

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

Services

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.



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