



We draw once again to the end of another year clouded by the threat of a pandemic and the reality of losing our loved ones. Disruption, stress and financial pressures have been endured, alongside the fear of the virus. So, we leave 2021, hopeful for something better in the fresh New Year.

However, I urge you to reflect again on 2021. Goodwill and gratitude for what we have and how we support our communities, has galvanised us. We care more about the planet and what we as individuals can do to slow down climate change. We have enjoyed being together with loved ones which we may have not appreciated in quite the same way before. Consumerism has slowed down and we have committed to repurposing and recycling.

Christmas being only a short time away brings lights and sparkle to the dark, cold winter months. Dreaming of smiling, happy faces and plentiful bounty alongside bouncy Christmas songs? But striving for 'the perfect' Christmas is unrealistic. By whose standards does that perfection exist? Aim to meet your own standards; set for you and by you. Instead of feeling overwhelmed by the burden of spending, your duty or high expectations, be forgiving. I ask you to notice the good in others, be kind to you and know that a 'time well spent is a time well lived'.

~ Adrienne, Chief Executive

Christmas and Recovery

The holiday season brings festive cheer, family get-togethers and plenty of over-indulgence. For many, this is an ideal way to spend the Christmas holidays, however this time of year can also be incredibly testing for vulnerable groups, including those in recovery. The pressure to have a happy family Christmas as well as the heightened exposure to drugs and alcohol at holiday celebrations, whether it's at work or at home, can lead to many in recovery isolating themselves and relapsing.

We'd like to share our advice on how to avoid this and [this article](#) has some great tips we recommend for anyone managing their recovery over the holidays:

1. **Plan your Christmas holidays** - Set your intentions, communicate them to others and remain true to yourself. Having a plan will help you to stay in control of your recovery and limit your exposure to high-pressure situations.
2. **Maintain a positive routine** - Keep on doing what you're doing! Whether it's going to the gym or attending fellowships, keeping your routine will help you manage the challenges of the holidays. You can easily find meetings near you on the [AA website](#).
3. **Think rationally and stay grounded** - It's easy to get carried away over Christmas, so it is important to check in with yourself and keep track of how you're feeling. Take it slowly and don't be afraid to say no.

At The Living Room, we provide extra support over the festive period to those clients who need it. We recognise the difficulties Christmas can bring and our counsellors work hard to ensure our clients can recognise their triggers and use healthy coping strategies to deal with any challenges they face.

If you or anyone you know is finding the holiday season difficult to cope with, there is plenty of support available. Go to our [website](#) to find some great Hertfordshire organisations or you can call us on **0300 365 0304** or just [contact us online](#).



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

I'm forever grateful for all the support of The Living Room and the people who have helped me in my journey, some are still a very big part of it today. I'm now coming up to two years free from alcohol and my food recovery is still a work in progress. I have now got myself back into work with a new part time job to start very soon. I have found a lot of hope in recovery, it has taken me blood sweat and tears to get where I am today but I wouldn't change what I have now- recovery.

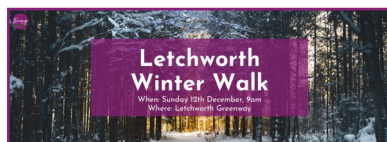
Upcoming Events

We've got some great events coming up for the holiday season...



St. Albans Santa Float: If you want to get into the festive spirit and help support our services then you can come along to the annual St. Albans Santa Float on Saturday 11th December, 4:30pm. If you can't volunteer then why not pop down and see us on our route, bring your family and see Father Christmas! **Find out more.**

To sign up, email Lara on lara@livingroomherts.org or call us on **0300 365 0304**.



Letchworth Winter Walk: We're back with another 13.6 mile walking challenge! A challenge for the body, mind and spirit. The walk will take place on Sunday 12th December 2021. We'll meet at the starting point (Standalone Farm) at 9:00am and set off at 9:30am. Nourish Café in Letchworth are also supporting this event, with all proceeds from any food and drinks bought going directly to The Living Room.

If you'd like to register your place, go to **our website** and if you have any questions just get in touch with **Lara**.

Aftercare Group

In response to feedback from people who graduated from our service, we are pleased to announce the launch of a new Aftercare group at our Stevenage hub. On the **second Tuesday of every month from 3-4pm**, anyone who has graduated from their treatment with us at any time over the past 21 years can visit to share a cuppa with a counsellor and catch-up with other graduates. Every graduate is welcome to attend.

We want to create an even stronger graduate community and this group would be a great opportunity for graduates to reconnect with The Living Room and reflect on their time with us. We know how important aftercare is and introducing more groups like these is a priority for all of our hubs going into the new year.

COVID-19 safety measures require you to wear a mask throughout our hub, until seated, and use hand sanitiser regularly. **Thank you.**



Vote for us!

Nominations for the Ecclesiastical Movement for Good 12 Days of Giving are now open! Your votes will give us the chance to win **£1,000** for our services. They are drawing 10 winners at random each weekday and nominations will remain open until midnight the day before each draw. Draws will take place each weekday from **6 – 21 December 2021**.

It's been a very challenging 18 months for so many charities, ourselves included, and this money can make a real impact. The more nominations we get, the higher our chances of winning! It will only take a minute so **nominate us today** and share the **link** with friends and family. When nominating please use **Charity No: 1175541** and our charity type as **Health**. Keep an eye on our social media pages for more opportunities to share!



St. Albans SleepOut 2021

Friday 19th November was the annual St Albans SleepOut, it was a brilliant event and our 'CGL Dream Team' exceeded their target raising **£1,385** for The Living Room. Thank you to the team and to everyone who donated.

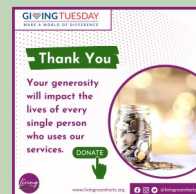
If you're feeling inspired by the SleepOut, why not put it in your diary for next year? Or come up with a fundraiser of your own? Have a look at **our guide** on our website for some inspiration, or check out how you can get involved in **future events**.



Giving Tuesday

The sentiment from a famous African proverb goes, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go further, go together." This is the core belief of Giving Tuesday.

Giving Tuesday is a time to support and raise awareness of local and national charities, grassroots organisations, teams or individuals who give back to people or communities facing different levels of deprivation. Therefore, we are thankful to have all the supporters of The Living Room on our team as we can only go further together. Read **our article** to find out more.



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 Asda Watford for their £200 donation from their Green Token Giving Scheme.



Thank you to the CGL Dream Team for raising £1,385 in their SleepOut fundraiser.



Thank you to our Mount Snowdon fundraisers for their £841.28 donation.