



Like 2020, this year has gone by in a flash - we're in the second half of 2021 and we've been getting back into the swing of things in our hubs. It'll take some getting used to living somewhat normally again but being able to see

the people we support in person has been fantastic.

On Wednesday 21st July, we managed to celebrate Drug and Alcohol Remembrance Day for the first time at The Living Room and I can't express enough how moving that event was.

We don't always get the opportunity to have an open conversation about loss and the stigma associated with drug addiction can make this worse, so I'm glad we took the time across all our hubs to explore those feelings, celebrate the lives of people we've lost and think about everything we want to achieve in our own lives.

~ Adrienne, Chief Executive

Dame Carol Black and the Future of Recovery Services

Things may be changing for drug treatment and recovery services and we're cautiously optimistic about the future now that part two of Dame Carol Black's review on drugs in the UK has been published.

Dame Black has urged the government to invest £552 million in recovery and treatment services like ours over the coming years and has set out 32 recommendations to improve all areas of support for people with addictions.

We're very happy that Dame Black's report urges the government to recognise addiction as a chronic health condition that requires long-

term support. We hope this will help the people we support to hold their heads high and be proud of achieving recovery. And we hope this will lessen the barriers to treatment and ensure that people with addictions get treated fairly in all areas of their lives.

The Dame Carol Black Review is wide-ranging, and we have a published a full response you can check out on [our website](#).



Drug and Alcohol Remembrance Day

People mark the day in different ways, usually with a 2-minute silence to remember loved ones who've died because of a drug or alcohol addiction.

In Watford, our clients started the day with a workshop on grief and loss, then they spent the afternoon focusing on the future and creating their own goals and bucket lists.



St Albans held a workshop where people shared photos and memories of people they've lost, reflected on how they've been given another chance at living their lives and used drawings and letters to express how they feel about addiction and loss.

At Stevenage, we marked the day with the release of (environmentally friendly) balloons with messages for loved ones. We know that days like these can be hard and that it's difficult

enough to share your feelings and experiences around death and loss (and it's even harder when addiction is involved), so we just want to thank everyone who got involved. Thank you for joining us, thank you for being brave and thank you for being committed to your recovery.



This disease of mine has led me down dark roads,
Emptiness, loneliness, a life that corrodes,
Conflicted, afflicted, an endless internal war,
At my wits ends, battling the urge to score,
I feel low but yet lucky, as I am still here,
Many have lost those, that they hold so dear,
To those that have fallen to addiction and fear,
We take a moment of silence and shed a collective tear.

~ St Albans Client

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

'Just wanted to say you guys are astounding!! Fast and furious and if you really wanna kick this like we did, then let's do this! It won't be easy it will be intense but it is intense coz that's how it is...You say it as it is and relate to people because you lived it too...So very thankful to you all, my partner has recently visited you and now...feels he is getting somewhere! Intense but necessary, you know what you are doing. Well done and thank you to you all.' ~ Partner of a client.

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Virtual and Vital Our Herts Hub

When Covid-19 hit in early 2020, the need to adapt our service and deliver life-saving treatment online became vital. Covid-19 caused enormous emotional strain on the nation. Mental health referrals increased and many services either temporarily or completely closed. Others were forced to keep long waiting lists, restricting access to help.

We adapted to this challenging time and created The Hertfordshire Hub, The Living Room's fourth location, entirely virtual.

Although it began as a response to a crisis, offering access to treatment from home has helped us become more inclusive, helping people who have small children, don't have access to transport, are working or have a disability to get the support they need.

One of our clients said:

"I'm able to share things about my addiction that I know I wouldn't do if I was physically in the same space as the people listening to me. For me, that makes it more powerful. Being able to admit and talk about my inner most demons has helped enormously, and I have been able to do this because the virtual environment makes me feel safer."

We know our online therapy is working. Since we opened in September last year, we have seen so many clients change their lives for the better:

"Today, I have been sober exactly 200 days, and that has been down to this centre. I am happier, healthier and feel confident that I have my addiction under control. This virtual centre works. I am proof of that."

Read the full article on [our website](#).



Sunday Fun Day!

Our first in-person event for over a year is coming! On **Sunday 29th August** we will be heading to Cassiobury Park in Watford for a day of fun (hopefully) in the sun!

We'll have all sorts of fun activities for you to get involved with on the day, including a special The Living Room Scavenger Hunt which will take you and your team around the park completing fun tasks and solving riddles. We'll also have a tombola, refreshments and encouraging you to bring your best blanket and chairs so we can all picnic together.



Mount Snowdon

Who doesn't love a challenge? After a difficult year this trip to Mount Snowdon on **Saturday 25th September** is a great way to get out and about, try something new and get a great sense of accomplishment when you reach that summit!

This event is open to everyone but we only have limited spaces available on our bus so get your friends and family together and get your tickets ASAP. Tickets cost £20 per person which covers the cost of transport to and from Mount Snowdon.



Herts Pride

Get out your best party clothes and your rainbow face paint, because we're going to be at **Herts Pride** this year! Herts Pride is back on, now restrictions have eased, and will be taking place on **Saturday 14th August** at Cassiobury Park in Watford.

This year's event is going to have a bunch of different performers and artists, a dog show, people giving out health and wellbeing advice, and loads of different, exciting stalls. We'll be holding a stall there, along with our partners Spectrum, so make sure you say hi, especially if you want to pick up some useful merch to help you party safely.

Thank You

We appreciate every donation we receive, if you've given something as a **one off** or are giving what you can as a **monthly donor** - thank you! Here's a special shout out to some organisations who have donated to us over the past month:



Thank you to Paul De Kort (LD) and Sandy Walkington (LD) for donating £500 each from their Locality Budgets.



Thank you to St Albans City & District Council for awarding us with £7000 from their Health Protection Board Covid Community Fund.