The Living Room

Breaking the cycle of addiction



Trustee Information Pack

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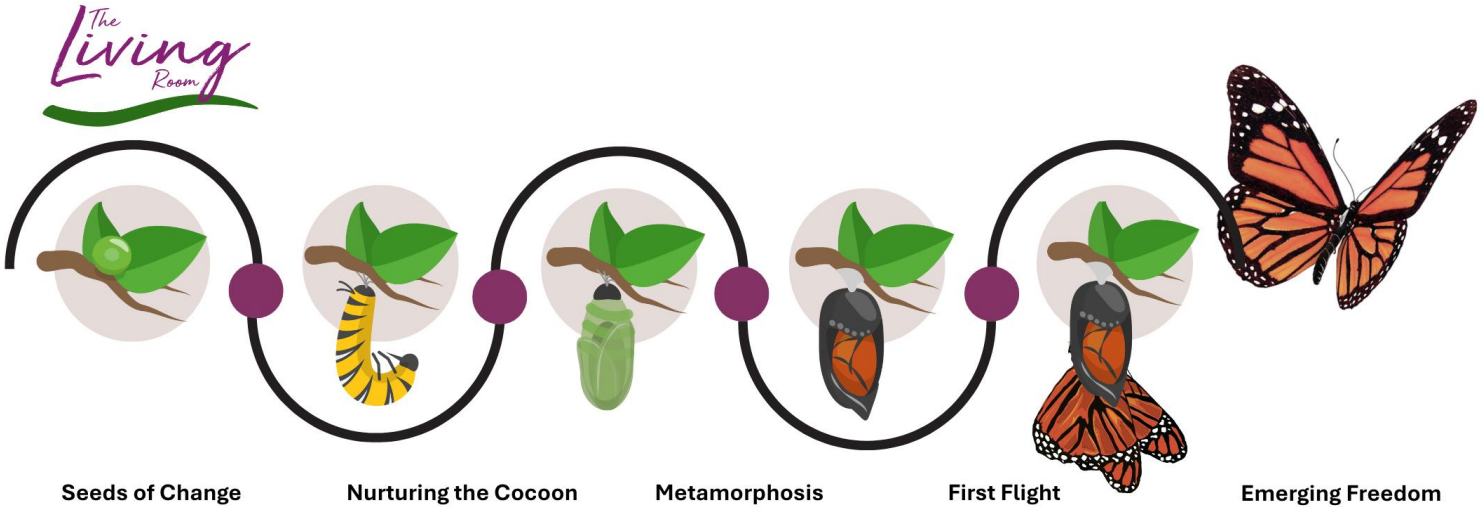
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welcome

I'm so pleased that you're considering becoming part of our Board of Trustees — or that you've already joined us. Trustees play a vital role in ensuring that our charity continues to grow, adapt and stay true to its purpose: helping people recover from addiction and build fulfilling, connected lives.

At The Living Room, we see recovery as a community effort. Every group session, counselling hour, shop sale, and fundraising event contributes to something bigger — a network of compassion that helps people find hope again. Our trustees are the guardians of that mission. You bring experience, perspective, and a commitment to our values, helping us make thoughtful decisions that put clients first.

This pack is here to support you in your trustee journey. It's not a rulebook, but a guide — something you can return to when you need to understand how we work, where your role fits, and what helps us stay strong as a charity. We've designed it to complement what's on our website rather than repeat it, focusing on what's most useful for your role and for our shared responsibilities under the **Charity Governance Code 2025**.

Thank you for choosing to give your time and expertise to The Living Room. I hope you find this guide both practical and inspiring. Together, we'll continue to create a space where recovery is possible and every story matters.

Warm regards,
Adrienne Arthurs
Chief Executive Officer

"Good governance is learning in action — staying curious, staying accountable, and staying connected."

background

breaking the cycle of addiction, one life at a time

The Living Room began in **2000**, founded by **Janis Rogers MBE**, who had a vision to create a welcoming space where people could recover from addiction without leaving their families or communities behind. What started with one room and a broom cupboard at The Oval Community Centre in Stevenage has grown into a trusted Hertfordshire charity with hubs in **Stevenage, St Albans**, and **Watford**.

Over the last **25 years**, The Living Room has supported more than **8,500 adults and family members** through free, time-unlimited group therapy. Our approach is distinctive — every counsellor is both professionally trained and in long-term recovery themselves. That lived experience helps create genuine connection and hope for everyone who walks through our doors.

From our first group sessions funded by **Churches Together in Stevenage** to national recognition, including an **MBE for our founder**, The Living Room has been built on compassion, courage, and community. Under the leadership of **CEO Adrienne Arthurs**, we've embraced digital therapy, expanded partnerships, and strengthened our local reach — but our heart remains the same:
a safe space where recovery, connection, and purpose begin.

