Recovery workshops for clients.
- ♥ Naloxone training for family and carers (overdose reversal) delivered by CGL.





Long-Term Impact 2023 - 2024

In December 2021, we sought feedback from our service users on how we could improve. They suggested offering a follow-up group to maintain contact with our service and connect with others who have achieved recovery. As The Living Room has an impressive 63% recovery rate (nationally 52%*), we are keen to help people maintain their recovery.

In response, we introduced a monthly non-therapeutic group session with a counsellor for our graduates—those who have successfully completed our program and maintained abstinence from addiction. These sessions, held monthly at each hub, have been a remarkable success, attracting 224 participants in 2023-24 and helping them stay connected.

To assess our long-term impact, we annually reach out to individuals who have previously used our services. In 2024, we surveyed 100 people who accessed our services in 2023 to evaluate the long-term outcomes and the impact of TLR treatment on their health and well-being. We had 30 respondents (30% response rate).

Our goal was to determine the effectiveness of our interventions. We asked questions designed to measure abstinence and assess whether individuals were positive, contributing members of society with sustained good health and well-being, in line with our theory of change.

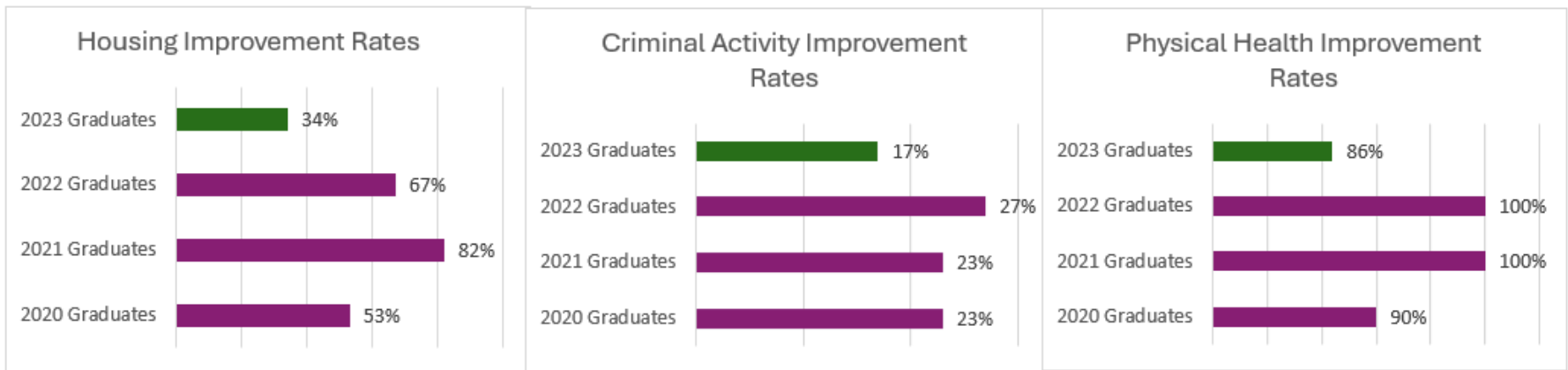
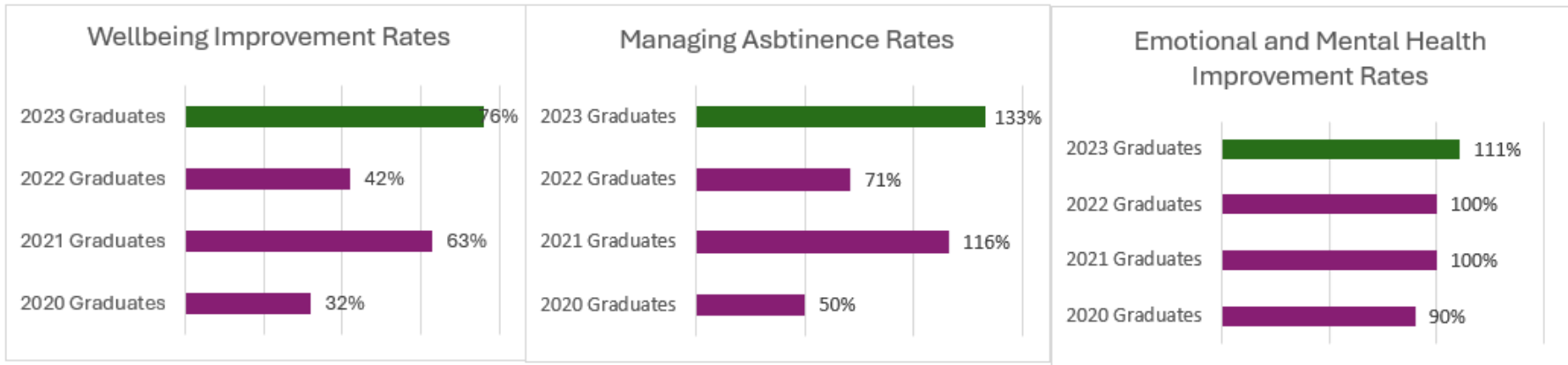
We asked: How well does our treatment method achieve the intended long-term outcomes?

In conclusion, while we recognise that recovery is multifaceted and influenced by many variables, the positive feedback from our clients and the measurable improvements in their well-being strongly indicate that The Living Room is making a meaningful and lasting impact on their lives. The desire of our graduates to support one another through post-graduation groups further demonstrates the strength of our community and the effectiveness of our programs.

We remain dedicated to our mission and will continue to strive for excellence in supporting our clients' long-term recovery and overall well-being. By fostering a supportive environment and continuously adapting our services, we aim to provide the best possible outcomes for those on their journey to recovery.

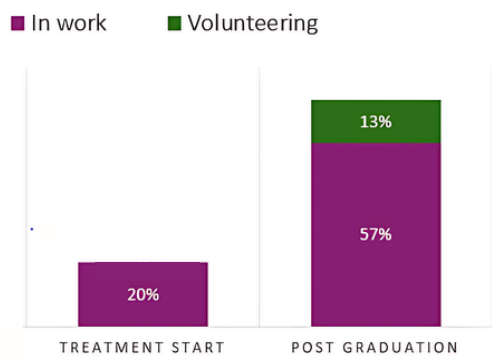
Full report available www.livingroomherts.org/approach-and-impact

Impact Improvement Rates for 2023 – 24



2023 - 24	Areas of Improvement (two methods of measurement – improvement and self-assessment)	2022 - 23
111% ↑	Emotional and mental health improvement	100%
105% ↑	Improved family relationships and increase social networks	82%
93%	Employed, a homemaker, in education or training, retired or volunteering (2 unemployed)	94%
93% ↑	Satisfied with their recovery since leaving TLR	81%
91%	Recovery benefit of attending The Living Room and managing their dependency	92%
91% ↑	Settled and secure housing situation (55% had settled housing at the start of treatment)	84%
91% ↑	Managed sustained abstinence, with 2 people struggling with their abstinence since leaving TLR	69%
86%	Improved physical health	95%
86%	Not offending, 16/22 rated no criminal activity at treatment start, rising to 19/22 at the time of survey. 17% improvement.	92%
73%	Self-care and living skills improvement (before treatment 2.2/5, post treatment 3.8/5)	100%
79%	Scores improved for being motivated and taking responsibility for their own actions (before treatment 2.4/5, 4.3/5 post treatment)	100%
80%	Did not access any further addiction support	88%
53% ↑	Continue to attend a fellowship (13 main group clients and 3 Family & Carer clients)	42%

IMPACT





What We Stopped

Over the past year, we have made difficult decisions to align our services with available resources and strategic priorities.

- Online Therapeutic Service** Despite our determination to reinstate our Online Therapeutic service, which was discontinued last year, securing funding has been challenging. We are now collaborating with Hertfordshire County Council to explore potential priorities that align with the county's strategic goals. Our plan to restart the fourth centre remains on hold, contingent upon securing the necessary income.
- Aftercare Group in St Albans** Our weekly aftercare group in St Albans ceased operations on March 31st due to the conclusion of funding from St Albans City and District Council. We are actively seeking alternative funding sources to potentially revive this essential support group in the future. Our monthly Graduation group is still operational.
- Awareness Days** We have become more discerning about participating in awareness days throughout the year. Our focus has shifted to key areas such as recovery, volunteer appreciation, and mental health, ensuring that our efforts are concentrated where they can have the most impact.
- Healthy Hubs Attendance** Due to limited staff resources, we are no longer able to attend Healthy Hubs across Hertfordshire. However, we have taken steps to ensure that other attending staff are well-briefed on our services, and our informational leaflets are readily available at these hubs.

In summary, whilst we may have paused or discontinued services and activities, decisions have been made thoughtfully to prioritise our core mission and optimise the use of our resources. We remain committed to exploring new funding opportunities and partnerships to reinstate and enhance our services where possible.



Sustainability Statement

As a charity dedicated to helping people achieve sustained recovery through abstinence-based group therapy and non-time-limited support, we address sustainability in our operations and mission by focusing on several key areas:



Community Integration

By working within communities and adopting a daytime community rehabilitation approach, we ensure our services are accessible and integrated into the fabric of local support networks. This enhances the long-term sustainability of our impact, as clients can maintain recovery within their own environments.



Long-term Support

Our non-time-limited approach allows clients to receive support for as long as they need, fostering enduring recovery and reducing the risk of relapse. This commitment to long-term care builds lasting relationships and stable communities.



Abstinence-Based Therapy

By promoting abstinence-based group therapy, we offer a clear and structured path to recovery. This method has proven effectiveness and provides clients with a reliable framework for achieving and maintaining sobriety.



Holistic Rehabilitation

Our focus on comprehensive, daytime community rehabilitation addresses not only the addiction itself but also the underlying issues contributing to it. This holistic approach ensures that clients receive the support they need to rebuild their lives in a sustainable way.



Resource Optimisation

We continuously seek funding opportunities and partnerships to enhance our services and expand our reach. For example, our successful bid for additional funding in Watford allowed us to open an extra day, alleviating pressure on our resources and improving service delivery.



Staff Wellbeing and Training

Ensuring the wellbeing and professional development of our staff is critical to our sustainability. By maintaining a healthy and skilled workforce, we can continue to provide high-quality support to our clients.



Environmental Responsibility

We are mindful of our environmental impact and strive to implement eco-friendly practices in our operations. This includes reducing waste, promoting recycling, and considering sustainability in our procurement processes.



Strategic Planning and Evaluation

We regularly review and update our strategic priorities to align with changing needs and circumstances. By engaging with consultants, stakeholders, staff, and clients, we ensure our roadmap remains relevant and effective, guiding us toward sustainable growth and impact.



Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)

<p>1 NO POVERTY</p>	<p>SDG 1: No Poverty Affordable Services- Continue to offer free services or a sliding scale for pricing for training. Community Outreach- Partner with health organisations and local charities to raise awareness of our services to those in need. Employment Opportunities- Create job opportunities for local residents, especially those from disadvantaged background; and provide training and development programmes.</p>
<p>3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</p>	<p>SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being Wellness Programs- Develop programs that focus on mental and physical health. Access to Healthcare- Collaborate and be commissioned by public health to offer free addiction support group counselling and workshops on wellness. Healthy Environment- Ensure The Living Room is a space that promotes well-being through clean, green spaces, and non-toxic materials.</p>
<p>10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES</p>	<p>SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities Inclusive Policies- Implement policies that promote inclusivity and diversity in all aspects of the business operations. Cultural Competency Training: Provide training for staff to better understand and serve diverse populations. Equal Access- Ensure services are accessible to all, including those with disabilities, and actively work to remove any barriers that might prevent marginalised groups from accessing your services.</p>
<p>11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</p>	<p>SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities Eco-friendly Practices- Adopt sustainable practices such as recycling, using renewable energy, and reducing waste within our operations. Public Spaces- Create spaces that are open to the community for various activities, ensuring they are safe, inclusive, and accessible. Community Engagement- Involve the local community in planning and decision-making processes to ensure your service meet their needs and contribute to the overall development of the area.</p>
<p>17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS</p>	<p>SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals Collaborative Networks- Build partnerships with local businesses, VCSFE organisations, and government agencies to create a network that supports sustainable development. Resource Sharing- Share knowledge, resources, and best practices with other organisations to foster a community of collaboration. Advocacy and Awareness- Engage in advocacy efforts to raise awareness about the SDGs and how others can contribute, using our platform to educate and inspire action.</p>





ESG Implementation Plan



Conduct a thorough assessment to understand the current impact of The Living Room on these SDGs. Develop a strategic plan with clear objectives, actions, and timelines.



Train our staff on the importance of the SDGs and how they can contribute to these goals in their daily work.



Establish a system to monitor progress towards each goal, evaluate the effectiveness of your initiatives, and make necessary adjustments.



Regularly engage with the community through surveys, focus groups, and experts by experience meetings to ensure their needs and feedback are incorporated into our efforts.



Provide regular updates to stakeholders on our progress towards achieving these SDGs through reports, newsletters, and social media.

By integrating these strategies, The Living Room can effectively contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, creating a positive impact on the community, and fostering a sustainable future.



Fundraising and Income Generation

Our organisation is committed to providing services free of charge at the point of delivery to all who seek our assistance.

To sustain this model, the Board of Trustees has entrusted the Income Generation strategy to the Fundraising Working Group, which includes both staff and trustees and is led by our External Relations Director. This group is dedicated to ensuring that our fundraising efforts are conducted ethically and transparently, securing the necessary resources to continue offering our vital services without financial barriers to our clients.

Our organisation is committed to adhering to the highest standards of ethical fundraising, in compliance with the guidelines set out by the Fundraising Regulator. We are dedicated to maintaining transparency, accountability, and integrity in all our fundraising activities to ensure the trust and confidence of our supporters and beneficiaries.

We fully comply with the Code of Fundraising Practice, ensuring that all our fundraising efforts are legal, open, honest, and respectful. We regularly review our fundraising practices to align with the latest standards and regulations, and we provide thorough training to our staff to uphold these principles.

We are proud to state that we do not employ external fundraisers. All our fundraising activities are conducted internally by our dedicated team, ensuring that we maintain direct control and oversight of all fundraising efforts. This approach allows us to build genuine, trust-based relationships with our donors and ensures that every interaction reflects our organisation's values and mission.

We are committed to respecting the privacy and preferences of our donors. We do not engage in aggressive fundraising techniques, and we ensure that all communications are conducted with sensitivity and respect. Donor information is managed with the utmost care, in compliance with data protection regulations, and we are committed to honouring any requests to opt-out of communications or data sharing.

We believe in being transparent about how donations are used and the impact they have. Regular updates and detailed reports are provided to our supporters, highlighting the difference their contributions make. We ensure that funds are used effectively and efficiently to further our mission and support our beneficiaries.

We welcome feedback from our donors and the public and are committed to addressing any concerns promptly and fairly. Our fundraising complaints policy is readily available, and we strive to resolve any issues in a transparent and constructive manner.



Income Sources

£30k - £60k

A G Foundation
Henry Smith Charitable Fund
Henry Smith COVID Fund
National Lottery Reaching Communities

£10k-£20k

Martin Geddes Charitable Trust
St James's Place
TLR Charity Shop (Revival CIC)

Contracts

Hertfordshire County Council

£20-£30k

Postcode Places Trust
Garfield Weston
National Lottery Awards for All

Under £10k

Burton Charitable Trust
Hertfordshire Community Foundation (multiple)
Hodge Foundation
The Leigh Trust
The Follett Trust
Corporate funders: B&Q Foundation, Co-op Local Community Fund

Under £1k

Individual donations, places of worship, district and county councillors, community fundraising

Call to Action: As a charity, we urgently need funds to sustain our transformative efforts. Addiction touches lives profoundly, impacting families and communities alike. To maintain our vital, free services, we require support in various forms: financial contributions, volunteering time, sharing expertise, attending one of our fundraising events, or donating goods. Your support can create brighter futures for Hertfordshire. Please consider standing with us today.



Compliance

Registrations, Memberships and Risk Management

The Living Room is a member of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy and Federation of Drugs and Alcohol Providers and therefore adheres to their ethical conduct for counselling and psychotherapy. It is a member of the NHS Addictions Provider Alliance and Hertfordshire County Council Drugs and Alcohol Network. It co-chairs the Integrated Drugs and Alcohol Governance Group alongside Spectrum (CGL) and Emerging Futures, who also hold commissioned services contracts for Hertfordshire Drugs and Alcohol statutory interventions.

The Charity is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and all client information is encrypted. The Living Room client and supporter databases are held in the cloud, are GDPR compliant and backed-up off site through an encrypted network. The organisation has access to a secure email connection. All colleagues, volunteers and trustees are regularly security checked and all relevant roles are DBS checked as per government guidance for working with Adults at Risk.

Through the risk management processes established by the charity, the Trustees were satisfied that the major risks identified had been adequately mitigated, where required.

As part of our unwavering commitment to maintaining the highest standards of operation, we strictly adhere to all relevant legal obligations and regulatory requirements. Our policies and practices reflect our dedication to safeguarding, anti-discrimination, and data protection, ensuring a safe and inclusive environment for all individuals we serve and employ. Our commitment to compliance not only reflects our legal obligations but also our core values of integrity, respect, and excellence in service delivery.



Compliance Continued...

Safeguarding

We place paramount importance on safeguarding vulnerable individuals. We have robust policies and procedures in place to protect our clients, particularly those who are at risk. All staff and volunteers undergo comprehensive safeguarding training and are required to report any concerns immediately. Regular audits and reviews of our safeguarding practices are conducted to ensure ongoing compliance with national and local safeguarding regulations.

Data Protection Regulations

We recognise the importance of protecting the personal data of our clients, staff, and partners. In compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and other relevant data protection laws, we have implemented stringent data protection policies and practices. These include secure data storage, restricted access protocols, regular data audits, and comprehensive training for all employees on data protection best practices. Our commitment to data privacy ensures that personal information is overseen with the utmost care and confidentiality.

Anti-Discrimination Policies

We are committed to fostering an inclusive environment that respects and values diversity. Our anti-discrimination policies are designed to prevent discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or any other characteristic protected by law. We actively promote equality and inclusivity through continuous training, awareness programs, and a zero-tolerance approach to any form of discrimination or harassment. We are dedicated to creating a culture where every individual feels valued and respected.



Equality, Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Statement

The Living Room is proud to be an equal opportunities employer. This means that decisions concerning recruitment, promotion, dismissal, or any other aspect of employment will be based on the needs of the business and not any assumptions based on sex, race, age, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, married or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, religion, or belief. This is an important commitment, which colleagues share.

Colleagues are encouraged to raise with management any discriminatory behaviour, assumptions, or attitudes they encounter at work and are entitled to do so free from any reprisal providing they are acting in good faith. There is a Diversity Equity, Equality and Inclusion staff working party forum to review process and procedures as well as ensure we uphold our values and mission.

Our commitment to inclusion: We want to find intentional ways to grow our understanding and support of others, by committing to equality, equity, diversity, and inclusion both within and outside our organisation. We value people for who they are and actively stop discrimination.



What has had the biggest impact on your recovery?

Processing my feelings sober, feeling understood from the peers in the group



Accounts 2023 - 2024

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The Living Room

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024, which are set out on pages 41 to 46

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (revised 2022 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- To follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records.

It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the next statement.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which give me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act (revised 2022 Act)

have not been met or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Trina Haggerty FCCA
Hargreaves Owen Ltd
Chartered Certified Accountants
Red Sky House
Fairclough Hall
Halls Green
Weston
Herts
SG4 7DP

The date upon which my opinion is expressed is 11th July 2024

The Living Room

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2024 £	Restricted Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2023 £
Incoming Resources					
Incoming Resources from generated funds					
Voluntary Income	2	800,642	60,155	860,797	899,065
Activities for generating funds	3	19,646		19,646	20,044
Investment income	4	3,802		3,802	857
Total incoming resources		824,090	60,155	884,245	919,966
Resources Expended					
Cost of generating funds					
Costs of generating voluntary income and undertaking charitable activities	5	781,016	57,239	838,255	883,225
Governance costs		16,531	1,004	17,535	25,409
Total resources expended		797,547	58,243	855,790	908,634
Net incoming/(Outgoing) Resources		26,543	1,912	28,455	11,332
Reconciliation of Funds					
Transfer between funds		0	0	0	0
Total funds brought forward		292,047	15,893	307,940	296,608
Total Funds Carried Forward		318,590	17,805	336,395	307,940

The Living Room

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2024 £	Restricted Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2023 £
Fixed Assets					
Tangible Assets	8	<u>464</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>464</u>	<u>619</u>
Current Assets					
Debtors	9	75,985	0	75,985	89,521
Rent Deposit		6,250	0	6,250	6,250
Prepayments and accrued income		8,158	0	8,158	8,227
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>242,919</u>	<u>17,805</u>	<u>260,724</u>	<u>221,273</u>
Total Current Assets		<u>333,312</u>	<u>17,805</u>	<u>351,117</u>	<u>325,271</u>
Creditors					
Amounts falling due within one year	10	<u>-15,186</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>-15,186</u>	<u>-17,950</u>
Net Current Assets		<u>318,126</u>	<u>17,805</u>	<u>335,931</u>	<u>307,321</u>
Total Assets Less		<u>318,590</u>	<u>17,805</u>	<u>336,395</u>	<u>307,940</u>
Net Assets		<u><u>318,590</u></u>	<u><u>17,805</u></u>	<u><u>336,395</u></u>	<u><u>307,940</u></u>
Funds					
Unrestricted funds				318,590	292,047
Restricted funds				<u>17,805</u>	<u>15,893</u>
Total Funds				<u><u>336,395</u></u>	<u><u>307,940</u></u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board on 11th July 2024 and were signed on its behalf by:



Daniel Marshall - Chair

The Living Room

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024

1.Accounting Policies

Basis of preparation of the accounts

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant notes to these accounts.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice Accounting and Reporting by Charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) issued on 16 July 2014 and with the Charities Act.

