ANNUAL REPORT
2019-20

Breaking the Cycle of Addiction

www.livingroomherts.org
0300 365 0304
enquiries@livingroomherts.org
VISION
Our vision is a future where people with the illness of addiction are able to live their lives free from an addiction to drugs, alcohol or behaviours, becoming contributing citizens in society.

MISSION
To provide treatment for adults with the illness of addiction and to support their family members, in Hertfordshire and other areas of the UK.

AIM
The aim of our organisation is to break the family cycle of addiction (both substance and behavioural addictions).

VALUES
We are caring to our clients and co-workers.
We are customer focused when prioritising our work and activities.
We serve and support our community.
We ensure we are competent in performing our duties.
We value our integrity as professionals.

What We Deliver

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

- Drugs and Alcohol Addiction Group Therapy
- Behavioral Addiction Group Therapy
- Family and Carers Group Therapy
- Creche (for family and carers receiving treatment)
- Talks, training and event presence to raise awareness
- Holistic support in partnership
- Helpline for families
- Individual counselling (for people attending group therapy)
Statement from our Chair of the Board of Trustees

Our 20th year as a charity was planned to be celebrated during the whole of 2020, with many activities, celebration events and awareness raising undertakings. Much planning in 2019, resulted in a diary full of notable dates to look forward to, then in early 2020, Coronavirus pandemic changed all of that. We have quickly morphed and adapted our service into a virtual one with real work being achieved, being focused on our mission ‘to provide treatment for adults with the illness of addiction and to support their family members, in Hertfordshire’.

The end of this year has seen a period of high anxiety and change around the virus threat, however we have been successful in keeping our clients and staff safe and will continue to do so into the new financial year; whatever obstacles come our way.

The launch of our new project in April 2019, Families Living in Recovery, heralded a solid holistic partnership with Relate (London North West & Hertfordshire) and Family Lives, as well as opening of our third location in Watford, bringing our reach across Hertfordshire to the West of the county. The partnership has seen many families supported together and acknowledging that addiction is a family disease. We strengthened our links with Spectrum CGI, who provide the county drugs and alcohol clinical intervention and education support for all ages, sharing a Communications Officer, improving communication and referral processes for people needing longer term support.

Alongside this exciting expansion we rebranded our charity, encompassing the charity shops that raise funds for us and the crèche in Stevenage that supports our parents and carers to attend treatment – which helps us to improve our brand recognition across Hertfordshire. There is no doubt that despite government intervention of closing down shops, centres and encouraging home-working and social distancing, we will continue to provide much needed support to people suffering with all addictions in the coming year, although the methods of how this support is accessed will change. The pandemic has forced us to become more technologically adept, and we rise to the challenge.

Our funders have been supportive, new funds have been made available and using technology in a massively increased way has provided us with potential opportunities for the future – we have moved quickly into a more digital age and embraced it. Addiction can be life-threatening and during this pandemic, we have never been more needed to be there for our clients and our communities. The future post lockdown looks uncertain, but I am confident that we will continue to provide a quality service to people who need us; keeping everyone safe.

Rob Henry,
Chair

Comments from our Chief Executive

For communities to be cohesive and address the underlying impact of addiction upon families and individuals, people need to be able to access support and treatment to change their behaviours. The Living Room provides Hertfordshire residents with a 20-year-old service which uses tested and successful methods to help people to reconnect with society. Addiction feeds on isolation, so what we do is to bring people together to connect. We give them space to trust and open up about their experiences, then guide them towards positive choices they can make to keep themselves and those around them well; supporting both the addict and the family and carers of someone suffering with an addiction.

Our work with the small but mighty team of trained counsellors with lived experience and the professional support roles means that 61% of people achieve sustained abstinence and recovery from their addiction, plus 75% of family and carers have improved self-care and coping strategies resulting in improved wellbeing.

2019-2020 has been a year of identifying what we are good at, building on that success and planning to continue to provide a quality and sustainable future. We have expanded in partnership, built strong networks and taken opportunities to make our service better for our clients. COVID-19 arrived and threw our plans into the air, but with maintained focus on our purpose and the passion to help people, we have been able to adapt and adopt a new way of working until life can return to normal.

Adrienne Arthurs,
Chief Executive (April 2020)
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’s public benefit is delivered through providing counselling treatment to break the cycle of addiction. By providing free non-time-limited abstinent based support to any adult with an addiction that needs it to stop and stay stopped.

The effect of providing the opportunity to look at the root cause of their addiction and the underlying trauma and/or bereavement enables people to make connections with others and learn tools and strategies to lead a healthy and happy life; one which benefits future generations, the economy and communities. We believe that everyone has potential and a life worth living.

