



I was struck by a recent headline in the Independent declaring that 'Someone becomes street homeless in London almost every two hours as rough sleeping hits record high.' Homelessness across the UK has been on the rise for a number of years now and these increases are in many ways nothing new, but as a community we should never become

numb to the presence of people in sleeping bags crammed into shop doorways or the tents appearing on side streets and in parks.

The good news is that in Hertfordshire there are many charities and community groups doing their bit to get people off the streets and into safe, secure accommodation. The likes of Herts Young Homeless, Open Door, New Hope and many more have been on the frontline of rough sleeping prevention for many years and alongside other health and social care providers are helping to tackle the social ills that lead to homelessness in the first place.

According to Shelter two thirds of homeless people cite drug or alcohol use as the reason for becoming homeless and at The Living Room we are determined to help as many people as possible to remain drug and alcohol free and hopefully give them a better chance at staying not only healthy and happy, but secure in their livelihoods and in their housing.

That's why we hope to see as many of you as possible at this year's St Albans Sleepout. On December 6th Hertfordshire residents will be sleeping out at Oaklands College, helping to raise awareness of the homeless crisis and raising funds that are used to change our clients' lives.

~ Adrienne, Chief Executive

£1000 raised at Stevenage Halloween Quiz Night

This year's Halloween-themed quiz night was a great success, with £1000 raised for The Living Room. Congratulations to the winning quiz team who received a massive chocolate hamper and to Bride of Frankenstein who walked away with the prize for best fancy dress.

Thank you to the brilliant Experts by Experience group who arranged the evening, to Reverend Pete and All Saints Church for hosting us, the quiz masters for your inventive trivia and our counsellor Bryn for compering.

We'd also like to thank the many individuals, organisations and businesses who donated the fabulous raffle prizes.

Missed the event? The Hertford and District Soroptimist International organisation is holding a quiz night on November 15th with proceeds going to The Living Room and Safer Places. Find more details at

www.livingroomherts.org



A reminder of why we are here... A snippet from a church talk testimonial:

Just to say that the client was brilliant yesterday. His talk was spot on, from the heart, absolutely appropriate and very moving. I know many people were quite blown away, and the sense I got was that for some people in particular, hearing his story connected with situations in their own lives. And all in a way that makes it real. Several took up his offer of staying on after the service over coffee to ask questions. Above all, he was a great ambassador for explaining how The Living Room works.

Notes of Appreciation

Thank you to all the customers at Andy Shoemiths in St Albans, who have generously donated £250 to The Living Room over recent months.

Thank you to Aamani, the Equality and Diversity Community Support Worker from Stevenage Borough Council, for joining us at our Equality and Diversity meeting and supporting us to link in with harder to reach groups in the area.

Thank you to our Stevenage centre clients for taking part in the Stevenage and District Charities Annual Sponsored Swim on the 6th October. The proceeds will be calculated by the charity and we will find out in the new year how much was raised.

Thank you to one of our Stevenage clients and their daughter for raising £8.20 for The Living Room via a cake sale at their school.



The Living Room welcomes our new Crèche Supervisor

Say hello to Ashleigh Davis, (AshleighD@livingroomherts.org) our new Crèche Supervisor. She will be supporting the Crèche Manager and team every Monday, Wednesday and Friday in Stevenage.

Ashleigh, who comes from a big family with nine siblings, has worked for 4 years in childcare and hopes to climb Mount Snowdon for charity in the near future.

Don't be shy, please say hi when you meet her in the Stevenage centre.

Small animal encounter at The Living Room Crèche

Children at the crèche got the opportunity to get up close with a variety of soft, furry animals courtesy of the small animal educational experience offered by Ark Farm.

They learnt about and were able to hold and play with rabbits, guinea pigs, chickens, a pygmy hedgehog and a leopard tortoise. We'd like to extend thanks to Crystal who ensured the children (and staff) had a fantastic time.



Visits from Herts County Council, the High Sheriff and Herts Business Awards

It's been a busy month for visitors. On October 17th we welcomed the Hertfordshire High Sheriff Sarah Beazley, who had the chance to speak with people who are actively achieving recovery at our Stevenage centre.

We have been shortlisted for the Social Enterprise Award in the Hertfordshire Business Awards 2019. We were visited on October 24th by the judges so they could see who we are and what we do. The award winners will be announced on November 21st, so wish us luck.

And the next day the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Prevention, Tim Hutchings, and Julia Fleming from the Public Health team joined us to hear first hand from our clients who are currently attending group therapy.

Autumn Waterways Experience

Clients from the St Albans, Stevenage and Watford Centres joined up for a therapeutic boat trip together along the Grand Union Canal near Hemel Hempstead.

Thanks to the St Albans Experts by Experience group who raised the money to pay for the day and for providing an excellent bonding experience for everyone involved.



This Christmas, keep an eye out for Giving Tuesday

Christmas can easily become nothing but an annual spending juggernaut. More and more stores are holding Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales which has led to the creation of an alternative global giving campaign that celebrates the amazing work charities do to help those in need and to make life better.

Giving Tuesday occurs on December 3rd and this year The Living Room will be encouraging Hertfordshire residents to give £12.50 to our general donation fund. Why £12.50? Because that is the average daily cost of treatment for one person at our services.

Remember: recovery happens one day at a time. For £12.50 you can ensure one person gets the treatment they need this December 3rd.



Living Wage Week 11th - 17th November



Living Wage week starts on November 11th and we want to encourage everyone reading to keep an eye on all the new developments that occur, including the announcement of the new living wage rates and the activities that are happening across the country.

The Living Room received accreditation as a living wage employer this year and we want to celebrate the movement and encourage employers from across the country to take part so that as many people as possible can afford to actually live on their income and not simply exist.