The particular accounting policies adopted are set out below:

Transition to FRS 102

No restatement of items has been required in making the transition to FRS 102. The transition date was 1 April 2016.

Incoming Resources

Incoming resources are accounted for on a receivable basis deferred as described below where appropriate

Resources Expended

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings, they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Investment Income

Bank interest received is included on an actual receipts basis.

Recognition of Liabilities

Liabilities are recognised on the accrual basis in accordance with normal accounting principles, modified where necessary in accordance with the guidance given in the Statement of Recommended Practice for Accounting and Reporting (revised June 2008) issued by the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales.

Fixed Assets and Depreciation

All tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation.

Depreciation has been provided at the following rates in order to write off the assets (less their estimated residual value) over their estimated useful economic lives:

- Fixtures and Fittings 25% on reducing balance.
- Computer Equipment 25% on reducing balance.

Taxation

As a registered charity, the charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

Fund Accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when the funds are raised for particular purposes. Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Hire Purchase and Leasing Commitments

Rental paid under operating leases are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities on a straight-line basis over the period of the lease.

2. Voluntary Income	2024	2023
	£	£
Grants	327,943	310,888
Contract	446,412	485,736
Places of Worship Donations	3,971	6,577
General Donations	52,409	51,865
Gift Aid	5,060	6,876
Corporate Donations	9,344	1,247
Donated Services and Facilities	15,658	35,876
	<u>860,797</u>	<u>899,065</u>

4 Activities for Generating Funds	2024	2023
	£	£
Fundraising Events	12,084	16,588
Earned Income	7,562	3,456
	<u>19,646</u>	<u>20,044</u>

4 Investment Income	2024	2023
	£	£
Interest Receivable	3,802	857

5 Costs of Generating Voluntary Income and Undertaking Charitable Activities	2024	2023
	£	£
Support Costs	838,254	883,225

6 Trustees' Remuneration and Benefits

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2024 not for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Trustees Expenses - There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2024 nor for the year ended 31 March 2023.

7 Staff Costs	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and salaries (including pensions)	682,308	711,675

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2024	2023
Full time equivalents	20	23

No employees received emoluments more than £60,000

8 Tangible Fixed Assets

Cost

At 1 April 2023
At 31 March 2024

Depreciation

At 1 April 2023
Charge for the year
At 31 March 2024

Net Book Value

At 31 March 2024
At 31 March 2023

Fixtures & fittings	Computer equipment	Totals
£	£	£
21,086	18,681	39,767
<u>21,086</u>	<u>18,681</u>	<u>39,767</u>
20,845	18,303	39,148
60	95	155
<u>20,905</u>	<u>18,397</u>	<u>39,303</u>
181	284	464
<u>241</u>	<u>378</u>	<u>619</u>

9 Debtors

2024	2023
£	£
75,985	89,521

10 Creditors

Taxation and social security
Other creditors
Accrued expenses

2024	2023
£	£
12,500	12,998
1,846	4,112
840	840
<u>15,186</u>	<u>17,950</u>

11 Movement in Funds

	At 1/4/23	Net movement in funds	At 31/3/24
	£	£	£
Unrestricted Funds	292,047	26,543	318,590
Restricted Funds	15,893	1,912	17,805
Total Funds	<u>307,940</u>	<u>28,455</u>	<u>336,395</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Movement in funds
Unrestricted Funds	824,090	797,547	26,543
Restricted Funds	60,155	58,243	1,912
Total Funds	<u>884,245</u>	<u>855,790</u>	<u>28,455</u>



Accounts 2023 - 2024

The Living Room

Schedule to the Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2024

	2024	2023		2024	2023
	£	£		£	£
Incoming Resources			Information Technology		
Voluntary Income			IT Support and consumables	7,270	9,200
Contracts	446,412	485,736	Website	5,967	5,895
Grants	327,943	310,888		<u>13,237</u>	<u>15,095</u>
General donations	52,409	51,865	Human resources		
Donated services and facilities	15,658	35,876	Wages (inc. pensions)	682,308	711,675
Places of Worship donations	3,971	6,577	Training	1,926	2,998
Corporate donations	9,344	1,247		<u>684,234</u>	<u>714,673</u>
Gift Aid	5,060	6,876	Other		
	<u>860,797</u>	<u>899,065</u>	Repairs and maintenance	24,858	32,999
Activities for generating funds			Insurance	8,197	9,464
Fundraising events	12,084	16,588	Office expenses	3,920	3,744
Earned income	7,562	3,456	Memberships	1,389	1,066
	<u>19,646</u>	<u>20,044</u>	Staff Travel	3,607	3,570
Investment income			Recruitment and DBS checks	1,031	1,175
Interest receivable	3,802	857	Equipment	5,119	11,236
Total incoming resources	<u>884,245</u>	<u>919,966</u>	Sundries	1,110	103
Resources Expended			Marketing	123	661
Governance costs			Fundraising	0	365
Accountancy fees	590	590		<u>49,354</u>	<u>64,382</u>
Independent examination	250	250	Total resources expended	<u>855,790</u>	<u>908,634</u>
Other professional fees	16,695	24,569	Net (expenditure)/income	<u>28,455</u>	<u>11,332</u>
	<u>17,535</u>	<u>25,409</u>			
Support costs					
Rent and Compliance charges	46,853	41,394			
Partnerships	25,500	30,000			
Heat and Light	12,120	10,725			
Telephone	4,813	4,767			
Refreshments	1,161	1,122			
Water	828	861			
Depreciation	155	206			
	<u>91,430</u>	<u>89,075</u>			

THE LIVING ROOM

England & Wales - Charity number 1080634

Accounts



Breaking the cycle of addiction

Annual Report and Accounts to 31 March 2023

Registered Charity Number 1080634

Charity Incorporated Organisation (CIO) Number 1175541

**The Living Room
Report and accounts
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In the face of challenges, as the world recovers from the damage of the pandemic, we have continued to adapt our service to help people overcome their dependency on drugs, alcohol, or addictive behaviours. 59% of our clients are in sustained recovery following our help, compared to the national average of 50%. The success rates of the people that have attended our services have remained constant over the past 3 years which is a testament to the dedication and determination of our clients and the staff that support their recovery journey.

We are proud of our resolve to ensure our staff's wellbeing and have committed to improving our support, working towards accreditation as a [Herts Healthy Workplace](#). This is in addition to our dedication to being a [Mindful Employer](#) (since 2019), to achieve better mental health at work. Our staff and volunteers are supporting vulnerable people in our community and bringing that same ethos to how we support clients as well as staff is embedded in our values as an organisation.

Our annual report shows the work The Living Room does to help change the lives of people living with addictions, support their loved ones and to champion therapeutic interventions. It costs on average £2,567 for someone to access our services over one year (the average treatment length).

The long-term impact we measure of graduates from the service shows the lasting effect on people's health, wellbeing, and stability after they leave our services. We know from Treasury approved modelling that for every person who becomes employed after attending our services our role in getting people back into employment has a benefit to society of **£22,000 per person**. We deadweight the actual figures by 50%, as we account for those who might have moved into employment without our support anyway and gives us much greater confidence in standing by a figure.

The Living Room's purpose has always (since 2000) been to break the cycle of addiction for social good. In our penultimate year of our strategic priorities, our purpose remains constant, and we have focused on how to achieve it.

The target for the year was to find a new home for our Watford service, as we had been temporarily housed in a not ideal space by Watford Community Housing. We were pleased to welcome Mayor Peter Taylor to open our new home in Station Road, the Mayor's second time opening our service. Station Road provides much improved facilities for our service and numbers have grown steadily since the opening.

ANNUAL REPORT STATEMENT

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The board of Trustees are satisfied with the performance of the charity during the year and the position at 31st March 2023 and consider that the charity is in a strong position to continue its activities during the coming year and that the charity's assets are adequate to fulfil its obligations.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE CHARITY GOVERNANCE CODE

The aim of the Charity Governance Code is to help charities and their trustees develop high standards of governance. As a sector, we owe it to our beneficiaries, stakeholders, and supporters to demonstrate exemplary leadership and governance. At The Living Room, we use the code as a guide, looking at areas we can improve our Board of Trustees practice and how it is supported by the leadership Executive Team.

There is an annual review of the Charity Governance Code, highlighting areas for improvement, discussions at board level around improvements needing focus and successes to celebrate. Our CEO is familiar with the Code in her training delivery for Hertfordshire Community Foundation.

RELATED PARTIES

None of the trustees receives remuneration or other benefit from their work with the charity.

Trustees are invited to declare any relevant conflicts of interest at each board meeting, and formally requested to submit an annual register of interests' form. Board members reported no relevant interests or transactions.

ANNUAL REPORT

The board of trustees of The Living Room present its annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2023. The financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011 and SORP regulations.

OUR PUBLIC BENEFIT

The trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's objectives and activities, and in planning its future activities. In particular, the trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the objectives and activities that have been set.

The Living Room delivers public benefit through supporting adults with an addiction to stop and stay stopped, and family members or carers of a loved one with an addiction, to benefit from peer support.

We do this by providing free, time unlimited, abstinence-based, facilitated, group counselling treatment to break the cycle of addiction and peer support groups for family members or carers of a loved one with an addiction. All our trained counsellors are in long-term and sustained recovery from addictions.

We provide people with the opportunity to explore the root cause of their own or their loved one's addiction and their responsibility in that. We help people to understand the underlying trauma and/or bereavement, which enables people to make connections with others and learn tools and strategies to lead a healthy and happy life; one that benefits future generations, the economy and communities and doesn't rely on dependency to drugs, alcohol, or behaviours for comfort.

We believe that everyone has potential and a life worth living.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Status	The Living Room is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) – Foundation	
Also known as	Living Room Herts, The Living Room Hertfordshire, TLR, TLRH	
Governing document	The Living Room is governed by its Constitution, as adopted on 02 November 2017 amended 26 September 2019.	
Company number	N/A	
Charity number	CIO 1175541 (previously 1080634)	
Registered office and operational address	8-10 The Glebe Chells Way Stevenage Hertfordshire SG2 0DJ	
Trustees	Daniel Marshall Daniel McGovern Eddie Mills Jenny Brace Charles King Fateh Hamoudi Tracy Lacey-Smith John Palmer Ramesh Summan Elizabeth Fisher	CHAIR TREASURER (from 24/04/2022) VICE-CHAIR (resigned 20/06/2022) (resigned 28/07/2022) (resigned 28/07/2022) (from 24/03/2022) (from 12/01/2023)
Chief Executive Officer	Adrienne Arthurs	
Banker	HSBC Town Centre, Danestrete, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 1BY	
Chartered Certified Accountants	Hargreaves Owen Ltd Red Sky House, Fairclough Hall, Halls Green, Weston. Hertfordshire SG4 7DP	

FUNDRAISING REGULATIONS

The Living Room engages in public fundraising but does not use professional fundraisers or commercial participators. The charity observes the relevant fundraising regulations and codes. During the year, there was full compliance of these regulations and codes and The Living Room received no complaints relating to its fundraising practices.

OUR PEOPLE

The Executive Team:

- Adrienne Arthurs, Chief Executive; (and Safeguarding DP)
- Rita Cooper, Clinical Director (and Safeguarding RP)
- Mark Wiseman, External Relations Director (and Shops)
- Susan Hudson, Corporate Services Director (and Data Protection Officer)

The Senior Leadership Team:

- Debbie Coote, Clinical Manager; (and Counselling Manager Watford)
- Cerise James (Fundraising and Marketing Manager)
- Nicola Roope (Finance and Personnel Manager)

16 FTE Counsellors and administrators support the work across all four hubs.

16 Volunteers

OUR TRUSTEES

Board meetings of the Trustees, CEO, and the Executive Leadership team (by invitation), occur quarterly. Additional meetings such as extra-ordinary board meetings, committee meetings and the executive board meeting occur when the need arises as well as planned regularity. Decisions are taken by a majority vote at quorate board meetings, but also communication and decisions can be made via email. Roughly half of the board meetings are in-person and half via video conferencing software.

- Finance Committee
- Sustainability Committee [NEW – including DEEI]
- Income Generation Committee
- Executive Committee

Trustees serve for 3 years to a maximum of three terms of three years. They are encouraged to use their skills, experience, and knowledge to guide and support the strategic direction of the organisation. Each trustee takes the lead on specific policy and procedures endorsement that are required by the Charity Commission, our Commissioners and legal and best practice recommendations. Those endorsements are then proposed to the full board for ratification.

The running of the organisation and operations are delegated to the CEO and the Executive Team.

Trustees are recruited from the general public, although people with lived experience of recovery and ex-service users are encouraged to join the board. Two spaces are allocated specifically. The CEO and the Chair provide new trustees with an induction and ongoing support.

INTRO FROM OUR CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Daniel Marshall
Chair of the Board
(June 2023)

We are facing unprecedented levels of change and complexity across society. Coming out of the pandemic and facing up to a Cost-of-Living crisis, it is undoubtedly the case that in certain areas, the true impact of these issues won't be felt for some time yet. We also know that the Cost-of-Living crisis puts increased pressure on households, and for some, increases the risk of relapse.

As a service, we've remained a constant through that change, complexity, and turbulence that our clients are facing, and that will continue to be the case. We've remained able to deliver high quality services, and achieve incredible, and sustainable, results. Our graduation rate continues to sit higher than the national average, at 59%, for example.

We've also helped more people this year than we did in the last. This is something we're particularly proud of as we experience downward pressure on our budgets due to inflation and is a demonstration of the culture within the organisation of continuing to deliver services effectively and efficiently.

These results are quite remarkable, and are testament to Adrienne and her team, who all work tirelessly to ensure we're here for those who need us. We're nothing without the passion of all our staff and volunteers, and as a Board we're immensely grateful for their hard work and dedication. I also want to thank our Trustee Board – we have an excellent, diverse Board, who care deeply about the organisation and the people we're here to help, and we have managed to attract high quality people on to our Board, which alongside the Executive, puts the organisation in the best possible position to face up to the challenges our clients have.

We know that the world will continue to be complex and changeable, but the organisation is stable, resilient, and will remain able to help people who need our support.

REPORT FROM OUR TREASURER

Daniel McGovern

Treasurer to the Board

(June 2023)

My first year as treasurer for The Living Room has seen the charity continue to grow, increasing the number of people accessing our services and maintaining a healthy graduation rate, which comfortably exceeds the national average.

There is no doubt that the responsibility for the continued success of The Living Room lies entirely at the feet of the people who dedicate their time and expertise to helping those suffering with addiction. Praise should go to Daniel Marshall and Eddie Mills for their stewardship of the Trustee board, Adrienne

Arthurs for overseeing the smooth operation of the charity, and all the staff and volunteers for their commitment to ensuring that those recovering from addiction receive the vital support they need.

Financially, The Living Room has had another successful year, spearheaded by the tireless fundraising efforts of Mark Wiseman's team and the prudent financial management of Corporate Services Director, Susan Hudson. The Living Room secured more funding than budgeted for over the year, as successful grant applications were supplemented by higher-than-expected income from donations and fundraising events. Similarly, income from our charity shops exceeded expectations by more than 40%, a reflection of the wonderful work of our staff and volunteers.

Looking forward, I believe that The Living Room is in robust financial standing for the year ahead. We will continue to closely monitor the financial effects of the Cost-of-Living crisis, ensuring our staff receive fair pay and keeping tabs on the increased costs that every UK institution is facing. Our fundraising team continue to explore new funding avenues and work hard to ensure that relationships with current financial supporters remain positive.

Reading testimonies and speaking to graduates of The Living Room, I am often amazed by the impact of the services provided by our charity. Over the 2022/2023 financial year, The Living Room averaged a cost of £2,567 per client. While this is not an insignificant amount, the fact that the incredible support each client receives costs little more than £210 per month will never cease to astound me. I am proud to be a part of this wonderful charity and I look forward to a successful new year.

COMMENTS FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Adrienne Arthurs
Chief Executive
(June 2022)

The number of people we have supported across this past year is a big increase on the year before. 354 people have stayed longer than two weeks with 59% graduation rate, achieving sustained recovery from their addiction or as a family and carer of a loved one with an addiction, leaving us with tools to maintain their recovery journey and peer support connections. We introduced monthly aftercare drop-in groups at each centre for people that graduate and want to keep in touch, and these are well attended.

Wellbeing has been the focus of the year, ensuring that as an organisation we look after ourselves and our colleagues so that we are able to support others. Mental health issues have been on the rise since lockdown's began in 2020 and as a service that remained open and actively supporting some of the most vulnerable people in society, we are aware how good mental health is an underlying ingredient in

wellness and maintaining recovery. Our measurement of mental health needs by people accessing our support shows a marked rise from 40% in 2019 to 66% by the end of March 2023.

With the needs of our clients becoming more mental health related, this naturally could have an impact on our staff and volunteers. Therefore, as an Executive Team, we have committed to developing a healthier workplace environment, checking what is needed and what would be helpful. Along the path of accreditation, we have highlighted areas of good practice and found opportunities to be a more supportive leadership team and organisation. I am keen to continue to develop and grow the supportive culture and we have now included development plans within our sustainability objectives.

Embracing technological solutions kept our organisation afloat when COVID-19 was causing the world to shut down, and fast forward to today, we have maintained our focus on reducing paperwork, using the tools available to us and to find better ways of delivering, monitoring, and protecting our services. To follow the sustainability goals, we have connected our streamlining to sustainability, as we approach the new financial year and our commitment to the environment.

End of a Good Project

The Fourth Centre – Herts Hub was a virtual service, offering an adapted but full version of our recovery model. People that accessed the group therapy online community rehabilitation service, may not have accessed our service due other barriers besides their addictions. Over the past year we supported 85 people in the Herts Hub, 65% female and 35% male, with the median age of 45. Interestingly, people accessed the service from all around Hertfordshire, with higher numbers living in Broxbourne and East Herts where we don't have a hub physically.

The funding from Hertfordshire County Council and COVID recovery grants ended 31 March 2023, but we were unable to find alternative sources of funding to continue the service. This is despite very real barriers that people accessing this support reported: mental health difficulties, disability, physical health conditions, sensory impairments and learning disabilities which are highly fundable in the JSNA priorities (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment). We will continue to look for funding to provide a virtual service.

Conclusion

The cost-of-living crisis has made our services more expensive to run and less opportunities to find suitable funding to support our work. Therefore, over the coming year we will focus on maintaining our service delivery levels and working with people with more complex needs and holistic barriers. Our unique model is based upon being free to access to all, no matter what their needs are.

In addition, as an organisation, we aim to become more sustainable in all areas of the business and service delivery. I am confident that we will continue to be a high quality, people focused community resource, delivering free, abstinence-based, time unlimited, addiction recovery services for Hertfordshire. Everyone in the organisation is committed to achieving more and more responsibly.

As an organisation that is people focused, I am determined to continue to highlight the needs of our clients and support the needs of our staff.

WE EXIST TO BREAK THE FAMILY CYCLE OF SUBSTANCE AND BEHAVIOURAL ADDICTIONS

OUR VISION

Our vision is a future when people with the illness of addiction are able to live their lives free from an addiction to drugs, alcohol or behaviours, becoming contributing citizens in society.



OUR MISSION

- ✓ To provide group therapy for adults with the illness of addiction, and
- ✓ to support their family members

...in Hertfordshire.

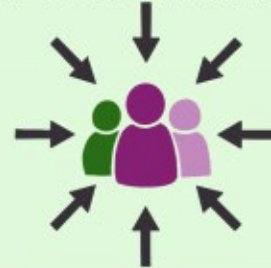


OUR VALUES...

We are **CARING** to our clients & co-workers.



We are **CUSTOMER-FOCUSED** when prioritising our work and activities.



We serve and **SUPPORT** OUR COMMUNITY.



We ensure we are **COMPETENT** in performing our duties.



We value our **INTEGRITY** as professionals.



OUR COMMITMENTS TO EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION:

We will ensure that anyone, regardless of their individual or group characteristics...

...can get treatment for their addiction and are given support...

...that takes account of their unique background and any complications this may cause for them.

We will reach out to community groups, develop better cultural awareness in our services...