Activities, Achievements and Future Plans

The Living Room centres are sited within communities across Hertfordshire. Each person’s recovery journey is individual and personal, working with a keyworker to plan and reflect on their progress. The charity has its treatment centres at its head office in Stevenage, and a separate centre in St Albans and now in Watford, new this year.

Our model works across all addictions and supports cross-addictions or multiple addictions, as we look beyond the drug of choice to the root cause such as a trauma, a tragic event, childhood or adult abuse or a mental health issue. We recognise that the effects of addiction reach beyond the prime sufferer and therefore offer weekly counselling to family and carers, using the same peer-led model.

Summary of Main Activities of the Charity in Relation to It’s Objects

The Living Room strives to make treatment as accessible as possible; clients with childcare needs are supported by our Children in Need funded, free creche in Stevenage available for under 5 year olds during term-time and up to 12-years-old during school holidays.

We met our objectives with the following activities:

- Group therapy sessions for all addictions 5 days a week in Stevenage and St Albans.
- Group therapy sessions for all addictions 4 days a week in Watford.
- One-to-one counselling for those in therapy.
- Triage - initial assessment and brief interventions or referrals to other services.
- Family and Carers group therapy weekly in Stevenage, St Albans and launched in Watford.
- Drug Therapy weekly specialist group in Stevenage.
- Love and Sex weekly specialist group in Stevenage.
- Eating Disorder weekly specialist group in Stevenage.
- Talks, training and workshops delivered to churches, partners and the business community.
- Training, volunteering opportunities and workshops for clients attending the service.
- One-to-one counselling for those in therapy.
- Holistic therapies.
- Parenting courses.

Average Recovery Journey

Of the 601 clients that were treated from 2018 – 2020 (treatment is non-time-limited and is accessed until the client is ready to graduate), the average recovery journey on a range of 3 to 20 months, for clients is as follows:

- Drugs and Alcohol Addictions 10 Months
- Behavioural Addictions 10 Months
- Family and Carers 4 Months
A review of charitable activities and main achievements undertaken by the charity revealed the following performance statistics in the year 2019-2020, bearing in mind the impending health control measures being highlighted in January to March 2020 around the Coronavirus threat:

1763 Enquiries were received
412 Adults started treatment for addiction
179 People achieved long term recovery and graduated
57 Family members and Carers received support
40 Children accessed our crèche over one year from 27 families
3 Children were on the child protection register
80 People had a diagnosed mental health issue
60 People had a disability

Of the total number of recorded enquiries for help and support for an addiction, we received in 2019–2020, we recorded 1763. The following chart shows how they heard about us and how many bookings were made with the outcome of that booking. 96 professional referrals were made to our service with the majority of enquiries recorded as self-referral.

How they heard about us?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GP</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGL</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMHT</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation/Criminal Justice</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Association</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Services</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of bookings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessed did not engage</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancelled/No Show/Declined</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referred to other agencies</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Objects

The charity’s main objective for the year was to promote the objects set out in its governing document, which was refreshed on 02 November 2017 when the charity was registered as a CIO.

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.
The charity works towards its objectives set down in the strategic business plan (started 2019) with clear referral pathways. The Living Room launched the Hertfordshire County Council commissioned Drug and Alcohol Community Rehabilitation Service on April 1st 2019. This is a 7-10 year contract working in partnership with Family Lives and RELATE London North West and Hertfordshire under the umbrella project name of Families Living in Recovery. We work alongside Spectrum CGL (harm reduction) and Emerging Futures (supported housing) for Families Living in Recovery. We work alongside Spectrum CGL in partnership with Family Lives and RELATE London North Service on April 1st, 2020.

**Contract Delivery**

The Living Room is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) Foundation. The organisation is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) Foundation. The organisation is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) Foundation.

**The Future Plans**

The charity works towards its objectives set down in the strategic business plan (started 2019) 2020 - 2025.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Addictions Group Therapy</td>
<td>Resilience and Wellbeing</td>
<td>Quality and Value for Money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Protect our unique model of supporting all addictions through group therapy.</td>
<td>• Deliver better outcomes for our clients by working in partnership.</td>
<td>• Strengthen our operating model with additional online services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide free daytime community rehabilitation.</td>
<td>• Support families impacted by a loved-one’s addiction.</td>
<td>• Attract financial investment that supports our model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Deliver abstinence-based, non-time limited support.</td>
<td>• Adapt to the needs of the community.</td>
<td>• Deliver contracted health and adult care services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strive to reach more people that haven’t accessed our services before.</td>
<td>• Train clients to tell their story.</td>
<td>• Help shape future preventative Hertfordshire services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Financial Review**

Details of The Living Room income and expenditure for the year are set out below.

