

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
Contents

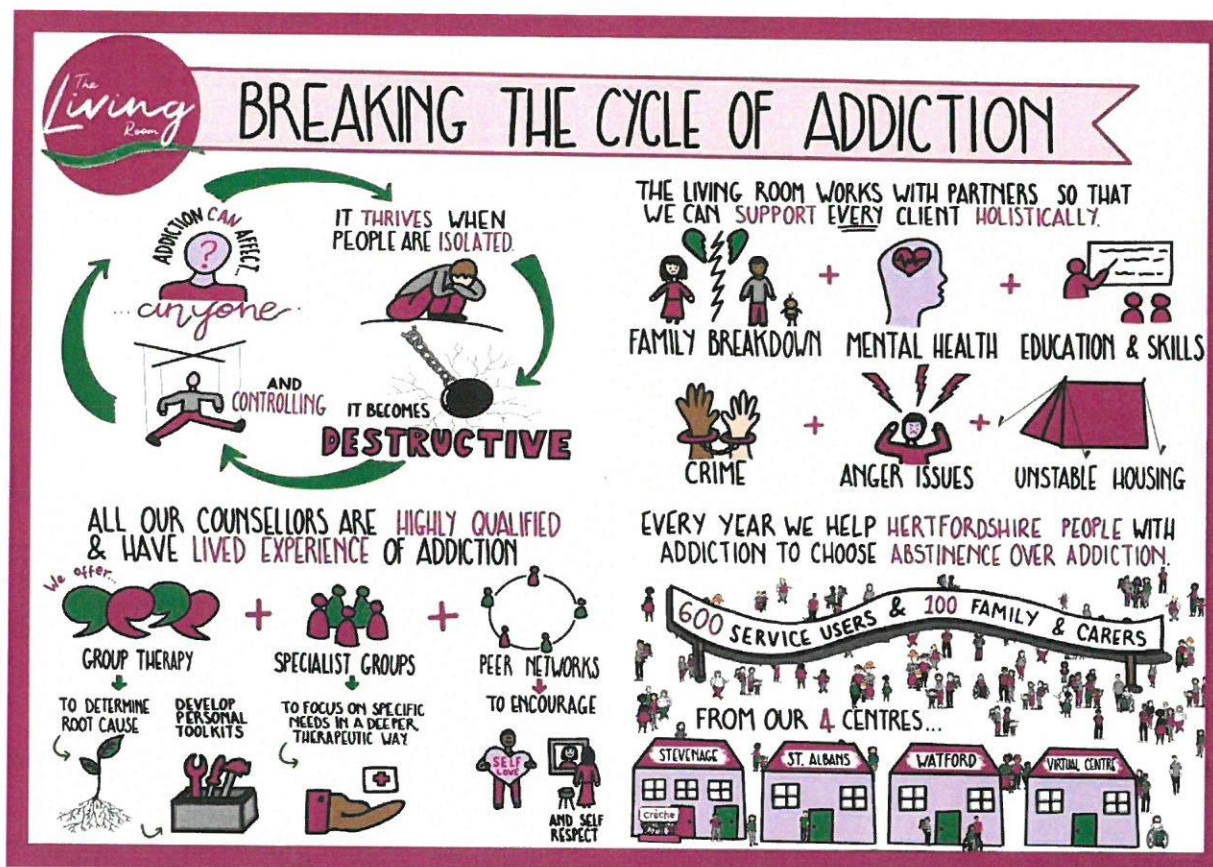
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REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

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.



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.

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**.



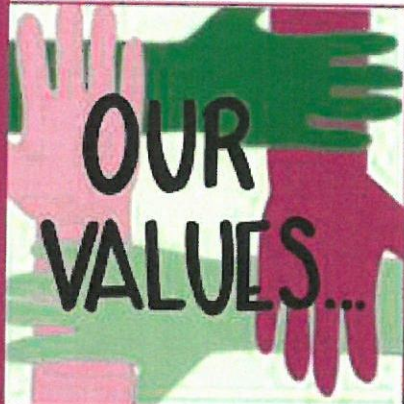
OUR MISSION

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

...in **Hertfordshire**.



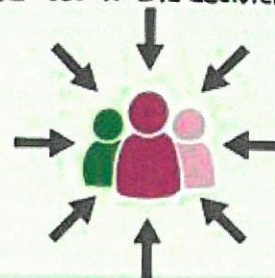
OUR VALUES...



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 **LGSTQ+** 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.

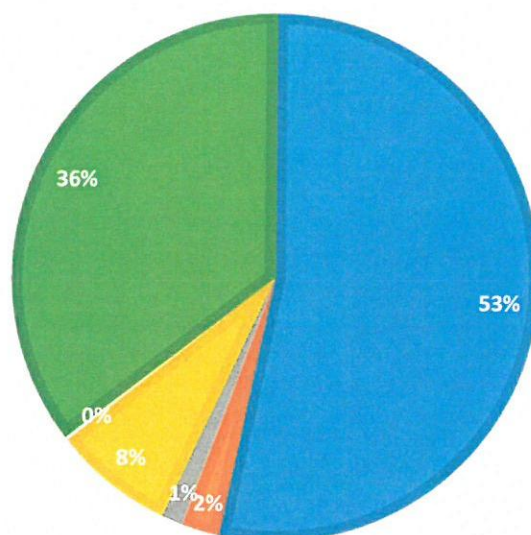
The Living Room aims to break the family cycle of addiction from substance and behavioural addictions.