...and focus on LGBTQ+ and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic visibility within our organisation.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

VISION	Our vision is a future where people with the illness of addiction can live their lives free from an addiction to drugs, alcohol or behaviours, becoming contributing citizens in society.
MISSION	To provide group therapy for adults with the illness of addiction and to support their family members, in Hertfordshire and other areas of the UK.
AIM	The aim of our organisation is to break the family cycle of addiction (both substance and behavioural addictions). Our culture change work – not just teaching people to live with their addiction, we help them to take back ownership of their lives.
VALUES	We are caring to our clients and co-workers. We are customer focused when prioritising our work and activities. We serve and support our community . We ensure we are competent in performing our duties. We value our integrity as professionals.
DIVERSITY, EQUALITY EQUITY AND INCLUSION	We will ensure that anyone, regardless of their individual or group characteristics, can get treatment for their addiction and are given support that takes account of their unique background and any complications this may cause for them during their time at The Living Room. We will reach out to community groups, develop better cultural awareness in our services and focus on LGBTQ+ and Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic visibility within our organisation.
CHARITABLE OBJECTS	The charity's main objective for the year was to promote the objects set out in its governing document, 02 November 2017 (refreshed 19 September 2019) when the charity was registered as a CIO No 1175541 (formerly 1080634). (a) to preserve and protect the health of all persons who are in danger of becoming addicted to, or dependent upon, drugs of any description, alcohol, solvents or other addictive substances or behaviours as well as their family members within the County of Hertfordshire and such other places as the trustees shall from time to time decide by the provision of counselling and recovery and support services. (b) to advance the education of professionals working in the field of addiction treatment by the provision of professional training, support services and information.

REFERRALS

We accept self-referrals as well as professional referrals, which are easily made via our website or via a phone call to our local number 0300 365 0304. In 2022-23, we saw **1149** (2021-2022 – 1501) enquiries made to our service, including **714** (2021-2022 – 903) referrals.

OUR PROGRAMMATIC WORK:

The Living Room has hubs in Stevenage, St Albans, Watford and Online (Closed 31/03/2023), for Hertfordshire adults to access.

Free, time unlimited group therapy, facilitated by trained counsellors with lived experience of addiction recovery, using person-centred therapy, cognitive behaviour therapy, dialectical behaviour therapy, psycho-educational/psycho-social counselling, psychodynamic counselling and the first four steps of the AA 12-step programme.

Our Services:

[Our Services | The Living Room \(livingroomherts.org\)](http://livingroomherts.org)



All Addiction Group Therapy Monday to Friday	All Addiction Group Therapy Monday to Friday	All Addiction Group Therapy Monday to Thursday
Family and Carers Group Tuesdays	Family and Carers Group Wednesdays	Family and Carers Group Wednesday evenings
Disordered Eating Wednesdays	Disordered Eating Tuesdays	
	Specialist Drug Group Mondays	
	Relationship Group Thursdays	
Weekly Newcomer's Group	Weekly Newcomer's Group	Weekly Newcomer's Group
Monthly Graduate's Group	Monthly Graduate's Group	Monthly Graduate's Group
Monthly Experts by Experience Group	Monthly Experts by Experience Group	Monthly Experts by Experience Group

Online All Addiction Group Therapy Hertfordshire Hub (Closed 31/03/2023)
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday via Zoom



Contracted to deliver drugs and alcohol daytime community rehabilitation in partnership with Relate and Family Lives.

Out of Hours Helpline for families 0808 800 2222 (Family Lives)

One number 0300 365 0304 – self or professional referrals.

Talks, training and event presence to raise awareness.

Holistic support in partnership with voluntary and statutory organisations.

Individual counselling for people attending group therapy provided by counsellors in training.

Our strategic themes:

We will take a client centred approach.

We will consider sustainability in all we do.




Our objectives:

1. Review and refine our services to ensure they are inclusive, effective, efficient, and creating long-lasting impact on the lives of our clients.
2. Develop and nurture external relationships, to grow our partnerships and profile within communities and Hertfordshire.
3. Invest in digital solutions to reduce the impact on the environment and improve efficiency, accessibility, impact measurement and the reach of our services.
4. Position our organisation to successfully bid for long-term contracts and grants.

Our assurances:

We will listen to those accessing our services, so that we can improve them, adapt, and respond holistically to client needs.

Contractual Targets

	Target	Outcomes 2022 - 2023
Service Delivery		
	60% of people achieve sustained recovery	59% of people achieved successful graduation overall. Almost achieved this target. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 53% alcohol • 59% drugs • 52% disordered eating • 82% behavioural addictions • 30% opiates • 77% family and carers
Access and Reach		
	700 people in Hertfordshire helped each year	1149 people supported in total. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice and guidance • Services • Signposting elsewhere
Organisational Improvement		
	100% good to excellent client satisfaction	100% good → excellent client feedback

STRATEGIC OUTCOMES 2021-2024

1. **Review and refine our services to ensure they are inclusive, effective, efficient, and creating long-lasting impact on the lives of our clients.**
 - Impact report and client monitoring data collection refined.

- Good practice clinical meetings integrated into monthly diaries.
 - Accessibility inspection completed.
2. **Develop and nurture external relationships, to grow our partnerships and profile within communities and Hertfordshire.**
 - Counsellors targeted to make community connections locally.
 - Involvement in professional strategic locality networks.
 - Presentations given to health, other VCSFE groups, statutory organisations, and the public.
 3. **Invest in digital solutions to reduce the impact on the environment and improve efficiency, accessibility, impact measurement and the reach of our services.**
 - Moved over to using electronic MS Forms for all client data collection.
 - Converted staff data collection and systems to Microsoft 365.
 - Electronic archiving of historical paperwork.
 4. **Position our organisation to successfully bid for long-term contracts and grants.**
 - Keep up to date with good governance.
 - Developed our client involvement in co-production.
 - Accreditation as a Herts Health Workplace.

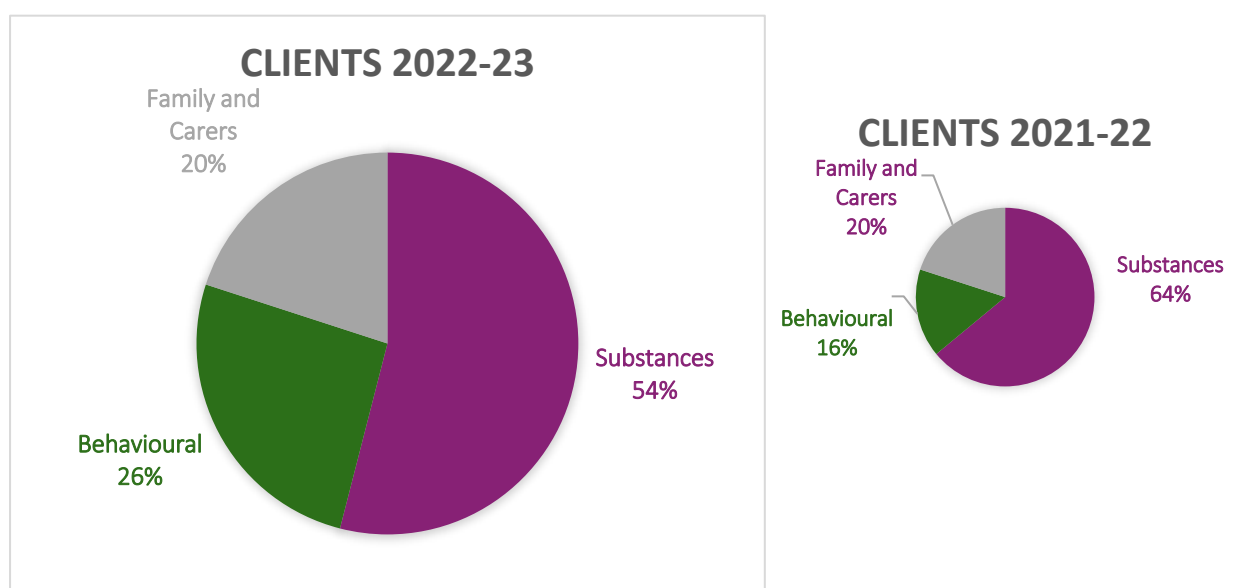
VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTION

The charity has placement counsellor volunteers (training counsellors - above Level 1); peer mentor volunteers, marketing and fundraising volunteers, event volunteers, IT consultants, data analysts, counselling volunteers and all our trustees are volunteers. All work purely in a voluntary capacity and are unpaid.

In 2022-2023, 60 people dedicated many hours to volunteering with The Living Room’s Stevenage, St Albans, Watford and Herts Hub hubs and our charity shops.

Our paid colleagues also offer additional hours to support our fundraising activities.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE



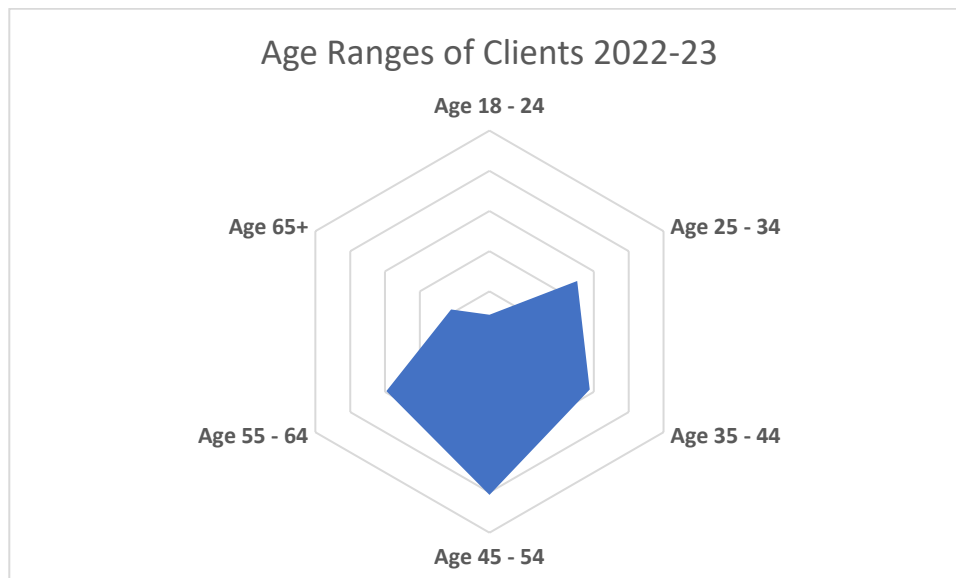
2022 - 2023		2021 - 2022
354	Number of people accessing treatment therapy	340

69	Number of family and carers supported via group therapy	68
1149	Brief Interventions via enquiries – in-person, phone or email	1541
90	'Families Living in Recovery' sessions delivered by Family Lives or Relate	96
156	Graduate groups (started Feb 2022) – people attended	27
59%	Graduation rate (Nationally 50%)	65%
16%	Transferred to clinical interventions (e.g., Spectrum CGL)	5%

OUTPUTS

36	Main group sessions per week
5	Family and carer sessions per week
8	Specialist group sessions per week
2	Families Living in Recovery support hours per week
25	Placement (in training) counsellor hours provided per week
392	Counselling hours provided per week

AGE RANGES



EXTRA DELIVERY

Additional projects delivered with or by partners to our clients.

1. Consortium working with RELATE North Thames and Chilterns as well as Family Lives Hertfordshire to deliver our 'Families Living in Recovery Project' providing relationship support.
2. Groundwork UK providing outreach for our Stevenage clients on gardening projects locally.
3. Growing People project in St Albans teaching about allotment growing.
4. Terence Higgins Trust deliver workshops to our clients at each hub on 'Keeping Safe Sexually'.
5. Turning Point provided in-house mental health support one-to-one with clients in each hub.
6. 30 motivational personal story 'chairs' from fellowships such as Cocaine Anonymous.

FUNDRAISING

Our services are free at the point of delivery to people wanting to access our services. The Board of Trustees delegates the Income Generation strategy to the Fundraising Working Group comprised of staff and trustees, led by the External Relations Director.

The income budget set December 2022 for April 2023 – March 2024 was proposed by the Fundraising Working group and approved by trustees.

	Approved 22-23 Budget	Actuals 22-23	Approved 23-24 Budget
Total Contracts	485,737	485,736	416,414
Revival Donation	25,000	35,876	32,000
Fundraising, Donations & Legacy Income	96,120	119,030	105,500
Traded income/interest earned	3,000	4,313	3,000
Total Grants	298,050	310,888	187,857
Total Grants Unsecured	20,000	0	190,000
TOTAL INCOME	902,907	919,966	902,771

OUR DONORS - TRUSTS & GRANTS

£30k - £60k	A G Foundation Henry Smith Charitable Fund Henry Smith COVID Fund National Lottery Reaching Communities
£20-£30k	Lloyds Bank Foundation Garfield Weston
£10k-£20k	Martin Geddes Charitable Trust Edward Gostling Foundation
under £10k	SADC Community Revenue Fund SADC Health and Wellbeing Fund Bedford and Luton Community Foundation Stevenage Community Trust Simon Gibson Community Trust Souter Charitable Trust Hospital Saturday Fund Sisters of Mercy Peter Storrs Trust Diocese of St Albans Hertfordshire Community Foundation Marsh Christian Trust The Follett Trust Arnold Clark Corporate funders: ASDA, Waitrose, Screwfix

Other income: Individual donations, places of worship, district and county councillors, community fundraising, our charity shops, and Hertfordshire County Council contracts.

LONG-TERM IMPACT 2022 - 2023

Annually we measure our long-term impact by contacting people who have previously used our services. In 2023, we surveyed 90 people who had accessed our services during 2021, to find out the longer-term outcomes and impact that attending TLR treatment had on their health and wellbeing.

We wanted to know whether our interventions worked. We asked questions that indicated if they were abstinent and positive contributing citizens with good health and wellbeing long term, as per our theory of change.

We asked:

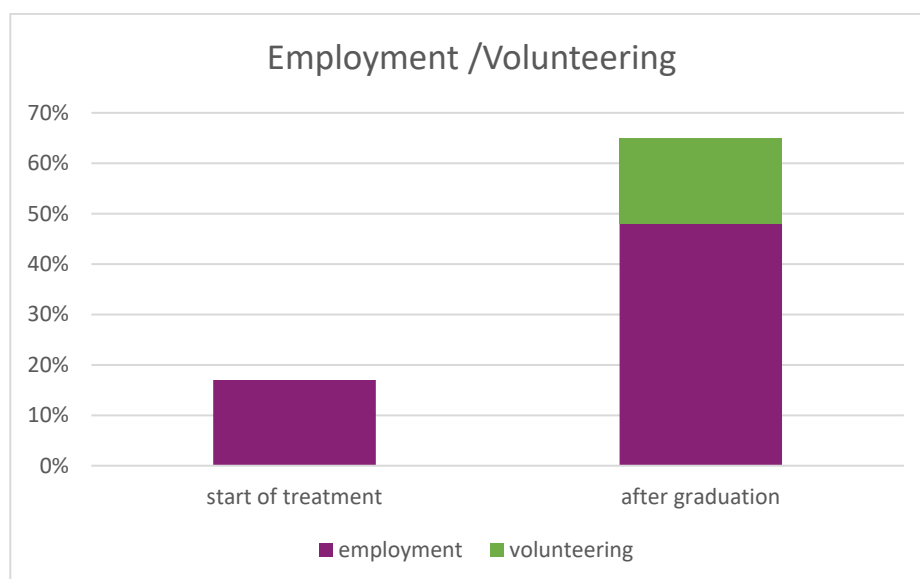
How well does our method of treatment achieve the intended outcomes, long-term?

The answers, from 38 respondents (42% return):

The long-term changes we are working towards in partnership with our clients, is that adults are abstinent and contributing citizens in society. The results from this evaluation, where most people who responded saw a positive change in their lives, across all areas surveyed, would suggest that The Living Room is achieving its intended outcomes.

We accept that we are unable to attribute our clients' improvement solely on engaging in treatment at The Living Room. However, the added comments from our graduates and their sustained recovery indicate the value of attending treatment and the significant positive impact it has had on them and their future.

The overall impact for people that have attended our services, is one of improvement across all areas of wellbeing. And interestingly, consistently following treatment, the increase in the number of people either working or volunteering is impressive. The overall results from all the questions asked are broadly stable, year on year, as we provide a consistent quality service that can demonstrate good outcomes.



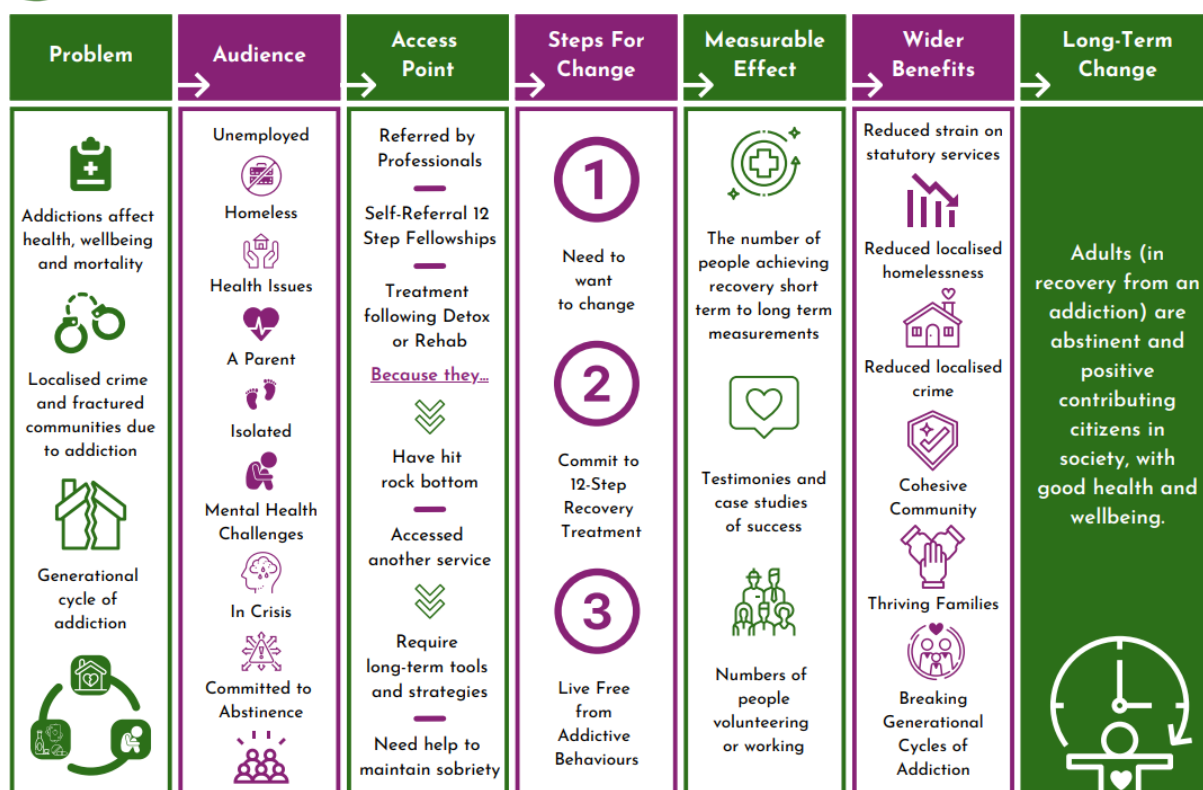
Impact Improvement Rates for 2022 – 2023



“I loved (and sometimes hated) every part of my journey. The counsellors delivered the perfect balance of care while also ensuring that clients were held accountable. I felt safe to speak about all of the things I had previously felt so ashamed about. I found a tribe of people who understood, even if their addictions looked different outwardly”.

“I’m a better parent and the relationship between my children and myself gets better every time”.

The Living Room - Theory of Change for the Client



“The Living Room has done an amazing job, there is nothing else I can think of that you could have done”.

100%	Emotional and mental health improvement (higher than previous year 90%)
100%	Self-care and living skills improvement (before treatment 2.5/5, post treatment 4.2/5)
100%	Scores improved for being motivated and taking responsibility for their own actions (before treatment 2.3/5, 4.3/5 post treatment)
95%	Improved physical health (even with the shadow of the pandemic)
94%	Employed, a homemaker, in education or training, retired or volunteering (2 unemployed)
92%	Recovery benefit of attending The Living Room and managing their dependency
92%	18/24 rated no criminal activity at treatment start, rising to 22/24 at the time of survey
88%	Did not access any further addiction support
84%	Settled and secure housing situation (21% had settled housing at the start of treatment)
82%	Improved family relationships and increase social networks
81%	Satisfied with recovery since leaving TLR
69%	Managed sustained abstinence, but all managing better than when they first accessed help
42%	Continue to attend a fellowship (no family and carers attend a fellowship after treatment)

“I was not aware that The Living Room dealt with such a wide range of issues and assumed that it would only be a drugs and alcohol service, so I was pleasantly surprised when other issues such as eating disorders, love addiction, gambling, etc were brought up as it helped me deal with my issues holistically as well as discover that my substance misuse was also entangled in my other troubles in many ways.”

WHAT WE STOPPED

Our **Hertfordshire Hub**, the fourth centre in our treatment choice, planned to close March 2023. We did look for alternative funding when the COVID-19 Recovery Grant ended, supplied by the government through Hertfordshire County Council. Despite proving the need for this service particularly for people with a higher level of mental health issues, funding was not available to continue.