Income for the year was £751,771 (2019: £551,054); costs were £743,192 (2019: £518,829). The surplus in 2019-2020 was £8,579 (2019: £32,215).

**TRADED INCOME**

This year we were able to earn income from training, room hire and talks, amounting to £9,289 (an increase of £3,898 on last year).

Our Revival (The Living Room) CIC No. 06611733 charity shops donated £31,309 this year, a decrease on last year’s donation of £45,988 (2018-2019).

The decrease is due to maintenance works on the buildings and a reduction in incomes due to general downturn in the charity economy and the impact of COVID-19.

**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.

**Outcomes We Want to Achieve**

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<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service Delivery</td>
<td>60% of people achieve sustained recovery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access and Reach</td>
<td>600 people in Hertfordshire helped each year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income Generation</td>
<td>50% of income from contracts</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
<td>30 talks, events and workshops delivered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational Improvement</td>
<td>100% good to excellent client satisfaction</td>
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**Status**

The organisation is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) Foundation. 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 but operating under the CIO number 1175541.

**Registered office and operational address:** 8-10 The Glebe, Chells Way, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG6 0DJ.

**Trustees:**

- Robert Henry, CHAIR.
- Mary Corbett OBE. Dr. Kevin Vaughan (to 18/06/2019).

**Chief Executive:** Adrienne Arthurs.

**Banker:** HSBC, Town Centre, Danestreete, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 1BY.

**Independent Examiner:** Gary Sirman ACA, Red Sky House, Fairclough Hall, Halls Green, Weston, Hertfordshire, SG4 7DF.

**Reference and Administrative Details**

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 2020-21 this would be between £185k and £247k. The free reserves at 31 March 2020, £392k are within the range of its reserves policy.
The board meets at least quarterly. The framework of delegated authority. The CEO is invited to attend each board meeting.

The board is responsible for the governance of the charity. The trustees delegate the running of the organisation to the chief executive, within a framework of delegated authority. The board meets at least quarterly. The board has established sub-committees focused on particular business needs including finance, fundraising, marketing and well-being to which appropriate matters are delegated. The CEO is invited to attend each board meeting.

The board follows a comprehensive risk management policy which clearly defines the roles of the board, finance and audit committee and senior staff 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.


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 staff, 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.

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Case Studies

Testimonial from an Alcohol Client (ABRIDGED)

An alcoholic is a person sitting on a bench, homeless, smelly, drinking out of a bottle. That’s what I thought 3 years ago. I had first had a drink when I was 13 in a graveyard! A litre bottle of cider, and to this day I reach when I smelled cider as I was so sick. But that drink enabled me to feel like a different person. I felt like I fitted in with the popular group. I always had friends but I always wanted more, and they made me feel accepted as they were a popular group. Weekend drinking was normal from 15. Being dropped at the cinema before being picked up by my Dad.

There was drinking at home (not alcoholically) and I would go with my Dad to the pub on a Sunday lunchtime or Christmas day when I was 16, 17.

My social life was always around the pub. When I moved away, I found drinking much easier. There was always bottles in the cupboard, and I remember Darren saying to cut down (that’s when I started hiding it). I wasn’t drinking every day or mornings at that stage but when I did it was generally at home and to blackout (always waking up on the sofa at 3am).

I drank more than I should have when pregnant with Simon, but thank God he was fine. When we found out I was expecting again I stopped completely, only to lose the baby at 16 weeks.

I drank heavily after that and it took me 3 years to get over it, so when I was pregnant with Eliza, I didn’t drink at all, but couldn’t wait to stop breast feeding so I could drink again. This pattern carried on for years, but 3 years ago I knew it was definitely getting out of hand, as I was drinking every day, sometimes from 3.30 pm after the school run.

I remember my 1st morning drink. I was shaking when I woke up and knew there was half a pint of gin in the kitchen so I drank it.

I had found a solution. So now I was drinking morning and evening but I hid it well (so I thought). I was anxious, nervous. I went to doctors and not telling them the amount I was drinking. I was prescribed medications, but I knew I should stop. So on one Monday morning I didn’t drink, I didn’t take my medication and by Wednesday I was having seizures. I went to Rehab on Friday for 2 weeks. I felt good when I left, went to a few meetings and thought I had cured myself. Three months later I relapsed. This pattern continued, and over a year I kept relapsing.