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.

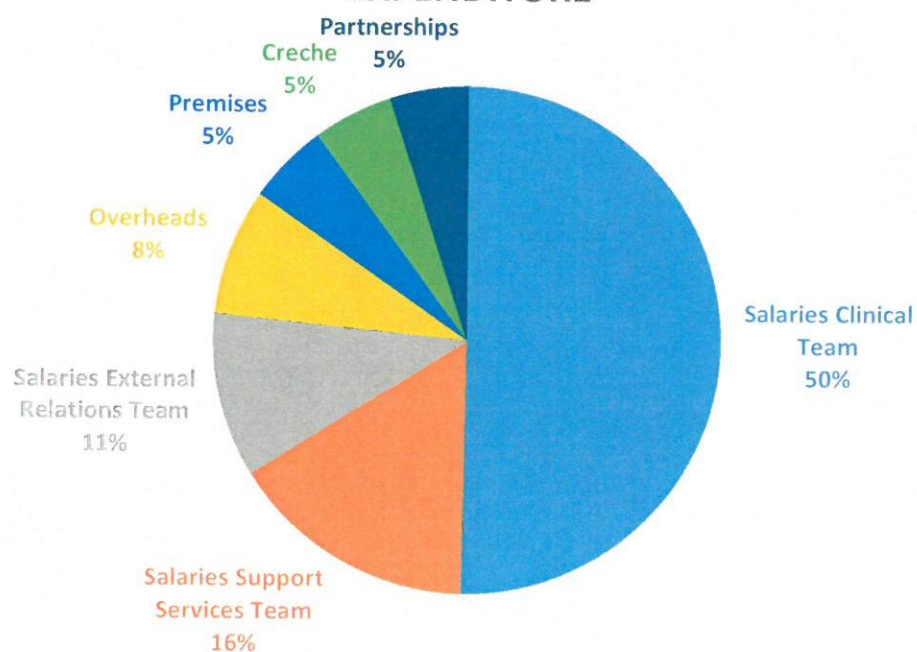
INCOME

■ 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*

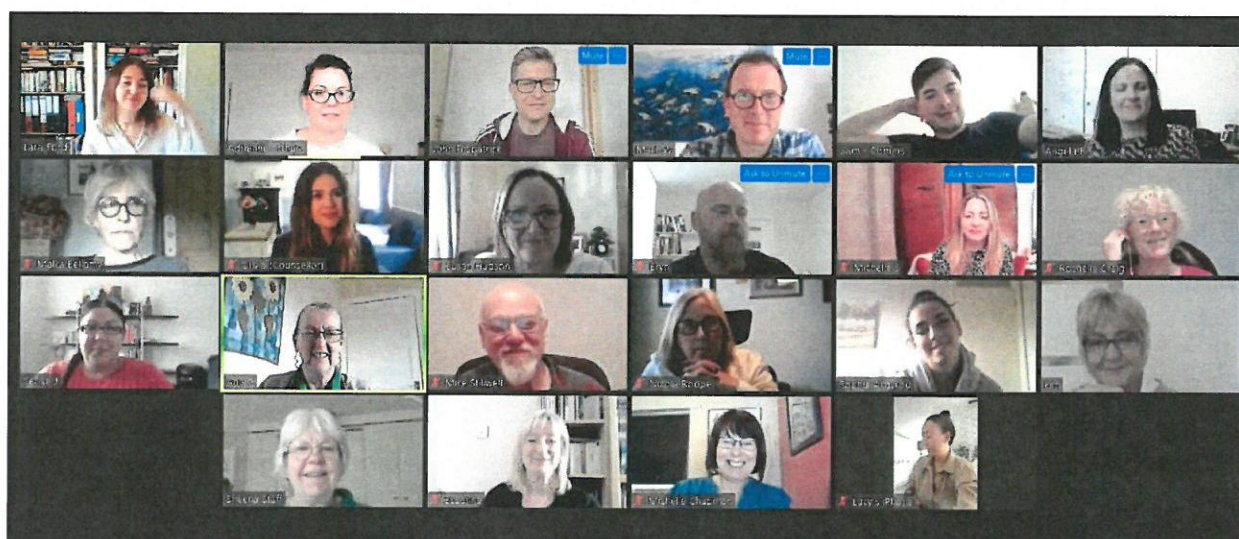
What challenges have we going forward?

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, flowing 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**

		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	
	Notes	2021	2021	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>428</u>	<u>672</u>	<u>1,100</u>
At 31 March 2020	<u>571</u>	<u>896</u>	<u>1,467</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

	At 1/4/2020	Net movement	At 31/3/2021
	£	in funds	£
		£	
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>
TOTAL FUNDS			

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>
TOTAL FUNDS			

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	<u>1,589</u>	<u>4,668</u>
	615,604	546,879
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	<u>5,853</u>	<u>19,631</u>
	26,741	68,023
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>