The interim independent evaluation said:

The delivery of the Hertfordshire hub has attracted new service users into the service who were unlikely to have accessed support from a physical centre due various challenges including mobility issues, self-isolation, shielding, and issues relating to stigmatisation.

The hub has also resulted in an increase of service users accessing treatment from underrepresented groups including those with co-existing mental/physical health issues. As a result, the hub is meeting a known need especially around the number of people who may find it challenging to access services delivered through building-based provision.

“They do listen, they really listen, and they try to help, and it does work, I can feel it working when I’m speaking, to not only the counsellors, but to everyone else that attends”.

FINANCIALS

Total Income for 2022-23 was £919,966 (2021-22 £830,296) with expenditure of £908,634 (2021-22 £858,663) resulting in a small operating surplus of £11,332 (2021-22 £-28,367). Total funds at year end were £307,940 of which £292,047 were Unrestricted Funds for our Core Service (2021-22 Total Funds £296,608 of which £ 279,226 were Unrestricted).

For the 354 clients attending our service in 2022-23 this represents an average cost per client of £2.6k for one year's treatment, or £50 per client per week, which represents exceptional value.

INCOME

Our Lloyds Bank multi-year funding and HCC contract for our Hertfordshire (online) Hub, worth £85k, came to an end this year and it has been a challenge to find other multi-year grants and contracts to apply for. There were also some programmes that we were not included in such as the government Supplemental Grant, however, due to previous years' multi-year grants we have remained stable this financial year.

With an end to 'lockdowns' we were able to raise more funds from events and increased income from room hire and our Charity Shops.

EXPENDITURE

The 11% increase in income has been used to cover the rise in our overheads, all of which have increased this year, and to invest in the bones of our service.

In addition to the 3% annual increase awarded in April 2022, we gave all our staff a 55p hourly increase in October as a response to the Cost-of-Living crisis.

We have also invested in our centres this year, converting the old creche area into a second counselling room for our Stevenage Hub and enabling us to hand back the second Stevenage premises we were renting. We also found a permanent Hub for Watford which we have furnished and equipped to provide two counselling rooms for the increasing client numbers in this area. Our St Albans Hub also had a partial refurbishment to provide two counselling rooms and improved facilities. The total cost of £30k was funded by additional grants and rent savings.

RESERVES POLICY

The trustees have considered the level of free reserves it is appropriate for the charity to hold to ensure its financial sustainability, future strategic development and continuing to operate and meet the needs of clients if unforeseen and potentially financially damaging circumstances arise.

They have considered the reliability and continuance of future income generation and funding, timing of cash flow and working capital requirements and cover for unplanned emergency repairs and premises costs.

Free reserves represent unrestricted funds of the charity excluding restricted funds. The determination of an appropriate reserves level is a key part of the strategic planning process.

This is linked into a risk assessment of key areas of income and expenditure, along with the following:

- Working capital
- Financial risk management
- Future strategic development

The trustees review the reserves level on an annual basis, along with the risk assessment of key areas of income, as this provides the information on an adequate level of reserves to be maintained.

The trustees consider therefore that it would be prudent to set aside an amount equivalent to between three to four months of the forthcoming year’s planned expenditure costs – for 2023-24 this would be between £223k and £298k. The free reserves on 31 March 2023 £292k are within the range of its reserves policy. Therefore, the trustees consider the charity a going concern.

REMUNERATION POLICY

The board is responsible for considering the Chief Executive’s remuneration, taking account of the skills and experience required and sector norms for charities of similar size.

Pay and pay increases are reviewed biennially by the finance committee in relation to their responsibilities and performance, skills and qualifications, the external economic environment and financial affordability for The Living Room.

The Living Room is a Living Wage Employer, a Disability Committed Employer, and a Mindful Employer.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The board follows a comprehensive risk management policy which clearly defines the roles of the board, finance and audit committee and senior colleagues in identifying and managing risk, and how the register of risks should be used as a live document. The board identifies the key risks and discusses the impact, likelihood, and the risk management in place to mitigate these risks.

Risk is managed under the headings of Health and Safety, Client Welfare, Legal and Statutory Obligations, Fundraising and Marketing, Services and Operations, Data Protection, Safeguarding, Volunteer and Staff Wellbeing, Financial Sustainability. Each trustee takes a lead in each area shown.

Risks	Major Risks and our Responses
Health and Safety	<p>Unsanitary and dilapidated washroom and water access facilities in the St Albans hub – full refurbishment.</p> <p>Small traces of asbestos found at the St Albans premises. Full site report stated no immediate risk to health. Landlord notified.</p>
Client Welfare	<p>Clients have presented higher complex needs in comparison to previous years – may be COVID related. Staff have fewer clients to keywork and have worked more intensely with them, referring to suitable agencies for additional support.</p> <p>13 incidents with clients were recorded and concluded professionally. None were serious incidents.</p>
Legal and Statutory Obligations	<p>Expired leases with Stevenage Borough Council [SBC] are being worked on for renewal by S. Hudson, SBC, and SA Law.</p>
Fundraising and Marketing	<p>Poor visibility in Watford. Open day and venue launch resulted in 35 professionals attending, raising the profile of our services in Watford.</p>

Services and Operations	Unused creche area, repurposed to Main Group Room 2 with refurbishment and handing back tenancy on No.15 The Glebe to reduce expenditure. Area made suitable for external hire, self-contained. Funding intended for new Watford property purchase was successfully diverted to provide fit for purpose furniture at the rented venue.
Data Protection	One incident recorded. A client's initials were not removed when submitting a report to NDTMS. No further action required.
Safeguarding	4 safeguarding referrals made.
Volunteer and Staff Wellbeing	Cost of Living crisis – made affordable adjustments to salaries across the year to acknowledge the rise in CoL.
Financial Sustainability	Changes to budgets and income streams has meant keeping on top of where the shortfalls are likely to be and looking for alternative ones. COVID recovery grants coming to an end and nothing to replace them, despite the needs being there.

Through the risk management processes established by the charity, the Trustees were satisfied that the major risks identified had been adequately mitigated, where required.

The Charity is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and all client information is encrypted. The Living Room client and supporter databases are held in the cloud, are GDPR compliant and backed-up off site through an encrypted network. The organisation has access to a secure email connection. All colleagues, volunteers and trustees are regularly security checked and all relevant roles are DBS checked as per government guidance for working with Adults at Risk.

The Living Room is a member of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy and Federation of Drugs and Alcohol Providers and therefore adheres to their ethical conduct for counselling and psychotherapy. It is a member of the NHS Addictions Provider Alliance and Hertfordshire County Council Drugs and Alcohol Network. It co-chairs the Integrated Drugs and Alcohol Governance Group alongside Spectrum (CGL) and Emerging Futures, who also hold commissioned services contracts for Hertfordshire Drugs and Alcohol statutory interventions.

EQUALITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

The Living Room is proud to be an equal opportunities employer. This means that decisions concerning recruitment, promotion, dismissal, or any other aspect of employment will be based on the needs of the business and not any assumptions based on sex, race, age, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, married or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, religion, or belief. This is an important commitment, which colleagues share.

Colleagues are encouraged to raise with management any discriminatory behaviour, assumptions, or attitudes they encounter at work and are entitled to do so free from any reprisal providing they are acting in good faith. There is a Diversity Equity, Equality and Inclusion staff working party forum to review process and procedures as well as ensure we uphold our values and mission.

How have we improved?

1.	Diverse representation of people in all our marketing materials.
2.	Staff training delivered on unconscious bias, twice over the year.
3.	All managers received Management Training Fundamentals, which included modules on equality, diversity, and inclusion.
4.	Newcomer and Graduate Aftercare groups provide additional support to clients at the start of their journey and when they leave us.
5.	Staff flexible working introduced, to promote autonomy.
6.	Updated staff grievance, performance management processes and client complaint policies.
7.	Working with Autism training, offered to clinical staff, to support clients with autistic tendencies to work better in group environments.

Download a pdf of this report [The Living Room \(livingroomherts.org\)](https://livingroomherts.org)

Partnership and press enquiries admin@livingroomherts.org

Service and clinical enquiries enquiries@livingroomherts.org

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The Living Room

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023, which are set out on pages 25 to 32.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records.

It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters.

The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the next statement.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Trina Haggerty FCCA
Hargreaves Owen Ltd
Chartered Certified Accountants
Red Sky House
Fairclough Hall
Halls Green
Weston
Herts
SG4 7DP

The date upon which my opinion is expressed is: 13th July 2023

**The Living Room
Statement of Financial Activities
for the year ended 31 March 2023**

		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
	Notes	2023 £	2023 £	2023 £	2022 £
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Incoming resources from generated funds					
Voluntary Income	2	827,885	71,180	899,065	820,519
Activities for generating funds	3	20,044	-	20,044	9,752
Investment Income	4	857	-	857	25
Total incoming resources		848,786	71,180	919,966	830,296
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Cost of generating funds					
Costs of generating voluntary income and undertaking charitable activities		828,694	54,531	883,225	843,778
Governance costs		24,653	756	25,409	14,885
Total resources expended		853,347	55,287	908,634	858,663
NET INCOMING / (OUTGOING) RESOURCES		(4,561)	15,893	11,332	(28,367)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
transfer between funds		17,382	(17,382)	0	0
Total funds brought forward		279,226	17,382	296,608	324,975
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		292,047	15,893	307,940	296,608

**The Living Room
Balance Sheet
as at 31 March 2023**

		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	
	Notes	2023	2023	2023	2022 £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	8	619	-	619	825
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	9	88,662	859	89,521	8,097
Rent deposit		6,250	-	6,250	-
Prepayments and accrued income		8,227	-	8,227	-
Cash at bank and in hand		205,380	15,893	221,273	305,700
Total current assets		<u>308,519</u>	<u>16,752</u>	<u>325,271</u>	<u>313,797</u>
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	10	(17,950)	-	(17,950)	(18,014)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>290,569</u>	<u>16,752</u>	<u>307,321</u>	<u>295,783</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>291,188</u>	<u>16,752</u>	<u>307,940</u>	<u>296,608</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>291,188</u>	<u>16,752</u>	<u>307,940</u>	<u>296,608</u>
FUNDS					
Unrestricted funds				291,188	279,226
Restricted funds				<u>16,752</u>	<u>17,382</u>
TOTAL FUNDS				<u>307,940</u>	<u>296,608</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Chair on 13th July 2023 and were signed on its behalf by:


D. MARSMAN

**The Living Room
Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2023**

1 Accounting policies

Basis of preparation of the accounts

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant notes to these accounts.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) issued on 16 July 2014 and with the Charities Act

The particular accounting policies adopted are set out below.

Transition to FRS 102

No restatement of items has been required in making the transition to FRS 102. The transition date was 1 April 2016.

Incoming Resources

Incoming resources are accounted for on a receivable basis deferred as described below where appropriate.

Resources expended

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Investment Income

Bank Interest received is included on an actual receipts basis.

Recognition of liabilities

Liabilities are recognised on the accruals basis in accordance with normal accounting principles, modified where necessary in accordance with the guidance given in the Statement of Recommended Practice for Accounting and Reporting (revised June 2008) issued by the Charity Commissioners for England & Wales.

Fixed assets and depreciation

All tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation.

Depreciation has been provided at the following rates in order to write off the assets (less their estimated residual value) over their estimated useful economic lives.

Fixtures and fittings	25% on reducing balance
Computer equipment	25% on reducing balance

Taxation

As a registered charity, the charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

The Living Room
Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2023

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when the funds are raised for particular purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Hire purchase and leasing commitments

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

2 VOLUNTARY INCOME	2023	2022
	£	£
Grants	310,888	265,060
Contracts	485,736	463,131
Places of Worship Donations	6,577	9,049
General Donations	51,865	49,292
Gift Aid	6,876	4,205
Corporate donations	1,247	5,782
Donated services and facilities	35,876	24,000
	<u>899,065</u>	<u>820,519</u>
3 ACTIVITIES FOR GENERATING FUNDS	2023	2022
	£	£
Fundraising events	16,588	6,857
Earned income	3,456	2,895
	<u>20,044</u>	<u>9,752</u>
4 INVESTMENT INCOME	2023	2022
	£	£
Interest receivable	<u>857</u>	<u>25</u>
5 COSTS OF GENERATING VOLUNTARY INCOME AND UNDERTAKING CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	2023	2022
	£	£
Support costs	<u>883,225</u>	<u>843,778</u>

The Living Room
Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2023

6 TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2023 nor for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Trustees' expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2023 nor for the year ended 31 March 2022.

7 STAFF COSTS	2023	2022
	£	£
Wages and salaries (including pensions)	<u>711,675</u>	<u>714,617</u>

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2023	2022
Full time equivalents	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u>

No employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000

8 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Fixtures and fittings £	Computer equipment £	Totals £
COST			
At 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023	<u>21,086</u>	<u>18,681</u>	<u>39,767</u>
At 31 March 2022	<u>21,086</u>	<u>18,681</u>	<u>39,767</u>
DEPRECIATION			
At 1 April 2022	20,765	18,177	38,942
Charge for the year	<u>80</u>	<u>126</u>	<u>206</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u>20,845</u>	<u>18,303</u>	<u>39,148</u>
NET BOOK VALUE			
At 31 March 2023	<u>241</u>	<u>378</u>	<u>619</u>
At 31 March 2022	<u>321</u>	<u>504</u>	<u>825</u>

The Living Room
Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2023

9 DEBTORS	2023	2022
	£	£
Other Debtors	<u>89,521</u>	<u>8,097</u>

10 CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR	2023	2022
	£	£
Taxation and social security	12,998	11,385
Other creditors	4,112	5,789
Accrued expenses	840	840
	<u>17,950</u>	<u>18,014</u>

11 MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		Net movement in funds	
	At 1/4/2022	£	At 31/3/2023
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	279,226	12,821	292,047
Restricted funds			
General fund	17,382	(1,489)	15,893
	<u>296,608</u>	<u>11,332</u>	<u>307,940</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Movement in funds
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	848,786	853,347	(4,561)
Restricted funds			
General fund	71,180	55,287	15,893
	<u>919,966</u>	<u>908,634</u>	<u>11,332</u>

The Living Room
Schedule to the Statement of Financial Activities
for the year ended 31 March 2023

	2023 £	2022 £
INCOMING RESOURCES		
Voluntary Income		
Grants	310,888	265,060
Contracts	485,736	463,131
Places of Worship Donations	6,577	9,049
General Donations	51,865	49,292
Gift Aid	6,876	4,205
Corporate donations	1,247	5,782
Donated services and facilities	35,876	24,000
	<u>899,065</u>	<u>820,519</u>
Activities for generating funds		
Fundraising events	16,588	6,857
Earned income	3,456	2,895
	<u>20,044</u>	<u>9,752</u>
Investment income		
Interest receivable	<u>857</u>	<u>25</u>
Total incoming resources	<u><u>919,966</u></u>	<u><u>830,296</u></u>
RESOURCES EXPENDED		
Governance costs		
Accountancy fees	590	590
Independent examination	250	250
Other professional fees	<u>24,569</u>	<u>14,045</u>
	25,409	14,885
Support costs		
Refreshments	1,122	859
Rent and Rates	41,394	38,314
Water	861	390
Light and heat	10,725	5,666
Telephone	4,767	3,739
Partnerships	30,000	35,000
Depreciation of tangible assets	<u>206</u>	<u>275</u>
	89,075	84,243

**The Living Room
Schedule to the Statement of Financial Activities
for the year ended 31 March 2023**

	2023	2022
Finance		
Bad debts	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Information technology		
IT support and consumables	9,200	7,133
Website	5,895	5,182
	<u>15,095</u>	<u>12,315</u>
Human resources		
Wages (including pensions)	711,675	714,617
Training	2,998	4,584
	<u>714,673</u>	<u>719,201</u>
Other		
Fundraising	365	335
Insurance	9,464	5,589
Printing, Stationery & Postage	3,744	4,935
Sundries	103	746
Subscriptions	1,066	1,832
Creche	-	894
Staff Travel	3,570	1,218
Marketing	661	387
Repairs and maintenance	32,999	10,108
Recruitment and DBS checks	1,175	997
Equipment	11,235	978
	<u>64,382</u>	<u>28,019</u>
Total resources expended	<u><u>908,634</u></u>	<u><u>858,663</u></u>
Net (expenditure) / income	<u><u>11,332</u></u>	<u><u>(28,367)</u></u>

THE LIVING ROOM

England & Wales - Charity number 1080634

Accounts

Registered Charity Number
1080634

Charity Incorporated Organisation (CIO) Number
1175541

The Living Room

Report and Accounts

31 March 2022

**The Living Room
Report and accounts
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In the face of unprecedented challenges, we have continued to adapt our service to help people overcome addiction. 65% of our clients are in sustained recovery following our help, compared to the national average of 50%.

Our annual report shows the work The Living Room does to help change the lives of people living with addictions, support their loved ones and to champion therapeutic interventions. The long-term impact we measure of graduates from the service shows the lasting effect on people's health, wellbeing and stability after they leave our services.

The Living Room's purpose has always (since 2000) been to break the cycle of addiction for social good. In our new 5-year strategy, our purpose remains constant, but we will focus on how we achieve it. Our two innovation themes are we will take a client-centred approach and consider sustainability in all we do.

Relationship building is a vital thread throughout our service delivery and organisational health. We will ensure we are inclusive, effective and have a sustainable impact on our clients' lives. We will nurture relationships in communities and work collaboratively to grow our presence and improve our holistic support.

ANNUAL REPORT STATEMENT

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

The board of Trustees are satisfied with the performance of the charity during the year and the position at 31st March 2022 and consider that the charity is in a strong position to continue its activities during the coming year and that the charity's assets are adequate to fulfil its obligations.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE CHARITY GOVERNANCE CODE

The aim of the Charity Governance Code is to help charities and their trustees develop high standards of governance. As a sector, we owe it to our beneficiaries, stakeholders and supporters to demonstrate exemplary leadership and governance. The Code is not a legal or regulatory requirement. Instead, the Code sets the seven principles and recommended practice for good governance and is deliberately aspirational, a tool for continuous improvement towards the highest standards.

There is an annual compliance review of the Charity Governance Code, highlighting areas for improvement and incorporate those into the yearly action plan.

RELATED PARTIES

None of the trustees receives remuneration or other benefit from their work with the charity.

Trustees are invited to declare any relevant conflicts of interest at each board meeting, and formally requested to submit an annual register of interests' form. Board members reported no relevant interests or transactions.

ANNUAL REPORT

OUR PUBLIC BENEFIT

The trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's objectives and activities, and in planning its future activities. In particular, the trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the objectives and activities that have been set.

The Living Room delivers public benefit through providing free, non-time-limited, facilitated, group counselling treatment to break the cycle of addiction for adults and family members or carers of someone with an addiction. By providing non-time-limited, abstinence-based, peer-support group therapy to any adult with an addiction that needs help to stop and stay stopped. Or providing a support peer group for family members or carers of a loved one with an addiction.

We provide people with the opportunity to explore the root cause of their own or their loved one's addiction and their responsibility in that. We help people to understand the underlying trauma and/or bereavement, which enables people to make connections with others and learn tools and strategies to lead a healthy and happy life; one that benefits future generations, the economy and communities and doesn't rely on an addiction for comfort. We believe that everyone has potential and a life worth living.

OUR PEOPLE

The Executive Team:

- Adrienne Arthurs, Chief Executive; (and Safeguarding DP)
- Rita Cooper, Clinical Director (and Safeguarding RP)
- Mark Wiseman, External Relations Director (and Shops)
- Susan Hudson, Corporate Services Director (and Data Protection Officer)

The Senior Leadership Team:

- Debbie Coote, Clinical Manager; (and Counselling Manager Watford)
- Cerise James (Fundraising and Marketing Manager)

16 FTE Counsellors and administrators to support the work across all four hubs.

12 Volunteers

OUR TRUSTEES

Board meetings of the Trustees and the CEO occur quarterly, with Extra-Ordinary meetings called in-between, when the need arises e.g. change of chair etc. Decisions are taken at the board meeting when the meeting is quorate, but also communication is by email. Some meetings are in-person and most conducted via video conferencing software (Zoom).

Trustees serve for 3 years, to a maximum of 3 x 3 years and are encouraged to use their skills, experience and knowledge to guide and support the strategic direction of the organisation. The running of the organisation and operations are delegated to the CEO, however, the Chair and Vice-Chair meet regularly.

Bi-monthly the Finance Committee meets, considering TLR finances and making recommendations to the board for decision.

The Executive Team are invited to attend the Board Meeting of Trustees.

Trustees are recruited from the general public, although people with lived experience of recovery and ex-service users are encouraged to join the board. Two spaces are allocated specifically. The CEO and the Chair provide new trustees with an induction and ongoing support.

INTRO FROM OUR CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Daniel Marshall
Chair of the Board
(June 2022)

Having been Chair for just a week of the financial year this report relates to, I want to start by giving credit and gratitude to my predecessor, Rob Henry, who chaired the Board superbly for the past 4 years. When I first joined as a Trustee almost five years ago, the organisation had low reserves, much lower income, and was nowhere near as financially resilient and sustainable as it is now. Huge credit for that goes to Adrienne and her team, but Rob as Chair, John as Vice-Chair, and Jonas as Treasurer, deserve a huge amount of credit too. John has kindly agreed to remain on the Board to continue to ensure a smooth continuation, and I'm grateful for his work and support.

