



It has been 4 months since lockdown started and we really appreciate the efforts of our supporters and staff, and everyone else who's helped to keep us going.

It's no secret to say that with the closure of our charity shops (now thankfully open again!), and our fundraising activities postponed, this has been a very challenging time for us.

That is why I would like to take a moment to give a shout out to the amazing people who have supported us throughout Covid-19. People have been running their own fundraising activity at home, others have been donating more through our website and our enthusiastic fundraising staff and volunteers have worked extra hard to deliver our first online quiz night of the year.

Charitable foundations in Hertfordshire have been very helpful and flexible as well, making emergency grants available quickly, which has helped us rise to the current challenges.

Without your support and without this caring community we would not be talking about our future plans and new groups in this edition of the Shout Out. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you!

~ Mark, Fundraising and Marketing Manager

The Power of Recovery

We recently surveyed our clients who graduated in 2019, and we are so happy to share with you how well they are doing.

50% of our clients are in regular, paid employment, with **10%** in education and **9%** are volunteering. On average, our graduates rate their physical health at a 4 out of 5 and emotional health at 3.9 out of 5.

It was also really gratifying to hear that the majority of graduates have good family and personal relationships (incredibly important during this time!), are managing abstinence well and have high motivation.

One graduate said:

"Today I am applying for college for my business degree and health and safety courses. I am happy and have healthy relationships and I am working on my mental health issues to eventually get my children back full time and I care about myself. I love who I am today. Before The Living Room I was ready to die. Today I am ready to live."

We want to thank all of our graduates who took part in the survey and also remind them that we're here for you if you ever need us again.

Third Sector features The Living Room

We were delighted to be included in an article written by Paul Streets for Third Sector magazine. The Chief Executive for Lloyds Bank Foundation spoke about how we've thrived despite the challenges posed by Covid-19, pivoting to delivering groups online early in lockdown, and highlighted the joint-working with Spectrum Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service since April last year.

He also praised the peer support offered in our groups and the range of addictions treated. You can read the full article [here](#).

A reminder of why we are here... A testimonial:

"Life in recovery has been no oil painting but it has been so worth it. It has taught me a lot about myself and other people. I am full of gratitude for what recovery has given me. I have a really good relationship with my family some of whom attended the Family and Carers group."

0300 365 0304

www.livingroomherts.org

Facebook: LivingRoomHerts | Twitter: @livingroomherts | Instagram: livingroomherts

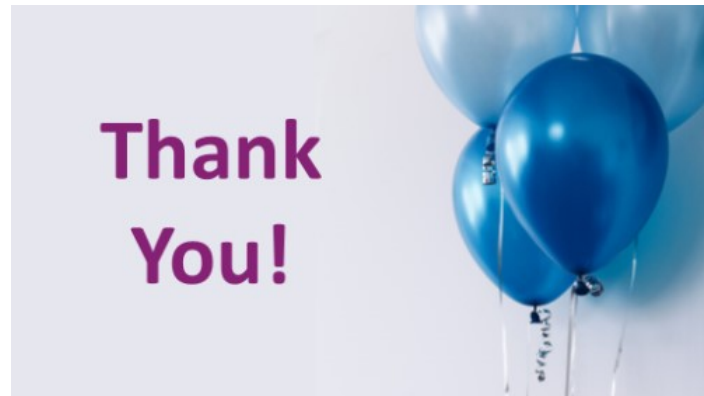
20th Birthday Quiz Night

Our alternative 20th Birthday Quiz Night, held on Thursday 30th July, sold 58 tickets and raised over £400 for our charity. Quizzers battled over six rounds covering 20 years of sport, music, film, TV, celebrities as children and The Living Room's history.

Congratulations to the Larderettes on their epic win, and well done to everyone who took part! The evening was a demonstration of community spirit. It was uplifting to see staff, volunteers, supporters, clients and their friends get together for a genuinely fun evening.

Even though we couldn't be together face-to-face, it was delightful to have an opportunity to unite and celebrate our birthday.

Couldn't join us? Take a look at this [short video](#), made especially for the quiz night and which celebrates our work over the last 20 years and features touching poems from our clients.



Stevenage Centre Plans to Reopen

Plans are well underway to reopen our Stevenage centre in September. We are currently putting in safety measures to enable social distancing for staff and clients, and, if possible, we will be reopening from September 9th.

Don't worry, we will continue to hold online group sessions for people who cannot access our Stevenage centre in person and we'll be reinstating face-to-face sessions gradually – we won't rush to reopen without listening to the wishes and concerns of the people who need us.

We will learn from how well Stevenage reopening works, before we continue with our plans to open our other centres. The foremost importance is safety and as Covid-19 is still with us, we must be cautious and careful, as we slowly come out of lockdown. At any time, our plans may change depending on government advice and local lockdown restrictions. Please bear with us as we try to navigate through this.

New Virtual Support Groups

Good news! We will soon be starting a new online group for people with gambling addictions. Gambling is already listed under [addictions we treat](#) and we hope that these dedicated sessions will attract more people from across Hertfordshire who need support.

The group will be as accessible as possible, with two weekly evening sessions held online using Zoom so people who are working, or have difficulty travelling to one of our centres, can get the therapy they need without leaving their home.

We are also happy to announce that we are starting a daily virtual Relationship Group in Stevenage from the 14th September. A big thank you to Garfield Weston, who provided the funding for the group.

We also mentioned previously that online group work has made our service accessible to more people than we could have imagined and that we are determined to make this a long-term feature. We're optimistic about continuing the service (in the form of a virtual centre) and are working on securing the funding we need to do this. Cross your fingers for us and if you have any suggestions or ideas please do [let us know](#).

