



It's been exciting to return to our centres and see people over the last few weeks, but with the country opening up I think it's worth reflecting on how that can make some of us feel.

If we're honest, multiple lockdowns and restrictions on the way we normally act has probably made us all a little... odd. Some of us have been stuck on our own and some of us have been stuck (too long) with our loved ones. Some of us are going to be itching to get out and see new people and others are going to feel overwhelmed or claustrophobic.

I want to remind you that it's normal to feel this way and I want to encourage you to get out there, spend time with people, go see what's

going on where you live but do it in your own time and in your own way. If it feels too noisy or too chaotic, take baby steps. If it feels weird being back in an office and you're not sure how to act, that's fine as well. Be honest with yourself and others and gently move back to how things were before. Read on for some tips on your mental health plus all the news and goings-on at The Living Room.

~ Adrienne, Chief Executive



Mental Health Awareness Week

Mental Health Awareness Week starts on the 10th of May and this year's theme is 'Nature'.

Now lockdown restrictions have eased, it's the ideal time to take advantage of the sunny weather, tear ourselves away from our phones and laptops and get outside. It may be difficult for some to adjust to crowds and renewed activity, so it's important to get out on our own terms.

Find a stretch of river, a quiet park or somewhere further out in the country. Take a long lunch, take a stroll after dinner, take a little time to get away from your responsibilities and relax.

If you're feeling down and you need help lifting your spirits, take a look at **The Five Ways to Wellbeing**:

1. **Connect** – so crucial for your happiness, especially if you're in recovery. Taking time to hang out people who make you feel good is a sure-fire way to feel better.
2. **Be Active** – exercise is important, but you don't have to be a slave to the gym! Just a kick about with friends, long walks or playing with younger relatives can be enough.
3. **Keep Learning** – Picking up new skills is key to staying sharp and feeling more

confident in your abilities.

4. **Give** – focusing on others is a smart idea if you're stuck inside your own head, and doing something nice for another person makes us feel good too. If you want an extra challenge why not try **volunteering with us**.
5. **Be mindful** – take notice of what's happening right now. Seriously, right now. How do you feel? Are you reading this and taking it in or is your mind elsewhere? Practice mindfulness every day with the **Headspace app**.



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

"I will always be indebted to The Living Room for helping me reclaim my life and turning what seemed like an impossible and tragic situation into a reason to thrive again. My relationships with my children, family and friends and career have all benefited from the changes I have made in recovery as has my emotional and physical health and well-being - the future looks bright - such a turnaround from a year ago."

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Virtual London Marathon 2021

It's taking place on **Sunday 3rd October** and you have 24 hours to complete the 26.2 miles. General entry into the **Virtual London Marathon 2021** has **sold out** but no need to worry **we still have places available**, for now!

You'll be given access to the official London Marathon app where you'll be able to log your miles, access exclusive audio commentary featuring famous voices and earn the coveted finishers medal and T-Shirt which will be posted to you after completion. Once you're signed up, we'll be able to support you the whole way, sharing your fundraising page



and providing you with special The Living Room merch to wear on the day. Spaces are limited, so the sooner you contact us the better.

To apply for a space just fill out this **application form**, we can't wait to hear from you!

Captain Tom 100

Over the bank holiday weekend we were encouraging our supporters to get involved in the **Captain Tom 100**.

We put out ideas like write a 100 word story or poem (see below) about your journey with addiction and recovery, paint a picture in 100 minutes about what The Living Room means to you or commit to volunteering 100 minutes (or hours) with us.

Our Crèche team also got the children involved in all sorts of activities around the number 100, have a look at their line of 100 cars and Sid the Snake- 100 cardboard tubes long!

Thank you to everyone that got involved, remember it's not too late to **donate**!

We're looking forward to taking part in more in-person challenges as lockdown continues to ease.

If you want to create your own sponsored event or fundraising challenge we'd love to **hear from you**!



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 **St Albans Cathedral** for their £900 donation.
- We've received our third year of funding of £15,450 from the **Martin Geddes Charitable Trust**, thank you.
- Thank you to **St. Mark's Church Hitchin** for their £200 donation.
- Thank you to **All Saints Church Datchworth** for their £300 donation.

Your Support, Our Impact

We'd like to share some facts and figures from a recent report which shows that The Living Room has continued to provide an amazing service to clients and fill a real need in our community. You can also read this **article** to find out more.

Over the past year...

- We have received an incredible **1,704 enquiries** into our services with **100%** of them hearing back from us within just 48 hours of their initial referral or contact with us.
- We've helped **638 people** across our hubs, with **61** in our new virtual Hertfordshire Hub.
- From January to March 2021 we've seen amazing graduation rates, with over **80%** for those in Alcohol or Drugs groups and **75%** for Disordered Eating and Family and Carers.

We know that there is much more to us than just numbers, have a read of a client story:



'The Living Room had changed my life and me. Through focusing on myself I have been able to get out of debt, get clean and sober, put on healthy weight in the gym and obtain my licence back, a complete 180!' - Client Story from Drugs group.

Thank you to all our staff and volunteers who work so hard to provide these amazing services to our clients and to all our supporters, we wouldn't be able to fund this important work without you.

Express Yourself Week

From 12th-16th April, to coincide with the opening of the Stevenage hub and with £200 funding from **CAMHS**, our Crèche team celebrated **Children's Mental Wellbeing Week**.

All week they were creating and using different media to encourage the children, and staff, to express their feelings on the return to the Crèche. There were lots of different activities, from emotion stones, to puppet shows and T-Shirt painting.



There were also some amazing outfits from the Crèche team and the children as they were encouraged to dress to express how they felt comfortable and confident. This let the children really show their individuality and creativity, and learn more about expressing themselves in fun ways.

A big **thank you** to the Crèche team for all their hard work! If you want to find out more have a look at their **Facebook page** and check out their videos on our **YouTube channel**.