Looking forward, I am immensely proud to be Chair of a charity, which has such a demonstrable impact on the lives of people it helps. Addiction has far-reaching, serious impacts on the lives of people, and those around them. We helped 340 people last year and, crucially, 65% of those sustain their recovery. I am also delighted to be working with such a committed and skilled group of Trustees. It is always worth remembering that Trustees are volunteers too, and I want to thank and commend my fellow Trustees who continue to show great commitment and passion for this cause, often having to weigh up difficult decisions in such a challenging financial climate.

I believe it is a sign of our strength as a Trustee Board that we've been able to quickly ensure that we have a brilliant Vice-Chair and Treasurer in place in Eddie Mills and Danny McGovern. This upcoming year we will be carrying out a review of our governance, again confident that we are coming from a place of strength and really testing ourselves as to how we can ensure that we're as robust, and effective as we possibly can be.

I want to also take the opportunity to thank Adrienne and her committed team of staff and volunteers. We are fortunate to have a high-performing team, with a culture, which is centred around constantly challenging ourselves as to how we can secure even better outcomes for those who access our services. The team continue to deliver brilliant outcomes in every aspect of the business, and should be proud of everything they have achieved. Adrienne and her Executive team display superb leadership, again facing difficult strategic decisions every day.

Finally, to our stakeholders and funders, we're looking forward to continuing to work with you on the challenges our clients face. It is important to highlight that these challenges are probably bigger than

ever before; we have a deeply unequal society coming out of the pandemic, inflation at its highest for 40 years, and a cost of living crisis putting immense pressure on household budgets. We can expect demand for our services to rise, and increasing complexity of cases, as a result. Nevertheless, I feel confident that we have the people capable of facing up to these challenges, and I look forward to working with everyone in doing so.

COMMENTS FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Adrienne Arthurs
Chief Executive
(May 2022)

Despite another year dominated by Coronavirus and restriction challenges, there is much to be proud of. The team managed to continue our vital services, sometimes in a different format, with extra safety measures, but always professional and person centred. The number of people attending our services did reduce as we couldn't be at full capacity, however the priority was a safe and secure environment for them and our colleagues.

Our priority was to continue our work to reduce the risk associated with addictions. It was imperative we continue to provide a daily service, with consistent messages of self-love and improving self-esteem. Routine and connections for our clients and carers or family members of someone with an addiction are a lifeline for many. The result of the challenges was that people attended our services for longer, with their mental health reported to be affected by isolation and the threat of a spreading Coronavirus.

Addiction tends to be stigmatised as something self-inflicted and controllable with a bit of self-will, but it is an illness and people living with an addiction deserve support, treatment and understanding just like anyone else with a health condition. Everyone knows someone who has experienced addiction at some point in their lives, from substance misuse to gambling or gaming addiction.

Trauma lies at the heart of all addictive behaviour and our group therapy model provides a safe environment for clients to explore this with people who can relate to having been through similar experiences. To stop our service at any time was not on the agenda; our clients need us to guide them through their recovery.

Our stoic staff team and in particular, our counsellors put our clients' needs first. However, the extra pressure on them as people was evident. As a charity, we invested in additional support, training and flexibility for our staff.

We embraced technology like never before. This year our online forums and social media campaigns have tried to reach out to people and professionals to help reduce the stigma and tell the real-life stories from people from all backgrounds, attending our service and achieving sustained recovery from

their addiction. We also asked our clients what the effects of Coronavirus was having on them and asked what we could do to better support them.

The benefit of learning to deliver groups via video conferencing, means that flexibility was maintained and delivery consistent, whether we were able to deliver in person or not. Over the year, despite various format changes of in-person or online; our counsellors have been determined to return to in-person group therapy to strengthen the client connections as a key ingredient of recovery. Addictions are isolating and recovery therefore must be connected.

Our Herts Hub, an online version of our in-person group, had different challenges. People who struggle to access in-person support are able to access therapeutic group therapy online. A majority of clients attending had a higher-than-average mental health illness alongside their addiction. Colleagues have learnt new skills and creative methods to connect clients together, as well as understanding non-verbal clues presented on the screen to aid their therapeutic support. As a result of the success of the Herts Hub, we secured a two-year contract from October 2021 – October 2023 with Hertfordshire County Council to deliver and be involved in active evaluation of online commissioned services.

End of an Era

Deciding to stop a service, due to lack of funding, is always a loss. Our crèche and crèche team had been supporting clients in Stevenage for nine years, but this year Children in Need changed direction with their funding and decided not to continue to support it. Regretfully, the crèche closed their doors for the final time on 31st December 2021.

Conclusion

Funding to continue our work will always be important, so that our service is free to access. We have a unique model that proves its worthiness through the lives it changes and saves. However, we know that to change is good and keeping our model intact, but embracing technology, helped us survive the stormy seas over the past few years with COVID-19. The challenge facing us going forward are to continue to attract funding and maintain the excellent outcomes for people living in recovery from an addiction, as the cost of living rises for us all.



Breaking the cycle of addiction

WE EXIST TO BREAK THE FAMILY CYCLE OF SUBSTANCE AND BEHAVIOURAL ADDICTIONS

OUR VISION

Our vision is a future when people with the **illness of addiction** are able to live their lives **free from** an addiction to drugs, alcohol or behaviours, **becoming contributing citizens in society**.



OUR MISSION

- ☑ To provide **group therapy** for adults with the **illness of addiction**, and
- ☑ to support their **family members**

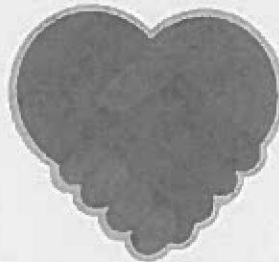
...in Hertfordshire.



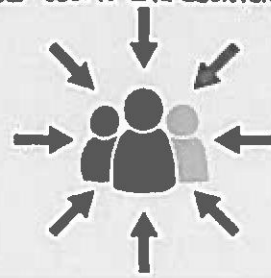
OUR VALUES



We are **CARING** to our clients & co-workers.



We are **CUSTOMER-FOCUSED** when prioritising our work and activities.



We serve and **SUPPORT** OUR COMMUNITY.



We ensure we are **COMPETENT** in performing our duties.



We value our **INTEGRITY** as professionals.



OUR COMMITMENTS TO EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION:

We will ensure that everyone, regardless of their individual or group characteristics,



can get **treatment** for their addiction and are given support.



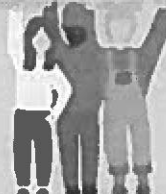
that takes account of their unique background and any complications this may cause for them.



We will reach out to community groups, develop better cultural awareness in our services,



and focus on **LGBTQ+** and **Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic** visibility within our organisation.



OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

VISION	Our vision is a future where people with the illness of addiction are able to live their lives free from an addiction to drugs, alcohol or behaviours, becoming contributing citizens in society.
MISSION	To provide group therapy for adults with the illness of addiction and to support their family members, in Hertfordshire and other areas of the UK.
AIM	The aim of our organisation is to break the family cycle of addiction (both substance and behavioural addictions). Our culture change work – not just teaching people to live with their addiction, we help them to take back ownership of their lives.
VALUES	We are caring to our clients and co-workers We are customer focused when prioritising our work and activities We serve and support our community We ensure we are competent in performing our duties We value our integrity as professionals.
DIVERSITY, EQUALITY EQUITY AND INCLUSION	We will ensure that anyone, regardless of their individual or group characteristics, can get treatment for their addiction and are given support that takes account of their unique background and any complications this may cause for them during their time at The Living Room. We will reach out to community groups, develop better cultural awareness in our services and focus on LGBTQ+ and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic visibility within our organisation.
CHARITABLE OBJECTS	The charity's main objective for the year was to promote the objects set out in its governing document, 02 November 2017 (refreshed 19 September 2019) when the charity was registered as a CIO No 1175541 (formerly 1080634). (a) to preserve and protect the health of all persons who are in danger of becoming addicted to, or dependent upon, drugs of any description, alcohol, solvents or other addictive substances or behaviours as well as their family members within the County of Hertfordshire and such other places as the trustees shall from time to time decide by the provision of counselling and recovery and support services. (b) to advance the education of professionals working in the field of addiction treatment by the provision of professional training, support services and information.

REFERRALS

We accept self-referrals as well as professional referrals, which are easily made via our website or via a phone call to our local number 0300 365 0304. In 2021, we saw 1501 enquiries made to our service, including 903 referrals.

OUR PROGRAMMATIC WORK:

The Living Room has hubs in Stevenage, St Albans, Watford and Online, for Hertfordshire adults to access.

Free, non-time-limited group therapy facilitated by trained counsellors with lived experience of addiction recovery; using person-centred therapy, cognitive behaviour therapy, dialectical behaviour therapy, psycho-educational/psycho-social counselling, psychodynamic counselling and the first four steps of the AA 12-step programme.

Our Services:

One number 0300 365 0304 – local call cost or free within mobile or landline package

All Addiction Group Therapy

Monday to Friday 10:30 – 14:30 (1 hour for lunch) St Albans and Stevenage
Monday to Thursday (Watford)

Drug Addiction Group Therapy

Weekly group

Family and Carers Group Therapy

Weekly group – Stevenage, St Albans and Watford (evening)

Relationship Group Therapy

Weekly group

Disordered Eating Group Therapy

Weekly group

Online All Addiction Group Therapy

Hertfordshire Hub

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

Zoom

Graduates Group meet up (monthly in each centre)

Out of Hours Helpline for families 0808 800 2222 (Family Lives)

Talks, training and event presence to raise awareness

Holistic support in partnership

Individual counselling (for people attending group therapy)

Crèche (for children of parents, family and carers receiving treatment, up to Dec 2021)

Our Services | The Living Room (livingroomherts.org)

TLR STRATEGY 2021 – 2024:

Our strategic themes:

We will take a client centred approach.

We will consider sustainability in all we do.



Our objectives:

1. Review and refine our services to ensure they are inclusive, effective, efficient and creating long-lasting impact on the lives of our clients.
2. Develop and nurture external relationships, to grow our partnerships and profile within communities and Hertfordshire.
3. Invest in digital solutions to reduce the impact on the environment and improve efficiency, accessibility, impact measurement and the reach of our services.
4. Position our organisation to successfully bid for long-term contracts and grants.

Our assurances:

We will listen to those accessing our services, so that we can improve them, adapt and respond holistically to client needs.

STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

	Target	Outcomes 2021 - 2022
 Service Delivery	60% of people achieve sustained recovery	65% of people achieved successful graduation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60% alcohol • 63% drugs • 71% disordered eating • 60% relationships • 50% gambling • 78% family and carers
 Access and Reach	600 people in Hertfordshire helped each year	340 people supported in total – less than our target <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 272 people supported for addictions • 68 family and carers supported
 Income Generation	50% of income from contracts	53% income from contracts achieved
 Community Engagement	30 talks, events and workshops delivered	21 talks and fundraising events 4 forums 4 workshops 2 quizzes
 Organisational Improvement	100% good to excellent client satisfaction	100% good → excellent client feedback

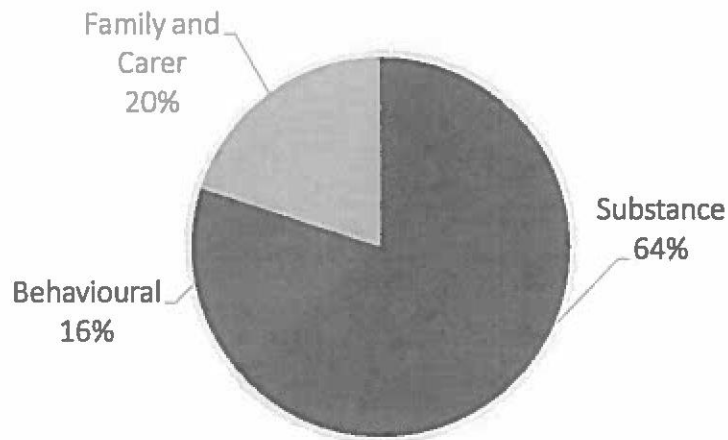
VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTION

The charity has placement counsellor volunteers (training counsellors - above Level 1); peer mentor volunteers, marketing and fundraising volunteers, event volunteers, IT consultants, crèche assistant volunteers, counselling volunteers and all of our trustees are volunteers. All work purely in a voluntary capacity and are unpaid.

In 2021-2022, 25 people dedicated many hours to volunteering with The Living Room’s Stevenage and St Albans hubs and our charity shops, lockdown affected the number of people volunteering and the hours they could offer.

Our paid colleagues also offer additional hours to support our fundraising activities.

CLIENTS 2021-22

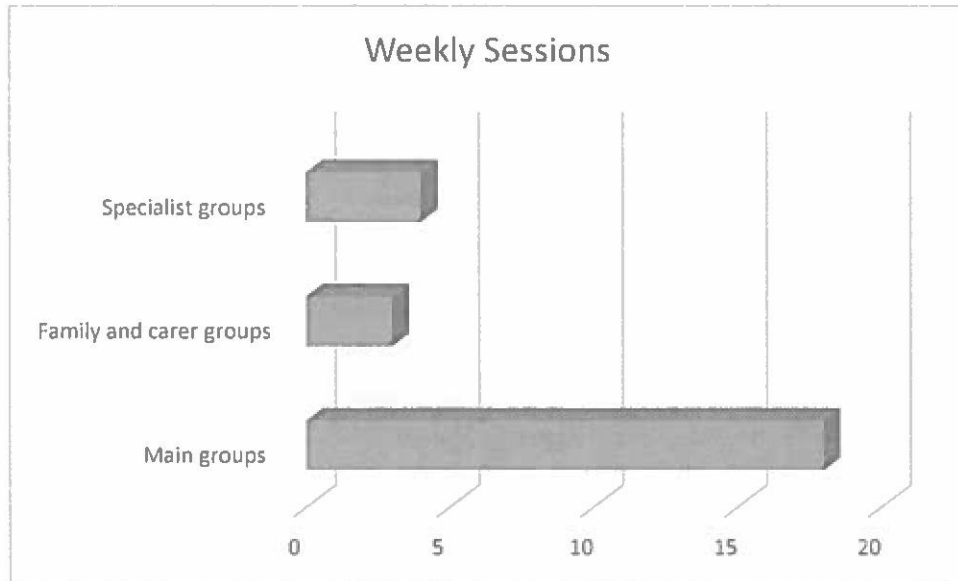


OUTCOMES

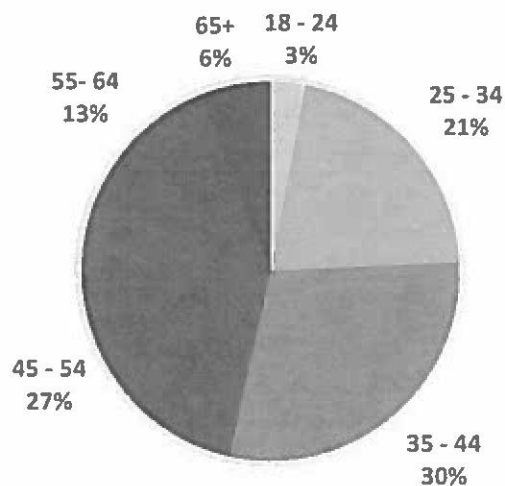
340	Number of people accessing treatment therapy
68	Number of family and carers supported via group therapy
1541	Brief Interventions via enquiries – in-person, phone or email
96	'Families Living in Recovery' sessions delivered by Family Lives or Relate
20	Make Money Make Sense project sessions delivered with Citizens Advice
27	Graduate groups (started Feb 2022) – people attended
65%	Graduation rate (Nationally 50%)
5%	Transferred to clinical interventions (Spectrum CGL)

OUTPUTS

18	Main group sessions per week
3	Family and carer sessions per week
4	Specialist group sessions per week
12	Placement counsellor hours provided per week (in training)
383	Counselling hours provided per week



AGE RANGES



EXTRA DELIVERY

Additional projects delivered with or by partners to our clients.

1. Partnership working with Citizens Advice St Albans and Stevenage to deliver Make Money Make Sense a debt and money management direct support for clients facilitated in our centres.
2. Groundwork UK providing outreach for our Stevenage clients on gardening projects locally.
3. Consortium working with RELATE North Thames and Chilterns as well as Family Lives Hertfordshire to deliver our 'Families Living in Recovery Project'.
4. Turning Point provided in-house mental health support one-to-one with clients in each hub.
5. 10 clients accessed Building Better Opportunities – Hertfordshire mentoring support for people re-entering the workplace.

FUNDRAISING

Our services are free at the point of delivery to people wanting to access our services. The Board of Trustees delegates the Income Generation strategy to the Fundraising Working Group comprised of staff and trustees, led by the External Relations Director.

The income budget set December 2020 for April 2021 – March 2022 was proposed by the Fundraising Working group and approved by trustees. However, due to lesser amounts raised in almost all categories due to the impact of COVID-19, more resources were focused on grants and trusts income stream, and reduced expenditure to reflect the difference raised.

	Approved 21/22 Budget	21/22 Actuals
Total Contracts	515,902	463,132
Revival Donation	25,000	24,000
Fundraising, Donations & Legacy Income	91,200	75,185
Traded income/interest earned	7,500	2,920
Total Grants	232,900	244,543
Children In Need-Crèche Funding Nov 18-Oct 21	23,938	20,518
TOTAL INCOME	896,440	830,298

OUR DONORS

40k - £50k	Albert Gubay Charitable Foundation Henry Smith Charity
£30-£40k	Children in Need (ended November 21)
£30-£20k	Lloyds Bank Foundation Garfield Weston
£20-£10k	Martin Geddes Charitable Trust Bedford & Luton Charitable Foundation David Laing Foundation
under £10k	Saint Albans District Council Watford Borough Council Stevenage Borough Council Diocese of St Albans St. Paul's Church St Albans Hertfordshire Community Foundation Watford Covid Community Grant Arnold Clark Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust Corporate funders: ASDA, Waitrose, Screwfix

Other income: Individual donations, places of worship, district and county councillors, community fundraising, our charity shops and Hertfordshire County Council contracts.

FUNDRAISING REGULATIONS

The Living Room engages in public fundraising but does not use professional fundraisers or commercial participators. The charity observes the relevant fundraising regulations and codes. During the year,

there was full compliance of these regulations and codes and The Living Room received no complaints relating to its fundraising practice.

LONG TERM IMPACT

In 2021, we surveyed people who had accessed our services during 2020, to see where they are now. We wanted to know whether our interventions worked. We wanted to see if the hard work that people affected by addiction put into achieve sustained recovery. We asked if they were abstinent and positive contributing citizens with good health and wellbeing long term.

“The Living Room is truly brilliant and took me in, gave me purpose to get better and a regular place to go with like-minded people so I could feel safe to talk about issues that I was having that I could not really speak to others outside of recovery. Without The Living Room, I would be in a very bad place now and possibly not here at all. I have to say every team member there are truly special, kind and very efficient I will never forget their kindness.”

95%	Recovery benefit of attending The Living Room
91%	Emotional and mental health improvement
90%	Self-care and living skills improvement
95%	Employed, a homemaker, in education or training, retired or volunteering
69%	Managed sustained abstinence, but all managing better than when they first accessed help
86%	Did not access any further addiction support
73%	Scored themselves 5/5 for being motivated and taking responsibility for their own actions
95%	Improved family relationships and increase social networks
54%	Continue to attend a fellowship
100%	Improved physical health
100%	Settled and secure housing situation (61% had settled housing at the start of treatment)
81%	Satisfied with recovery since leaving TLR

“Never wanted to leave The Living Room, but understood that needed to attend in person so was waiting for a referral over to the evening session at St Albans. I did find the support helpful, I never felt alone with The Living Room. I felt safe.”

KICKSTART

The government Kickstart Scheme provided funding to employers to create jobs for 16-24 year olds on Universal Credit. In 2021, we recruited a young person to work with us (paid) for 6-months, to train and prepare the young person to secure a permanent role either with us or elsewhere. We worked with Impactful Governance CIC who delivered the training portion of the scheme and a young person worked with us for 6-months (April 2021 – September 2021). The scheme was mainly funded through Job Centre Plus with a small top-up by us as the employer.

WHAT WE STOPPED

We closed our 9-year-old crèche. Alongside the reduction in funding available, there had been a decline over three years in the number of children supported during term time. The main reasons for this were:

- a) government childcare support from 3 years old
- b) low numbers of clients with children under 3
- c) twelve children potentially attending three days a week in school holidays – difficult to staff

On a positive note, the crèche has now been converted to Stevenage Group Room 2, meaning we no longer need to rent No.15 The Glebe, which helps with finances overall.