I first came to TLR in June 2019, and after 2 weeks returned to Sussex and drank again. I’ve been here now, abstinent, since July 2019 and I know I am in the right place. Their knowledge, compassion and help is immense. They are counsellors who are addicts, so they get it. I’ve learned reasons for my drinking, behaviours, tools and so much more; I owe them so much.

That perception I had of an alcoholic couldn’t be more wrong. I am me and I am an alcoholic.”

Engaged within 5 months. We would spend a lot of time in the pub. When I moved away, I found drinking much easier. There was always bottles in the cupboard, and I remember Darren saying to cut down (that’s when I started hiding it). I wasn’t drinking every day or mornings at that stage but when I did it was generally at home and to blackout (always waking up on the sofa at 3am).

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Testimonial from Family and Carers Group Client (EDITED AND ABRIDGED)

I first attended the Living Room after hearing about it on a talk show on the radio. I knew I needed help as my son was returning home to live with the family again and he was very angry and depressed about the situation also.

My son’s cocaine addiction and problems associated with his addiction were really affecting my whole family and having a bad effect on my mental health. I felt responsible, ashamed and completely drained from this and could see no way of it ever changing without professional help from trained counsellors. Through this group at TLR, I have learned a lot about myself, and my co-dependency, enabling and the importance of setting realistic boundaries. I was surprised to learn that my husband and I were both enabling our son to behave like this.

We have worked together with the help and advice from the counsellors in setting boundaries at home and letting our son take ownership of his own life. This has been difficult at times and we have done lots of talking, some shouting and crying but have come through it as a stronger couple. My son’s behaviour has changed and he is showing the whole family more respect. He is also much happier with his life.

Testimonial from an Alcohol Client (ABRIDGED)

Our Thanks

Organisations/Donors/Individuals

- A Bloody Good Cause
- A G Charitable Trust
- Arriva Community Fund
- Artisan Hair Watford
- Asda Stevenage
- Bedfordshire and Luton Community Fund
- Children in Need
- David Laing Foundation
- Diocese of St Albans
- District Councillors
- Ecclesiastical
- Garfield Weston Family Trust
- Harvester
- Hertfordshire Community Foundation
- Hertfordshire County Councillors
- Hoote Toot Jewellery
- John Aphthorpe Charity
- Lady Dione Verulam
- Letchworth Motor Auctions
- Lloyds Bank Foundation
- Maltings Arts Theatre
- Martin Geddes Charitable Trust
- Masonic Charitable Foundation
- Mr Mulligans Stevenage
- Paradise Wildlife Park
- Police Crime Commissioners Action Fund
- Sisters of Mercy
- Soroptimist International
- St Michaels Church
- Standalone Farm
- Stevenage Community Trust
- Stevenage Cycles
- Stuart Lewis DL
- Tafa Restaurant
- Tesco
- TESCO Bags of Help
- The Balloon Wall
- The Beech House, St Albans
- The Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Alban
- The Cutter Barber Shop
- The Henry Smith Charity
- Toby Carvery
- Tru Gym Stevenage
- Utopia Hair and Beauty
- Waitrose
- Warburtons UK
- Waterstones
- Watford Mayor

Partners

- Hertfordshire County Council and Public Health England
- RELATE London North West & Hertfordshire
- Family Lives
- Spectrum/Change Grow Live
- Viewpoint
- Emmaus (St Albans)
- Herts Young Homeless
- Centre 33
- Open Door
- HAFLS Hertfordshire Adult and Family Learning Service
- Stevenage Borough Council
- St Albans District Council
- Watford Borough Council
- Watford Community Housing
- Complex Needs Service

Thank you to the hundreds of supporters, fundraisers, volunteers and donors over the years who have helped us continue our vision of breaking the cycle of addiction.
Highlights 2019-2020

- Launch Families Living in Recovery Project
- Open Watford Centre
- Staff and Trustee Strategy Away Day
- Disability Confident Employer Award
- Accredited as a Living Wage Employer
- Changing Herts Launch with Spectrum and Emerging Futures
- Centres Closed - COVID-19
- All Services transferred online

Statement as to Disclosure to our External Examiner

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- There is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company’s auditors are unaware.
- The trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charity’s website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Members of the charity guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 to the assets of the charity in the event of winding up. The trustees are members of the charity but this entitles them only to voting rights. The trustees have no beneficial interest in the charity.

Independent Examiner Reappointment

Hargreaves Owen Ltd was reappointed as the charitable company’s independent examiner during the year and has expressed its willingness to continue in that capacity.

Approval

The trustees’ annual report was approved by the trustees on 25 June 2020 and signed on their behalf by:

Rob Henry, Chair
Jonas Schirm, Treasurer