We ran a Gambling specialist group pilot mid-year 2020 to mid-year 2021, funded by HCC, however the pilot was unsuccessful in attracting the numbers of people needed to make it financially viable and we decided to stop the group when the funding came to an end. People with gambling addiction are supported in main group, but the pilot was run out of working hours and online to try to attract clients who had stated the need due to work. In fact, most people who attended the groups did so for a short time and did not address their addiction issues in the same way as main group clients.

FINANCIALS

Total income (financial year) 2021 - 2022 was £830,298 with expenditure of £858,664 resulting in a small operating deficit of £28,366. However, we had carried forward restricted reserves of £65,766 from 20/21 to be spent in 21/22, so this was a budgeted overspend.

INCOME

There was a 3% drop in income compared to 2020 – 2021. There were more COVID-19 grants available that we were eligible, but we were very limited on community fundraising activities and earned income reduced due to partners no longer renting space from us, moving their services online.

Fortunately, local councillors committed a substantial level of their locality budgets to support us, which was a £7k rise on the budget sent.

EXPENDITURE

There was a 13% increase in costs compared to 2020 - 2021 mainly due to growth in service, the staffing restructure and 3% pay rise awarded to staff. The other unusual additional costs included PPE, staff training costs for hybrid working and costs of closure of the crèche.

We continue to pay for premises across Hertfordshire despite online services, but we were given a freeze in Watford and were not required to pay rent when we didn't occupy the centre.

RESERVES POLICY

The trustees have considered the level of free reserves it is appropriate for the charity to hold in order to ensure its financial sustainability, future strategic development and continuing to operate and meet the needs of clients in the event that unforeseen and potentially financially damaging circumstances arise.

They have taken into account the reliability and continuance of future income generation and funding, timing of cash flow and working capital requirements and cover for unplanned emergency repairs and premises costs.

Free reserves represent unrestricted funds of the charity excluding restricted funds. The determination of an appropriate reserves level is a key part of the strategic planning process.

This is linked into a risk assessment of key areas of income and expenditure, along with the following:

- Working capital
- Financial risk management
- Future strategic development

The trustees review the reserves level on an annual basis, along with the risk assessment of key areas of income, as this provides the information on an adequate level of reserves to be maintained.

The trustees consider therefore that it would be prudent to set aside an amount equivalent to between three to four months of the forthcoming year's planned expenditure costs – for 2022-23 this would be between £223k and £297k. The free reserves at 31 March 2022 £279,227 are within the range of its reserves policy. Therefore, the trustees consider the charity a going concern.

REMUNERATION POLICY

The board is responsible for considering the Chief Executive's remuneration, taking account of the skills and experience required and sector norms for charities of similar size.

Pay and pay increases are reviewed biennially by the finance committee in relation to their responsibilities and performance, skills and qualifications, the external economic environment and financial affordability for The Living Room.

The Living Room is a Living Wage Employer, a Disability Committed Employer and a Mindful Employer.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The board follows a comprehensive risk management policy which clearly defines the roles of the board, finance and audit committee and senior colleagues in identifying and managing risk, and how the register of risks should be used as a live document. The board identifies the key risks and discusses the impact, likelihood and the risk management in place to mitigate these risks.

Risk is managed under the headings of Health and Safety, Beneficiaries Welfare, Legal and Statutory Obligations, Fundraising and Marketing, Services and Operations, Data Protection, Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults, Volunteer Welfare, Staff Welfare, Financial Sustainability.

Through the risk management processes established by the charity, the Trustees were satisfied that the major risks identified had been adequately mitigated where necessary.

The Charity is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and all client information is encrypted. The Living Room client and supporter databases are held in the cloud, are GDPR compliant and backed-up off site through an encrypted network. The organisation has access to a secure email connection. All colleagues, volunteers and trustees are regularly security checked and all relevant roles are DBS checked as per government guidance for working with Children or Vulnerable Adults.

The Living Room is a member of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy and Federation of Drugs and Alcohol Providers and therefore adheres to their ethical conduct for counselling and psychotherapy. It is a member of the NHS Addictions Provider Alliance and Hertfordshire County Council Drugs and Alcohol Network. It co-chairs the Integrated Drugs and Alcohol Governance Group alongside Spectrum (CGL) and Emerging Futures, who also hold commissioned services contracts for Hertfordshire Drugs and Alcohol statutory interventions.

EQUALITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

The Living Room is proud to be an equal opportunities employer. This means that decisions concerning recruitment, promotion, dismissal or any other aspect of employment will be based on the needs of the business and not any assumptions based on sex, race, age, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, married or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief. This is an important commitment, which all colleagues share.

Colleagues are encouraged to raise with management any discriminatory behaviour, assumptions or attitudes they encounter at work and are entitled to do so free from any reprisal providing they are acting in good faith. There is a Diversity Equity, Equality and Inclusion staff working party forum to review process and procedures as well as ensure we uphold our values and mission.

Download a pdf of this report [The Living Room \(livingroomherts.org\)](https://livingroomherts.org)

Partnership and press enquiries admin@livingroomherts.org

Service and clinical enquiries enquiries@livingroomherts.org

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The Living Room

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2022, which are set out on pages 20 to 27.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records.

It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters.

The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the next statement.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Trina Haggerty FCCA
Hargreaves Owen Ltd
Chartered Certified Accountants
Red Sky House
Fairclough Hall
Halls Green
Weston
Herts
SG4 7DP

The date upon which my opinion is expressed is: 28th July 2022

**The Living Room
Statement of Financial Activities
for the year ended 31 March 2022**

		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
	Notes	2022 £	2022 £	2022 £	2021 £
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Incoming resources from generated funds					
Voluntary Income	2	746,655	73,864	820,519	849,335
Activities for generating funds	3	9,752	-	9,752	9,039
Investment Income	4	25	-	25	136
Total incoming resources		<u>756,432</u>	<u>73,864</u>	<u>830,296</u>	<u>858,510</u>
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Cost of generating funds					
Costs of generating voluntary income and undertaking charitable activities		721,606	122,172	843,778	735,457
Governance costs		14,809	76	14,885	22,010
Total resources expended		<u>736,415</u>	<u>122,248</u>	<u>858,663</u>	<u>757,467</u>
NET INCOMING / (OUTGOING) RESOURCES		<u>20,017</u>	<u>(48,384)</u>	<u>(28,367)</u>	<u>101,043</u>
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
transfer between funds		0	0	0	0
Total funds brought forward		259,209	65,766	324,975	223,932
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u>279,226</u>	<u>17,382</u>	<u>296,608</u>	<u>324,975</u>

**The Living Room
Balance Sheet
as at 31 March 2022**

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2022	Restricted Funds 2022	Total Funds 2022	2021 £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	8	825	-	825	1,100
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	9	2,715	5,382	8,097	292
Prepayments and accrued income		-	-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand		293,700	12,000	305,700	342,457
Total current assets		<u>296,415</u>	<u>17,382</u>	<u>313,797</u>	<u>342,749</u>
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	10	(18,014)	-	(18,014)	(18,874)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>278,401</u>	<u>17,382</u>	<u>295,783</u>	<u>323,875</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>279,226</u>	<u>17,382</u>	<u>296,608</u>	<u>324,975</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>279,226</u>	<u>17,382</u>	<u>296,608</u>	<u>324,975</u>
FUNDS					
Unrestricted funds				279,226	259,209
Restricted funds				<u>17,382</u>	<u>65,766</u>
TOTAL FUNDS				<u>296,608</u>	<u>324,975</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Chair on 28th July 2022 and were signed on its behalf by:

.....
.....
.....

**The Living Room
Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2022**

1 Accounting policies

Basis of preparation of the accounts

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant notes to these accounts.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) issued on 16 July 2014 and with the Charities Act

The particular accounting policies adopted are set out below.

Transition to FRS 102

No restatement of items has been required in making the transition to FRS 102. The transition date was 1 April 2016.

Incoming Resources

Incoming resources are accounted for on a receivable basis deferred as described below where appropriate.

Resources expended

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Investment Income

Bank Interest received is included on an actual receipts basis.

Recognition of liabilities

Liabilities are recognised on the accruals basis in accordance with normal accounting principles, modified where necessary in accordance with the guidance given in the Statement of Recommended Practice for Accounting and Reporting (revised June 2008) issued by the Charity Commissioners for England & Wales .

Fixed assets and depreciation

All tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation.

Depreciation has been provided at the following rates in order to write off the assets (less their estimated residual value) over their estimated useful economic lives.

Fixtures and fittings	25% on reducing balance
Computer equipment	25% on reducing balance

Taxation

As a registered charity, the charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

The Living Room
Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2022

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when the funds are raised for particular purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Hire purchase and leasing commitments

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

2 VOLUNTARY INCOME	2022	2021
	£	£
Grants	265,060	304,283
Contracts	463,131	458,042
Places of Worship Donations	9,049	11,138
General Donations	49,292	49,027
Gift Aid	4,205	4,167
Corporate donations	5,782	2,678
Donated services and facilities	24,000	20,000
	<u>820,519</u>	<u>849,335</u>
3 ACTIVITIES FOR GENERATING FUNDS	2022	2021
	£	£
Fundraising events	6,857	7,699
Earned income	2,895	1,340
	<u>9,752</u>	<u>9,039</u>
4 INVESTMENT INCOME	2022	2021
	£	£
Interest receivable	<u>25</u>	<u>136</u>
5 COSTS OF GENERATING VOLUNTARY INCOME AND UNDERTAKING CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	2022	2021
	£	£
Support costs	<u>843,778</u>	<u>735,457</u>

The Living Room
Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2022

6 TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2022 nor for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Trustees' expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2022 nor for the year ended 31 March 2021.

7 STAFF COSTS	2022	2021
	£	£
Wages and salaries (including pensions)	<u>714,617</u>	<u>614,015</u>

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2022	2021
Full time equivalents	<u>24</u>	<u>23</u>

No employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000

8 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Fixtures and fittings £	Computer equipment £	Totals £
COST			
At 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022	<u>21,086</u>	<u>18,681</u>	<u>39,767</u>
At 31 March 2021	<u>21,086</u>	<u>18,681</u>	<u>39,767</u>
DEPRECIATION			
At 1 April 2021	20,658	18,009	38,667
Charge for the year	<u>107</u>	<u>168</u>	<u>275</u>
At 31 March 2022	<u>20,765</u>	<u>18,177</u>	<u>38,942</u>
NET BOOK VALUE			
At 31 March 2022	<u>321</u>	<u>504</u>	<u>825</u>
At 31 March 2021	<u>428</u>	<u>672</u>	<u>1,100</u>

**The Living Room
Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2022**

9 DEBTORS	2022	2021
	£	£
Other Debtors	<u>8,097</u>	<u>292</u>

10 CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR	2022	2021
	£	£
Taxation and social security	11,385	12,642
Other creditors	5,789	5,392
Accrued expenses	840	840
Deferred income	-	-
	<u>18,014</u>	<u>18,874</u>

11 MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		Net movement in funds	
	At 1/4/2021	£	At 31/3/2022
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	259,209	20,017	279,226
Restricted funds			
General fund	65,766	(48,384)	17,382
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>324,975</u>	<u>(28,367)</u>	<u>296,608</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Movement in funds
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	756,432	736,415	20,017
Restricted funds			
General fund	73,864	122,248	(48,384)
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>830,296</u>	<u>858,663</u>	<u>(28,367)</u>

The Living Room
Schedule to the Statement of Financial Activities
for the year ended 31 March 2022

	2022	2021
	£	£
INCOMING RESOURCES		
Voluntary Income		
Grants	265,060	304,283
Contracts	463,131	458,042
Places of Worship Donations	9,049	11,138
General Donations	49,292	49,027
Gift Aid	4,205	4,167
Corporate donations	5,782	2,678
Donated services and facilities	24,000	20,000
	<u>820,519</u>	<u>849,335</u>
Activities for generating funds		
Fundraising events	6,857	7,699
Earned income	2,895	1,340
	<u>9,752</u>	<u>9,039</u>
Investment Income		
Interest receivable	<u>25</u>	<u>136</u>
Total incoming resources	<u>830,296</u>	<u>858,510</u>
RESOURCES EXPENDED		
Governance costs		
Accountancy fees	590	590
Independent examination	250	250
Other professional fees	14,045	21,170
	14,885	22,010
Support costs		
Refreshments	859	162
Rent and Rates	38,314	31,831
Water	390	878
Light and heat	5,666	5,630
Telephone	3,739	4,174
Partnerships	35,000	38,000
Depreciation of tangible assets	275	367
	<u>84,243</u>	<u>81,042</u>

The Living Room
Schedule to the Statement of Financial Activities
for the year ended 31 March 2022

	2022	2021
Finance		
Bad debts	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Information technology		
IT support and consumables	7,133	7,174
Website	5,182	4,896
	<u>12,315</u>	<u>12,070</u>
Human resources		
Wages (including pensions)	714,617	614,015
Training	4,584	1,589
	<u>719,201</u>	<u>615,604</u>
Other		
Fundraising	335	280
Insurance	5,589	3,653
Printing, Stationery & Postage	4,935	2,196
Sundries	746	436
Subscriptions	1,832	2,185
Creche	894	5,086
Staff Travel	1,218	164
Marketing	387	584
Repairs and maintenance	10,108	5,226
Recruitment and DBS checks	997	1,078
Equipment	978	5,853
	<u>28,019</u>	<u>26,741</u>
Total resources expended	<u><u>858,663</u></u>	<u><u>757,467</u></u>
Net (expenditure) / income	<u><u>(28,367)</u></u>	<u><u>101,043</u></u>

THE LIVING ROOM

England & Wales - Charity number 1080634

Accounts

Registered Charity Number
1080634

Charity Incorporated Organisation (CIO) Number
1175541

The Living Room

Report and Accounts

31 March 2021

**The Living Room
Report and accounts
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REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

The board of trustees of The Living Room present its annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2021. The financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011.

The board of Trustees of are satisfied with the performance of the charity during the year and the position at 31st March 2021 and consider that the charity is in a strong position to continue its activities during the coming year and that the charity's assets are adequate to fulfil its obligations.



BREAKING THE CYCLE OF ADDICTION

ADDICTION CAN AFFECT *anyone*

IT THRIVES WHEN PEOPLE ARE ISOLATED.

AND CONTROLLING IT BECOMES **DESTRUCTIVE**

THE LIVING ROOM WORKS WITH PARTNERS SO THAT WE CAN SUPPORT EVERY CLIENT HOLISTICALLY.

FAMILY BREAKDOWN + MENTAL HEALTH + EDUCATION & SKILLS

CRIME + ANGER ISSUES + UNSTABLE HOUSING

ALL OUR COUNSELLORS ARE HIGHLY QUALIFIED & HAVE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF ADDICTION

We offer:

- GROUP THERAPY: TO DETERMINE ROOT CAUSE
- SPECIALIST GROUPS: TO DEVELOP PERSONAL TOOLKITS
- PEER NETWORKS: TO FOCUS ON SPECIFIC NEEDS IN A DEEPER THERAPEUTIC WAY
- TO ENCOURAGE SELF LOVE AND SELF RESPECT

EVERY YEAR WE HELP HERTFORDSHIRE PEOPLE WITH ADDICTION TO CHOOSE ABSTINENCE OVER ADDICTION.

600 SERVICE USERS & 100 FAMILY & CARERS

FROM OUR 4 CENTRES...

STEVENAGE, ST. ALBANS, WATFORD, VIRTUAL CENTRE

Statement from our Chair of the Board of Trustees

This year April 2020- March 2021, which is our 20th anniversary year, has been challenging for everyone. We have been accommodating COVID-19 rules and regulations and have had to transform how we work, trying to maintain a service on which people rely to keep them safe. We have been keen to see the impact of these changes on our services across the year. We did not just want to survive but continue to perform and grow, despite the impact of the pandemic, providing the help people need *because* of the pandemic.

Over the year, we have received an incredible **1,704 enquiries** to our services with **100%** of them hearing back from us within just **48 hours** of their initial referral or contact with us. This means our team ensures that **every single person** who calls is being given what they need, whether that's someone coming in for an assessment, being referred on to another service or just being given more information about who we are and what we do.

We've helped **505 people** across our hubs, with **61** people in our new virtual Hertfordshire Hub which is continuing to grow, allowing more and more people in need **across the county** to access us without concern for issues like travel costs.

From January to March this year, we have also seen **amazing graduation rates** across the groups. With **75%** success for Disordered Eating and Family and Carers, **80%** for drugs and **88%** of those who came in for alcohol addiction. We are so proud of people who graduate.

These encouraging statistics show our impact as a charity. Nevertheless, we know that there is much more to us than just numbers, we support our community to live their lives free from addiction.

I would like to thank the colleagues who worked so hard and showed great resilience. It is important to put into perspective all that goes on over the course of a year and this reflection of a particularly difficult and unusual year helps us do just that. We appreciate everyone who works or volunteers at The Living Room, from the clinical team to administration. To our supporters and funders, we would like to say another thank you. We want you to see the results of your time spent volunteering, money donated or grants awarded allows us to do for our community.

Without everyone working together, statistics and successes like these would not be possible.

Rob Henry – Chair

Board of Trustees

(May 2021)

Comments from our Chief Executive

What a year this has been! Despite it being a challenging and unusual year because of Covid, we have maintained operations and high levels of community support.

Preparation for Lockdown

On 10th March, we published our Covid-19 Action Plan. The four-stage plan helped us to keep hygiene standards high while our hubs were open and we assured our colleagues we were prepared. It also meant that team members were quickly set up and trained for remote working via Zoom.

By 16th March, we were ready to deliver four online counselling groups at any one time. We kept our clients informed about our plans and assured them they would still receive therapy.

Lockdown – Initial stages

On 19th March, we announced we would close our hubs on 23rd March. We sent invitations for Zoom sessions to clients. Initially, we restricted groups to a maximum of 10 people therefore each of our clients could attend a one-hour session daily. Our counsellors continued to phone clients that needed extra support or could not access Zoom, to help them stay safe.

Temporarily, to focus on the people who were already accessing our service, we stopped taking on new clients. Our clients told us they were experiencing increased fear, confusion and a new isolation that the lockdown created. The feedback was positive; clients told us that although virtual services were not the same they were a lifeline. By 7th April, 85% of people who attended The Living Room before lockdown remained with us and engaged in their treatment.

Counsellors rely on being able to read body language during groups, and people form positive relationships before and after sessions. Despite concerns that running counselling sessions online would dilute the effectiveness of the therapy, our counsellors and clients adapted fantastically.

Lockdown – adapting to change

We were determined to restart welcoming new clients to our online groups as soon as possible; the needs of our community were evident in the increasing referrals to our service. Triage and assessment over the telephone or Zoom with a trained counsellor became our priority, but we needed extra funding to do this. Fortunately, we were successful in applying for several emergency COVID-19 grants, which funded the technology needed (laptops, headsets, Zoom licences, routers) to run our service remotely and the staffing costs involved. By 16th April, our new telephone triage and online one-to-one assessments for new clients began.

During April, we began to extend the session times with morning and afternoon groups, re-introducing our specialist, weekly sub-groups to give people extra support.

Lockdown – the benefits

One of the benefits of lockdown is that we have made our service more accessible to certain groups. Our surveys show that a number of people joined The Living Room specifically because of our online service. Feedback comments indicated this was because they were too nervous about attending a group in person, unable to afford the transport costs, or they had a disability, which made it difficult to attend one of our hubs.

In addition, virtual group therapy provides flexibility. Historically, a challenge we face is encouraging people to prioritise daytime counselling over other commitments, especially work. This is one of the

reasons we attract fewer people with gambling concerns than we would like. Virtual groups have meant that evening sessions are possible: weekly problem gambling addiction group, family and carers support and a disordered eating group.

Bounce back from lockdown

As lockdown restrictions eased in the summer of 2020, our face-to-face counselling resumed in location. We maintained socially distanced groups for 15 people at a time, facilitated by two counsellors. On September 9th we reopened some of our hubs and reintroduced specialist groups such as our Drugs group, in November.

After the success of our online groups, we are pleased to say that our fourth hub, which provides a Hertfordshire-wide virtual service, opened in September to help us to keep supporting people who were unable to attend in person. We did not want to leave anybody behind.

In response to client demand, in January 2021 we held once a week face-to-face sessions in our Watford hub and our St Albans hub. The remainder of the sessions continued online in a blended model.

Funding is secured for The Hertfordshire Hub until October 2021, but we are keen to make this a permanent addition to The Living Room.

Funding

Like all charities, our revenue from fundraising events dropped. We closed our charity shops from March to July 2020 and December 2020 to May 2021, which was a substantial hit to our unrestricted income. Places of worship, another key funding avenue supporting our work, closed their doors which affected donations.

Our main funders have been steadfast in their support, for which we are extremely grateful. The long-term economic picture is uncertain, but we are in a strong position for this financial year. On-going financial support from our community will be crucial as we strive to deliver a mixture of location-based and online counselling.

Conclusion

I am extremely proud of the way our trustees, colleagues, volunteers and clients have reacted to the pandemic situation. I am also very thankful for the external support we received to help us cope with all of the challenges thrown our way, from funders such as Hertfordshire County Council, ACEVO, Lloyds Bank Foundation and access to grants and the government furlough scheme for our shop colleagues.

Addiction thrives on loneliness, anxiety, and trauma. Always and particularly during and post pandemic, our services are vital. We do not do it alone, working with partners, to provide holistic support.

Our readiness for lockdown enabled us to move seamlessly to online counselling on 23rd March 2020. Our priority was to hold onto our clients during troubling times to keep them safe and we continued to provide our tried-and-tested group-counselling model to hundreds of people. A year on, even more people than ever are accessing and graduating from The Living Room and leading lives free from addiction.

Adrienne Arthurs

Chief Executive
(May 2021)

Reference and Administrative Details

Status	The organisation is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) - Foundation
Governing document	The Living Room is governed by its Constitution, as adopted on 02 November 2017 amended 26 September 2019.
Company number	N/A
Charity number	1175541 (previously 1080634) Registered under both numbers but operating under the CIO number 1175541
Registered office and operational address	8-10 The Glebe Chells Way Stevenage Hertfordshire SG2 0DJ
Trustees	Robert Henry <i>CHAIR</i> Mary Corbett OBE (to 25/06/2020) Tracy Lacey-Smith Eddie Mills Daniel Marshall John Palmer <i>VICE-CHAIR</i> Charles King Jenny Brace Jonas Schirm <i>TREASURER</i>
Chief Executive	Adrienne Arthurs
Banker	HSBC Town Centre, Danestrete, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 1BY
Chartered Accountant and Statutory Auditor	Gary Sisman ACA Red Sky House, Fairclough Hall, Halls Green, Weston. Hertfordshire SG4 7DP

OUR PUBLIC BENEFIT

The trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's objectives and activities, and in planning its future activities. In particular, the trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the objectives and activities that have been set.

The Living Room delivers public benefit through providing free counselling treatment to break the cycle of addiction for adults and family members or carers of someone with an addiction. By providing non-time-limited, abstinence-based peer-support group therapy to any adult with an addiction that needs help to stop and stay stopped. Or providing a support peer group for family members or carers of a loved one with an addiction.

We provide people with the opportunity to explore the root cause of their own or their loved one's addiction and their responsibility in that. We help people to understand the underlying trauma and/or bereavement which enables people to make connections with others and learn tools and strategies to lead a healthy and happy life; one that benefits future generations, the economy and communities and doesn't rely on an addiction for comfort. We believe that everyone has potential and a life worth living.

WHAT WE DELIVER:

Free, non-time-limited group therapy facilitated by trained counsellors with lived experience; using person-centred therapy, psycho-educational counselling, psychodynamic counselling and the first four steps of the AA 12-step programme.

- Drugs and Alcohol Addiction Group Therapy
- Behavioral Addiction Group Therapy
- Family and Carers Group Therapy
- Crèche (for children of parents, family and carers receiving treatment)
- Relationship Group Therapy
- Talks, training and event presence to raise awareness
- Holistic support in partnership
- Helpline for families
- Individual counselling (for people attending group therapy)

The charity's main objective for the year was to promote the objects set out in its governing document, 02 November 2017 (refreshed 19 September 2019) when the charity was registered as a CIO.

OBJECTS:

The objects of the CIO [Charitable Incorporated Organisation] are:

(a) to preserve and protect the health of all persons who are in danger of becoming addicted to, or dependent upon, drugs of any description, alcohol, solvents or other addictive substances or behaviours within the County of Hertfordshire and such other places as the trustees shall from time to time decide by the provision of counselling and recovery and support services.

(b) to advance the education of professionals working in the field of addiction treatment by the provision of professional training, support services and information.



Breaking the cycle of addiction

WE EXIST TO BREAK THE FAMILY CYCLE OF SUBSTANCE AND BEHAVIOURAL ADDICTIONS

OUR VISION

Our vision is a future when people with the **illness of addiction** are able to live their lives **free from** an addiction to drugs, alcohol or behaviours, becoming **contributing citizens in society**.



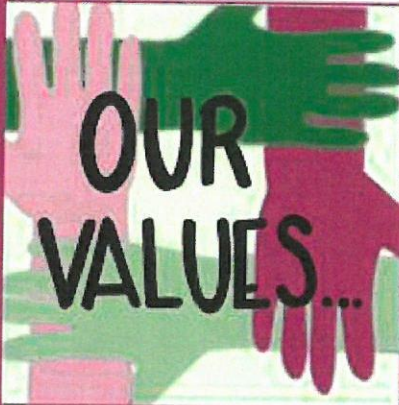
OUR MISSION

- ✓ To provide **group therapy** for adults with the **illness of addiction**, and
- ✓ to support their **family members**

...in Hertfordshire.



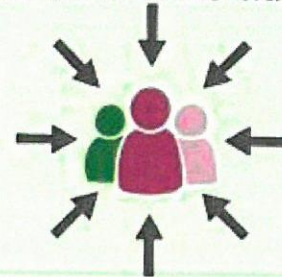
OUR VALUES...



We are **CARING** to our clients & co-workers.



We are **CUSTOMER-FOCUSED** when prioritising our work and activities.



We serve and **SUPPORT** OUR COMMUNITY.



We ensure we are **COMPETENT** in performing our duties.



We value our **INTEGRITY** as professionals.



OUR COMMITMENTS TO EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION:

We will ensure that anyone, regardless of their individual or group characteristics...

...can get treatment for their addiction and are given support...

...that takes account of their unique background and any complications this may cause for them.

We will reach out to community groups, develop better cultural awareness in our services.

and focus on LGBTQ+ and black, Asian and Minority Ethnic visibility within our organisation.



Addiction takes control of ordinary people's lives. Taking, over-doing or using a substance or a behaviour becomes harmful, affecting health, mental wellbeing, relationships and finances.

People do not choose to become addicted. Those who have suffered a traumatic experience in their life may be using a substance or behaviour as a way of coping. Using food, alcohol, medication or illegal substances create a feel-good feeling and will initially block out difficult issues, but gradually needing more and more comfort to dull the pain. Triggers can be unemployment, poverty, stress and emotional or professional pressures.

Then comes the vicious circle of not coping, 'using', relief, come down, shame, repeat. This cycle does not happen to everyone and not everyone becomes addicted. Why not? Access to a supportive network, having the opportunity to talk about issues and worries and finding other ways to cope will have a preventative effect. Research is inconclusive as to whether developing an addiction is likely due to genetics or environmental factors. There could also be a combination of the two.

Children of someone with an addiction are four times more likely to have an addiction themselves. For every person with the illness of addiction, it affects at least five other people and their community.

It is estimated there is a **£3.5 billion** cost to the NHS for alcohol related addiction and **£3.5 billion** for drug misuse. However, the real cost is in lives with an escalating death rate and many families torn apart by the negative impact addiction has, as a rippling effect.

The UK economy loses **£21 billion** to alcohol abuse and **£15 billion** to drug abuse each year, and employers lose about **£7.3 billion** yearly due to lack of productivity as a result of the misuse of alcohol. It is estimated that the cost per unemployed person is £9,800 to move them into work, which is more difficult when addiction is one of the barriers.²

Suicide is a significant national social issue in the UK, in 2019 there were 5,691¹ deaths by suicide which costs the UK economy **£1.67 million**. People who misuse alcohol are eight times more likely to die from suicide. Clients say they reached out when they were in the most emotional pain – the choice they had was ending their life or reaching out for help. Thankfully, they reached out for help.

We work with other organisations that provide clinical interventions, to help people stop using. We are abstinence based and believe that recovery long term is only possible when not under the influence of drugs, alcohol or behaviours. People are therefore presenting their real self and can engage and benefit from therapy making choices with a clear mind. Abstinence is the basis for recovery working alongside reconnecting with communities.

Our vision is a future where people with the illness of addiction are able to live their lives free from an addiction to drugs, alcohol or behaviours, becoming positive contributing citizens in society.

Charitable Mission: to provide treatment for adults with the illness of addiction and to support their family members, in Hertfordshire.

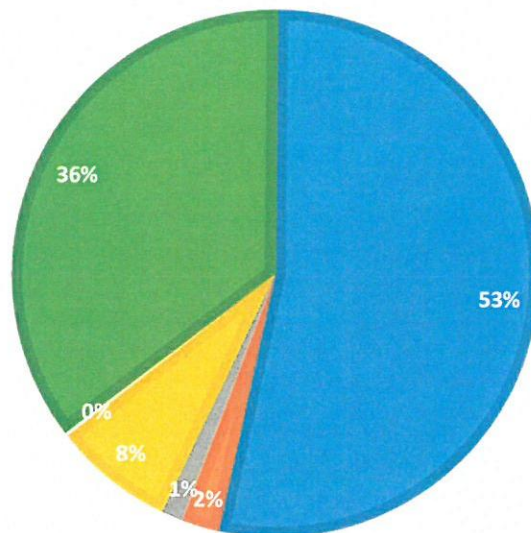
The Living Room aims to break the family cycle of addiction from substance and behavioural addictions.

FINANCIALS

Total income (financial year) 2020 - 2021 - £859,000. We are running at a surplus of £101,000, restricted and dedicated to projects for the forthcoming financial year, as well as increased reserves requirements.

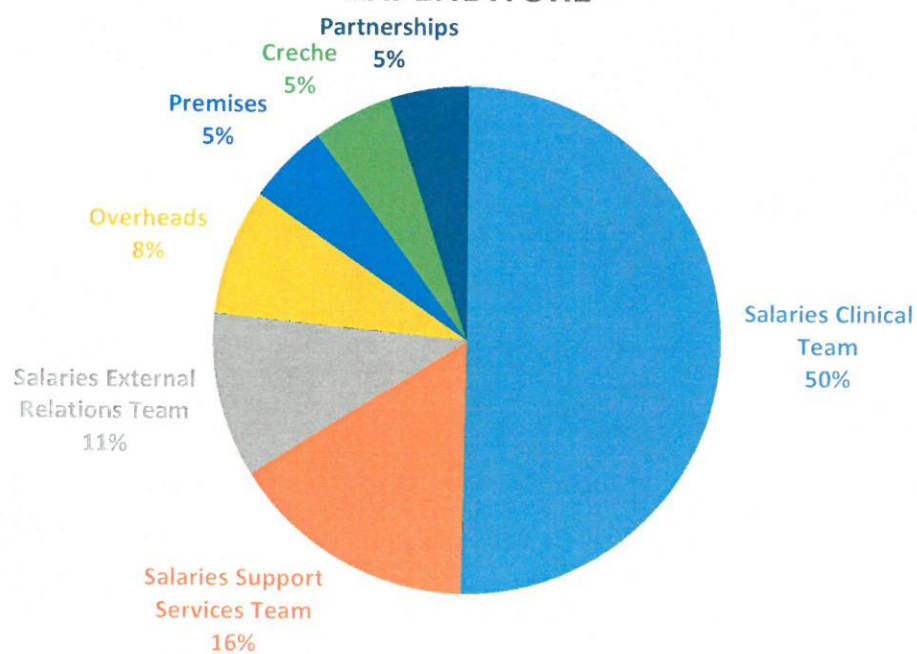
INCOME

■ Contracts ■ Revival ■ Churches ■ Donations ■ Traded ■ Grants



EXPENDITURE

EXPENDITURE



EXPENDITURE

77% spent on salaries – our biggest expenditure and asset. We are a people focused charity and our investment is in the counsellors who provide the right environment to guide, support and challenge a person’s destructive coping strategies.

Even though the majority of colleagues worked from home, due to the largest expenditure being staff salaries there were no cost savings overall. In fact, salary expenditure has risen as we have increased the amount of counselling hours on offer by around **40%**.

Day-to-day premises costs reduced, such as photocopying, electricity and heating, but the digital investment and maintenance costs increased. Early 2020, we received a grant for digital equipment to enable all colleagues to have a suitably powered laptop and accessories to work from their own homes, efficiently.

IMPACT

Number of people treated	434
Number of family and carers supported	56
Brief Interventions	1704

RESERVES POLICY

The trustees have considered the level of free reserves it is appropriate for the charity to hold in order to ensure its financial sustainability, future strategic development and continuing to operate and meet the needs of clients in the event that unforeseen and potentially financially damaging circumstances arise.

They have taken into account the reliability and continuance of future income generation and funding, timing of cash flow and working capital requirements and cover for unplanned emergency repairs and premises costs.

Free reserves represent unrestricted funds of the charity excluding restricted funds. The determination of an appropriate reserves level is a key part of the strategic planning process.

This is linked into a risk assessment of key areas of income and expenditure, along with the following:

- Working capital
- Financial risk management
- Future strategic development

The trustees review the reserves level on an annual basis, along with the risk assessment of key areas of income, as this provides the information on an adequate level of reserves to be maintained.

The trustees consider therefore that it would be prudent to set aside an amount equivalent to between three to four months of the forthcoming year’s planned expenditure costs – for 2021-22 this would be between £222k and £295k. The free reserves at 31 March 2021 £259k are within the range of its reserves policy.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE CHARITY GOVERNANCE CODE

The aim of the Charity Governance Code is to help charities and their trustees develop high standards of governance. As a sector, we owe it to our beneficiaries, stakeholders and supporters to demonstrate exemplary leadership and governance. The Code is not a legal or regulatory requirement. Instead, the Code sets the seven principles and recommended practice for good governance and is deliberately aspirational, a tool for continuous improvement towards the highest standards.

We annually review our compliance with the Charity Governance Code, highlighting areas for improvement and incorporate those into the yearly action plan.

KEY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL

The Executive Team:

- Adrienne Arthurs, Chief Executive; (and Safeguarding DP)
- Rita Cooper, Clinical Director (and Safeguarding RP)
- Mark Wiseman, External Relations Director
- Susan Hudson, Corporate Services Director (and DPO)

The Senior Leadership Team:

- Debbie Coote, Clinical Manager; (and Counselling Manager Watford)
- Cerise James (Fundraising and Marketing Manager)

The Senior Management Team:

- Carl Duke, Counselling Manager Stevenage
- Michelle Smale, Counselling Manager St Albans
- Olivia Betts, Counselling Manager Hertfordshire Hub
- Michelle Chapman, Crèche Manager (and Children's Safeguarding DP)

The Management Team:

- Mike Stillwell, Deputy Counselling Manager St Albans
- Kim Rawlings, Deputy Counselling Manager Stevenage
- Maxine Gargan, Senior Counsellor Watford
- Natalie Grant, Crèche Supervisor
- Lucy Roe, St Albans and Watford Hub Manager
- Jackie Swole, Stevenage and Hertfordshire Hub Manager
- Nicola Roope, Personnel and Finance Officer

RELATED PARTIES

None of the trustees receives remuneration or other benefit from their work with the charity.

Trustees are invited to declare any relevant conflicts of interest at each board meeting, and formally requested to submit an annual register of interests' form. Board members reported no relevant interests or transactions.

REMUNERATION POLICY

The board is responsible for considering the Chief Executive's remuneration, taking account of the skills and experience required and sector norms for charities of similar size.

Pay and pay increases are reviewed biennially by the finance committee in relation to their responsibilities and performance, skills and qualifications, the external economic environment and financial affordability for The Living Room.

The Living Room is a Living Wage Employer and Mindful Employer.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The board follows a comprehensive risk management policy which clearly defines the roles of the board, finance and audit committee and senior colleagues in identifying and managing risk, and how the register of risks should be used as a live document. The board identifies the key risks and discusses the impact, likelihood and the risk management in place to mitigate these risks.

Risk is managed under the headings of Health and Safety, Beneficiaries Welfare, Legal and Statutory Obligations, Fundraising and Marketing, Services and Operations, Data Protection, Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults, Volunteer Welfare, Staff Welfare, Financial Sustainability.

Through the risk management processes established by the charity, the Trustees were satisfied that the major risks identified had been adequately mitigated where necessary.

The Charity is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and all client information is encrypted. The Living Room client and supporter databases are held in the cloud, are GDPR compliant and backed-up off site through an encrypted network. The organisation has access to a secure email connection. All colleagues, volunteers and trustees are regularly security checked and all relevant roles are DBS checked as per government guidance for working with Children or Vulnerable Adults.

The Living Room is a member of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy and Federation of Drugs and Alcohol Providers and therefore adheres to their ethical conduct for counselling and psychotherapy.

FUNDRAISING

The Living Room engages in public fundraising but does not use professional fundraisers or commercial participators. The charity observes the relevant fundraising regulations and codes. During the year, there was full compliance of these regulations and codes and The Living Room received no complaints relating to its fundraising practice.

EQUALITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

The Living Room is proud to be an equal opportunities employer. This means that decisions concerning recruitment, promotion, dismissal or any other aspect of employment will be based on the needs of the business and not any assumptions based on sex, race, age, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, married or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief. This is an important commitment, which all colleagues share.

Colleagues are encouraged to raise with management any discriminatory behaviour, assumptions or attitudes they encounter at work and are entitled to do so free from any reprisal providing they are acting in good faith.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF VOLUNTEERS

The charity has placement counsellor volunteers (training counsellors - above Level 1); peer mentor volunteers, bookkeeping volunteers, marketing and fundraising volunteers, event volunteers, IT consultants, crèche assistant volunteers, counselling volunteers and all of our trustees are volunteers. All work purely in a voluntary capacity and are unpaid.

In 2020-2021, 20 people dedicated many hours to volunteering with The Living Room's Stevenage and St Albans hubs and our charity shops, lockdown affected the number of people volunteering and the hours they could offer.

Our paid colleagues also offer additional hours to support our fundraising activities.

OUR SERVICES

LONG TERM IMPACT

In 2020, we surveyed people who had accessed our services during 2019, to see where they are now. We wanted to know whether our interventions worked. We wanted to see if the hard work that people affected by addiction put into achieve sustained recovery. We asked if they were abstinent and positive contributing citizens with good health and wellbeing long term.

"The support I received was phenomenal. I believe I will always be able to look back at my time there as the most significant turning point in my recovery."

100%	Recovery benefit of attending The Living Room
100%	Emotional and mental health improvement
100%	Self-care and living skills improvement
93%	Employed, a homemaker, in education or training, retired or volunteering
87%	Managed sustained abstinence
77%	Did not access any further addiction support
53%	Are motivated and taking responsibility for their own actions
50%	Improved family relationships and increase social networks
46%	of people continue to attend a fellowship
37%	Of people had improved physical health
30%	More settled and secure housing situation (70% had settled housing at the start of treatment)

"I struggled afterwards. Leaving was very destabilising. Some sort of greatly reduced, yet consistent contact or support may have helped. I managed though, having said that and came through it with a strong recovery."

HERTFORDSHIRE Local Charity

We support Hertfordshire residents, with three location-based hubs and one virtual hub covering the whole of Hertfordshire. Our Head Office is in Stevenage with an additional therapy space next to our children's shop, one hub in St Albans and one hub in Watford. Our virtual service Hertfordshire Hub was a direct response to opening up services going back to being location based, with limited group sizes. We secured emergency funding to supplement our offer to meet the needs of the community and

ensure treatment continuity. It has worked so well in attracting people who were unable to attend our hubs in-person that we are now seeking funding to continue beyond the end of the emergency funding (October 2021).

95% of people attending our virtual Hertfordshire Hub are supported for drugs and alcohol.

It was also the year of George Floyd's murder in the US. As an organisation, we felt we wanted to cement our commitment to supporting equality, equity, diversity and inclusion. We reviewed all of our practices and procedures, set up the EDI Staff Working Party and spoke with our client Experts by Experience groups. Collectively we set our organisational EDI statement of commitment and aim to deliver better practice.

GROUP THERAPY

'I had to admit my life was in turmoil and I had hit rock bottom in order to move forward, one baby step at a time. The journey over the last 10 months hasn't been easy but I have been honest the whole way. I have learnt to put my trauma to bed to take responsibility of my life, to shut the door on toxic relationships that didn't serve me anymore, to grow up and most importantly to move on 'one day at a time!' ~ Drug Client

434 people accessed group therapy during 2020 – 2021. 40% attended St Albans, 32% attended Stevenage, 20% attended Watford and 10% attended our Hertfordshire Hub (started in October 2020). We offered a blended virtual and location-based service where government guidance allowed.

We provide a day service 5 days a week, with an evening service for Family and Carers and from September 2020, we started a one-year evening problem-gambling pilot. We provide additional project groups to look at a particular addiction in more depth with Disordered Eating groups, Relationship Groups and Drug group.

Over the year, we have successfully worked with partners to target clients' issues, which also presented barriers to their recovery journey. For example, a specifically funded project working with Citizens Advice titled 'Make Money Make Sense', guiding people to manage their money more effectively and to deal with debt.

Our close working relationship with Spectrum CGL supports the no-wrong-door ethos and supporting people to achieve abstinence in order to attend our service. We have worked with our partners Emerging Futures - supporting people with housing and addiction issues to have a stable home to aid their recovery journey.

We work in a consortium partnership with RELATE (London North West and Hertfordshire) and Family Lives (Hertfordshire) to supplement the support for people, specifically looking at relationships. These relationships sessions looked at parenting, family dynamics, intimate relationships, friendships and wider family relationships. As they are the experts, their partnership working provided a benefit to people that had these entwined issues.

All our projects have elements of following up the interventions on an individual basis, to personalise the support for our clients. We work with other agencies and organisations across the year, when needs are identified, bringing projects to us for a person-focused holistic treatment plan.

CHILD IMPACT

'I'm a good mum today; I even know now how to be a mum! I have been clean from toxic men, drink and drugs for fourteen months as well as shoplifting for 2 months. I would have never been able to do this and get this far without The Living Room (my safe space) the counsellors and everyone in it and most importantly the crèche! Without the crèche, I wouldn't have been able to come and get clean which could have lost me my son and him, his mummy!' ~ Alcohol Client

29% of clients are parents of one or more children under 18, with 69% living with that parent in their household. 20% live with an ex-partner or spouse, 5% are in care and the remainder live with grandparents or other family members. This means 128 households have had exposure to one or more parents who, prior to attending The Living Room, would have been using.

We know that parental addiction affects children whatever their age, but these children would have been dependent upon care from a parent who may not have been in a good state to provide the care they needed. We work with RELATE and Family Lives to support parents and help them to identify and improve their parenting skills as well as their bond with their child/ren.

In some cases, we have been instrumental in supporting parents to have their child/ren returned from care, or improve contact with their child who may not live with them. Our crèche in Stevenage has been running parenting workshops from summer 2020 and providing family activities online, when in lockdown. 29 children have additional external interventions that we have supported the parents with: Looked After Care, Child in Need and Child Protection Plans.

'I found these zoom sessions a lifesaver during lockdown, it gave me a safe space to share my worries and struggles, ups and downs of being a mum. I felt very heard and understood.'

'It was a really wonderful group and very supportive- especially during times when lonely and children at home due to covid-19.'

FAMILY and CARERS

90% of people who accessed support in 2020 were female ranging from 24 to over 65 in age. Most family and carers are aged 45-65+ and 31% live in the St Albans area. Family and Carers of a loved one living with an addiction attend our service once a week. Their loved ones do not have to be attending in order for them to access our service. We provide support at our St Albans, Stevenage and Watford Hubs. Our Watford service is an evening virtual group regularly attended by 15 people per week.

'The advice support, empathy and sometimes-tough love I received from the counsellors and other members of the group has been invaluable to me. They noticed when I was wavering from my boundaries with kind observation and brought me into reality when emotion took over. This was critically important for me and my dependent family particularly as at various times I was evaluating legal and financial life changing decisions as a knee jerk to the situation and I was not doing this with a clear head. My sessions at The Living Room enabled me to recover patience, strength, balance, clarity and joy in my own life and happiness instead of concentrating on the addict and his behaviours which had been both a negative and destructive force.'






REFERRALS

We accept self-referrals as well as professional referrals, which are easily made via our website or via a phone call to our local number 0300 365 0304. In 2020, we saw 1704 enquiries made to our service, with 930 referrals.

47% of the referrals we received were via an internet search for help. Spectrum CGL (Harm Reduction service for Drugs and Alcohol) made 17% of the referrals with family and carers being the other main referral route at 8%. We follow up the referral wherever it originates from, within 3 working days.

'I had a call back to my online request from a counsellor within 24 hours, at that time I was a broken, soul destroyed and desperate and without doubt at the lowest point I have ever experienced in my entire life.'

OUTCOMES WE WANTED TO ACHIEVE 2019 - 2022:

	Target	Outcomes 2020 - 2021
Service Delivery 	60% of people achieve sustained recovery	65% of people achieved successful graduation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66% alcohol • 59% drugs • 58% disordered eating • 73% relationships • 40% gambling • 78% family and carers
Access and Reach 	600 people in Hertfordshire helped each year	490 people supported in total – less than our target <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 434 people supported for addictions • 56 family and carers supported
Income Generation 	50% of income from contracts	53% income from contracts achieved
Community Engagement 	30 talks, events and workshops delivered	19 talks delivered due to restrictions
Organisational Improvement 	100% good to excellent client satisfaction	100% good → excellent client feedback

THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC

In an unprecedented year of challenge, which was also our 20th Anniversary year, we have been responsive, remarkable and resilient.

What changed?

Restrictions on social contact enforced with the full country lockdown on 23rd March 2020 as the global pandemic threatened lives everywhere from COVID-19. In response, we reverted to a completely online service. Over the year 2020 - 2021, we attempted to return to location-based services, but quickly had to respond to the virus threat and the vulnerability of our clients who are at a higher risk of becoming very ill if they contracted COVID-19. Our colleagues (some of whom did catch the virus) needed our protection. Our services could not continue if they became unwell, their groups relied on their daily therapy and counselling provision.

Working virtually brings its own challenges and positives; people could hide behind the camera and short relapses became common – there is nowhere to hide in person. Some people struggled to dig deep into their emotions, which was liberating in person. We had to find innovative solutions to bring honesty to the screen. Childcare and privacy issues were major hurdles, but most people were able to find a way to attend their sessions.

Usually people attend ideally for 5 days a week, with an average attendance of 10 months. During the pandemic and effects on mental health and wellbeing, we knew that people would need our support for longer. The average stay increased to 12 months.

The impact mentally on everyone, colleagues and beneficiaries has resulted in increased anxiety: *'Have become quite anxious and emotional over lockdown. I seem to worry about the small things.'*

Our usual outlets of fundraising changed overnight. We were no longer able to do community fundraising and events and tried our hand at online events and fundraising activities that people could do from their own home. Our shops closed and we lost an estimated £35,000 in unrestricted income to THE LIVING ROOM. Fortunately, the shops were eligible for grants and furlough support from the government, which helped to bridge some of the gap.

What stayed the same?

We remained open and although providing our service in a different format for 8 months over the year, we continued to provide quality support. *'The Living Room has given me an opportunity to connect with others and not feel isolated and relapse. It has also given me a purpose to get to the morning and afternoon sessions to connect with like-minded people and learn ways in which to help myself.'*

Even though our buildings were no longer in regular use, we still had to pay rent. We were eligible for small local grants to support some of our buildings. Our Stevenage hub houses the call centre and it remained open throughout each lockdown. Colleagues were on site answering phones and providing brief interventions.

We improved the support for colleagues through Health and Wellbeing programmes and external support, providing a focus on their needs, this helped colleagues to weather the storm and continue to hold and support our clients who were presenting ever-increasing mental health challenges alongside their addiction.

What improved?

Positively, people who had been reluctant to access therapy prior to our online support now saw us a service that they could access and to which they could commit time. In addition, no one was going anywhere as lockdown restricted everyone's movements. People therefore, were able to attend more frequently benefitting from intense support.

Our staffing levels raised to cope with the demands of increased complex needs that people entered our service with and the ability to record and monitor client journeys improved with more people sharing the load.

We introduced a triage service, thereby reducing waiting times for people and providing access to a counsellor within 3 working days, for an assessment. This new service ensured that we redirected people sooner to another treatment provider, if we were not the right service for their needs. Our triage service also meant that more people committed to treatment quickly with fewer 'no shows' to assessment or group therapy in their first week.

The results are From April 2020 to March 2021

Our Triage service contacted on 1704 occasions.

- 787 – 58% were enquiries, find out about the service, how and when it operated and the referral process, another 178 (5%) were referred on to other services that better suited the needs of the client.
- 410 people (30%) were assessed via our initial assessment process and of these, 356 (28%) attended our service while just 54 (2%) did not engage after their initial assessment.
- A separate 143 (7%) appointments were either cancelled or the client did not feel ready to address their issues

'I can't remember the exact words I heard on that first phone call but I remember feeling for the first time my experience was understood, being validated and that I was not going crazy and there was potentially a way to move forward in this situation.'

Our colleagues were able to access a lot of training for nominal fees or free, enabling time for continuous professional development.

Most notably, we restructured our organisation. We now have three designated teams, with a clear line management structure and wellbeing support for colleagues and volunteers.

- *Clinical Services – Counselling Team*
- *Corporate Services – Support Team*
- *External Relations Services – Fundraising and Marketing Team*

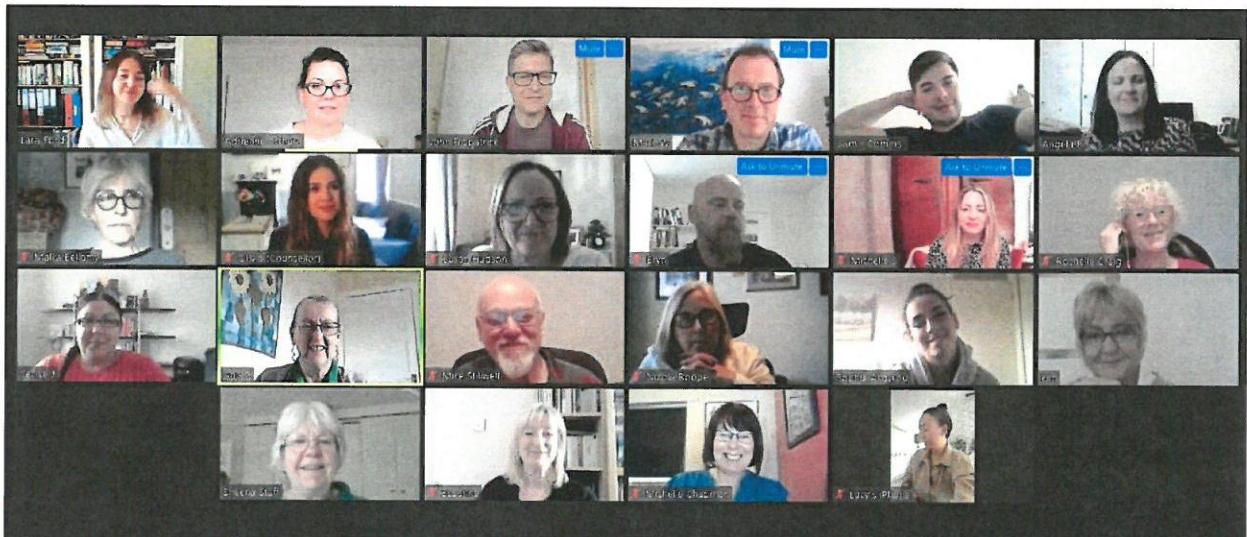
What challenges have we going forward?

Our therapy rooms are different sizes, with St Albans hub being the smallest and therefore unsuitable for group work with a 2-metre social distancing rule and without a window (the roof provides the sunlight and an air-conditioning unit provides air).

Social distancing and a limit on group sizes means that we have not been able to open all our hubs even when the government guidance allowed. In May 2021, these limitations mean that we are restricted on the size of the therapy groups, facilitated by two trained counsellors for each group.

95% of clients and 85% of colleagues agreed to have the COVID-19 vaccinations or will do so when offered. This means that there is still a risk (though small) of infections and we must maintain all COVID-19 secure measures in all of our buildings.

Most team members have been working at home for the year and this has brought many benefits, but team working is important, as solitary working can be tiring and disconnected. Innovation happens through unscheduled unplanned conversations. We need to give the workforce opportunities to connect and be creative even when working in a blended model of home working and hub based. We have learnt that being on video conference calls all day is tiring and having a more evened out diary is better for everyone. However, having a weekly whole team meeting has been a good way to bring everyone together as one team. These will continue even when some colleagues will work from a hub or from home.



'The Living Room had changed my life and me. Through focusing on myself I have been able to get out of debt, get clean and sober, put on healthy weight in the gym and obtain my licence back, a complete 180! However, the most important thing I have received is getting me back, an improved version of myself. A young man who is calm but assertive. Can create boundaries that serve me and be present in my life. The journey isn't over and there is still work to be done but today I get to wake up happy, to know that what I see in the mirror, I am proud of! I never chose my addiction but I did choose my recovery.'

- Client Story from Drugs group

'I will always be indebted to The Living Room for helping me reclaim my life and turning what seemed like an impossible and tragic situation into a reason to thrive again. My

relationships with my children, family and friends and career have all benefited from the changes I have made in recovery as has my emotional and physical health and well-being - the future looks bright - such a turnaround from a year ago.'

- Client Story from Family & Carers

'So grateful to the living room the counsellors who facilitate it, without it, I would have just been another statics, and today I'm not, I can be me and give back what I've so freely given, today I'm living not just existing - I'm a survivor all thanks to the support I've had from the living room, crèche, the counsellors, fellowships. I feel so lucky to have been given this opportunity and to be able to work through my traumas, whilst learning how to live a healthy life - so thank you who ever funds this magical place.'

- Client Story from Alcohol group

¹https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suicide_in_the_United_Kingdom#:~:text=Suicide%20is%20a%20significant%20national,of%2045%20in%20the%20country

²<https://www.readersdigest.co.uk/health/wellbeing/the-hidden-cost-of-substance-abuse-in-the-uk-workplace>

³<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmhealth/300/30005.htm>

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The Living Room

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2021, which are set out on pages 23 to 30.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records.

It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters.

The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the next statement.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Sisman". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Gary Sisman
Hargreaves Owen Ltd
Chartered Accountants
Red Sky House
Fairclough Hall
Halls Green
Weston
Herts
SG4 7DP

The date upon which my opinion is expressed is: 24 June 2021

**The Living Room
Statement of Financial Activities
for the year ended 31 March 2021**

		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
	Notes	2021 £	2021 £	2021 £	2020 £
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Incoming resources from generated funds					
Voluntary Income	2	106,363	742,972	849,335	723,354
Activities for generating funds	3	7,699	1,340	9,039	28,095
Investment Income	4	136	-	136	322
Total incoming resources		114,198	744,312	858,510	751,771
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Cost of generating funds					
Costs of generating voluntary income and undertaking charitable activities		48,704	686,753	735,457	728,445
Governance costs		(1,768)	23,778	22,010	14,747
Total resources expended		46,936	710,531	757,467	743,192
NET INCOMING / (OUTGOING) RESOURCES		67,262	33,781	101,043	8,579
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
transfer between funds		3,157	(3,157)	0	0
Total funds brought forward		188,790	35,142	223,932	215,353
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		259,209	65,766	324,975	223,932

**The Living Room
Balance Sheet
as at 31 March 2021**

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2021	Restricted Funds 2021	Total Funds 2021	2020 £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	8	1,100	-	1,100	1,467
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	9	292	-	292	31,151
Prepayments and accrued income		-	-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand		276,691	65,766	342,457	221,014
Total current assets		<u>276,983</u>	<u>65,766</u>	<u>342,749</u>	<u>252,165</u>
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	10	(18,874)	-	(18,874)	(29,700)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>258,109</u>	<u>65,766</u>	<u>323,875</u>	<u>222,465</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>259,209</u>	<u>65,766</u>	<u>324,975</u>	<u>223,932</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>259,209</u>	<u>65,766</u>	<u>324,975</u>	<u>223,932</u>
FUNDS					
Unrestricted funds				259,209	188,790
Restricted funds				<u>65,766</u>	<u>35,142</u>
TOTAL FUNDS				<u>324,975</u>	<u>223,932</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Chair on 24 June 2021 and were signed on its behalf by:



.....

**The Living Room
Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2021**

1 Accounting policies

Basis of preparation of the accounts

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant notes to these accounts.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) issued on 16 July 2014 and with the Charities Act

The particular accounting policies adopted are set out below.

Transition to FRS 102

No restatement of items has been required in making the transition to FRS 102. The transition date was 1 April 2016.

Incoming Resources

Incoming resources are accounted for on a receivable basis deferred as described below where appropriate.

Resources expended

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Investment Income

Bank Interest received is included on an actual receipts basis.

Recognition of liabilities

Liabilities are recognised on the accruals basis in accordance with normal accounting principles, modified where necessary in accordance with the guidance given in the Statement of Recommended Practice for Accounting and Reporting (revised June 2008) issued by the Charity Commissioners for England & Wales .

Fixed assets and depreciation

All tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation.

Depreciation has been provided at the following rates in order to write off the assets (less their estimated residual value) over their estimated useful economic lives.

Fixtures and fittings	25% on reducing balance
Computer equipment	25% on reducing balance

Taxation

As a registered charity, the charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

The Living Room
Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2021

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when the funds are raised for particular purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Hire purchase and leasing commitments

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

2 VOLUNTARY INCOME	2021	2020
	£	£
Grants	304,283	191,036
Contracts	458,042	440,000
Places of Worship Donations	11,138	17,914
General Donations	49,027	33,257
Gift Aid	4,167	7,060
Corporate donations	2,678	2,778
Donated services and facilities	20,000	31,309
	<u>849,335</u>	<u>723,354</u>
3 ACTIVITIES FOR GENERATING FUNDS	2021	2020
	£	£
Fundraising events	7,699	18,806
Earned income	1,340	9,289
	<u>9,039</u>	<u>28,095</u>
4 INVESTMENT INCOME	2021	2020
	£	£
Interest receivable	<u>136</u>	<u>322</u>
5 COSTS OF GENERATING VOLUNTARY INCOME AND UNDERTAKING CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	2021	2020
	£	£
Support costs	<u>735,457</u>	<u>728,445</u>

**The Living Room
Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2021**

6 TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2021 nor for the year ended 31 March 2020.

Trustees' expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2021 nor for the year ended 31 March 2020.

7 STAFF COSTS

	2021	2020
	£	£
Wages and salaries (including pensions)	<u>614,015</u>	<u>542,211</u>

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2021	2020
Full time equivalents	<u>23</u>	<u>19</u>

No employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000

8 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Fixtures and fittings £	Computer equipment £	Totals £
COST			
At 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021	<u>21,086</u>	<u>18,681</u>	<u>39,767</u>
At 31 March 2020	<u>21,086</u>	<u>18,681</u>	<u>39,767</u>
DEPRECIATION			
At 1 April 2020	20,515	17,785	38,300
Charge for the year	<u>143</u>	<u>224</u>	<u>367</u>
At 31 March 2021	<u>20,658</u>	<u>18,009</u>	<u>38,667</u>
NET BOOK VALUE			
At 31 March 2021	<u><u>428</u></u>	<u><u>672</u></u>	<u><u>1,100</u></u>
At 31 March 2020	<u><u>571</u></u>	<u><u>896</u></u>	<u><u>1,467</u></u>

The Living Room
Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2021

9 DEBTORS	2021	2020
	£	£
Other Debtors	<u>292</u>	<u>31,151</u>

10 CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR	2021	2020
	£	£
Taxation and social security	12,642	8,073
Other creditors	5,392	5,787
Accrued expenses	840	840
Deferred income	-	15,000
	<u>18,874</u>	<u>29,700</u>

11 MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		Net movement in funds	
	At 1/4/2020	£	At 31/3/2021
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	188,790	70,419	259,209
Restricted funds			
General fund	35,142	30,624	65,766
	<u>223,932</u>	<u>101,043</u>	<u>324,975</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Movement in funds
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	114,198	(43,779)	70,419
Restricted funds			
General fund	744,312	(713,688)	30,624
	<u>858,510</u>	<u>(757,467)</u>	<u>101,043</u>

**The Living Room
Schedule to the Statement of Financial Activities
for the year ended 31 March 2021**

	2021	2020
	£	£
INCOMING RESOURCES		
Voluntary Income		
Grants	304,283	191,036
Contracts	458,042	440,000
Places of Worship Donations	11,138	17,914
General Donations	49,027	33,257
Gift Aid	4,167	7,060
Corporate donations	2,678	2,778
Donated services and facilities	20,000	31,309
	<u>849,335</u>	<u>723,354</u>
Activities for generating funds		
Fundraising events	7,699	18,806
Earned income	1,340	9,289
	<u>9,039</u>	<u>28,095</u>
Investment income		
Interest receivable	<u>136</u>	<u>322</u>
Total incoming resources	<u>858,510</u>	<u>751,771</u>
RESOURCES EXPENDED		
Governance costs		
Accountancy fees	590	590
Independent examination	250	250
Tender costs	-	-
Other professional fees	<u>21,170</u>	<u>13,907</u>
	22,010	14,747
Support costs		
Room hire	-	-
Refreshments	162	1,745
Rent and Rates	31,831	37,915
Water	878	784
Light and heat	5,630	5,636
Telephone	4,174	3,813
Partnerships	38,000	50,000
Depreciation of tangible assets	<u>367</u>	<u>489</u>
	81,042	100,382

The Living Room
Schedule to the Statement of Financial Activities
for the year ended 31 March 2021

	2021	2020
	£	£
Finance		
Bad debts	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Information technology		
IT support and consumables	7,174	8,265
Website	4,896	4,896
	<u>12,070</u>	<u>13,161</u>
Human resources		
Wages (including pensions)	614,015	542,211
Training	1,589	4,668
	<u>615,604</u>	<u>546,879</u>
Other		
Fundraising	280	1,056
Insurance	3,653	2,080
Printing, Stationery & Postage	2,196	5,217
Sundries	371	390
Subscriptions	2,185	2,730
Creche	5,086	2,611
Staff Travel	164	5,699
Volunteers expenses	65	601
Marketing	584	2,888
Repairs and maintenance	5,226	23,678
Recruitment and DBS checks	1,078	1,442
Equipment	5,853	19,631
	<u>26,741</u>	<u>68,023</u>
Total resources expended	<u><u>757,467</u></u>	<u><u>743,192</u></u>
Net (expenditure) / income	<u><u>101,043</u></u>	<u><u>8,579</u></u>