> "Celebrating 25 years of The Living Room is a tribute to the thousands of lives changed through compassion, community, and courage."
>
> Adrienne Arthurs, CEO

2000 – Founded in Stevenage

2012 – St Albans Hub opens

2019 – Watford Hub launches

2025 – Celebrating 25 years

what we do

At The Living Room, we help people **recover from addiction** and rebuild their lives within a caring, safe, connected community.
Our work is built on one simple belief — that recovery happens best together.



our approach

We provide **free, time-unlimited, abstinence-based group therapy** for adults living with any form of addiction — from alcohol and drugs to gambling, eating disorders, and other harmful behaviours such as overworking or relationship dependency.

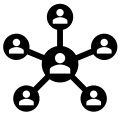
Our sessions are led by professionally qualified counsellors who are themselves in long-term recovery. This shared experience creates empathy, trust, and authenticity — helping every person who joins us believe that lasting recovery is possible.



support for families and carers

Addiction affects everyone around it. That's why we also provide **specialist support for families, partners and carers**, offering a safe space to understand addiction, build healthy boundaries, and rediscover hope.

These sessions empower loved ones to focus on their own wellbeing while supporting recovery for the whole family system.



a community of recovery

Recovery doesn't stop when someone completes therapy. Many of our graduates stay connected as volunteers, peer supporters or trustees.
Through our **community projects, partnerships, and charity shop**, people in recovery gain new skills, rebuild confidence, and continue giving back — proving that recovery can ripple through families, friendships and communities.

"Addiction doesn't just harm individuals — it ripples through families, workplaces and communities. Recovery ripples too."
— Adrienne Arthurs, CEO

At The Living Room, every person who walks through our doors is met with compassion, understanding, and belief in their potential to live a full, connected life — free from addiction.

why our work matters

recovery changes everything



Every day, people walk through our doors carrying the weight of addiction, shame and fear — and every day, we see lives begin to change. At The Living Room, we know that recovery is not only possible, but sustainable when people are supported with empathy, structure, and community.

Addiction often isolates people from those they love and erodes their sense of purpose. Our work helps rebuild those connections. Through our free, abstinence-based group therapy, people learn to understand the root of their addiction, find strength in shared experience, and develop the tools to live healthy, connected lives.

Families and carers also heal alongside them. When one person finds recovery, it can transform an entire household — improving children's wellbeing, rebuilding trust, and restoring hope across generations.

The Living Room's work also benefits our wider community. Fewer hospital admissions, safer families, reduced social care involvement, and people returning to education, volunteering or employment all show the tangible difference recovery makes. Trustees play a vital part in ensuring this continues — helping us stay strong, sustainable, and ready to meet growing need.

8,500 lives changed

1500 family and carers supported

3 hubs across Hertfordshire

25 years supporting families

strategy and vision

guided by compassion, strengthened by governance

Our vision is simple yet powerful:

A world where people affected by addiction can live full, connected lives free from the harm of dependency.

> "Our vision is to make recovery possible for everyone, because every person deserves the change to live."
>
> Strategic Plan 2025-8

Everything we do is driven by this vision and grounded in our mission — to provide group therapy, support, and connection for adults and families in safe, welcoming community spaces.

Our work over the next few years focuses on growing stronger as a charity while reaching more people in need. Guided by compassion, lived experience, and sound governance, we aim to make recovery accessible, inclusive and sustainable for the long term.

Quote from a current trustee:

"It's not often you get to truly give back to something that has had such a profound effect on your life but my time as a Trustee has allowed me just that.

From sitting on a purple chair and discovering the healing power of being open, vulnerable and honest to sitting on a chair at a Board meeting sharing my experience as someone working in business and part of the recovery community, the role has, in its own way, been a huge part of my life as a proud, grateful and sober member of society."

Information from our Chair, Daniel Marshall

"As a Board of Trustees, we really value the relationship we have with the Executive Team, who are strong, experienced and open and transparent in how they lead. That openness allows us to have honest conversations, offer healthy challenges, and provide support in a way that feels constructive and purposeful.

We've taken the time to agree our shared strategic priorities and know were all working towards the same goals. Most importantly, this shared approach keeps us focused on the people we are here to support, ensuring that every decision we make together is through that lens."

our priorities

turning our vision into action

Our strategy comes to life through a set of clear priorities that guide everything we do — from the therapy rooms to the boardroom.
Each one reflects how we grow stronger as a charity while keeping recovery and connection at the heart of all we do.

1. Connection & Community

We're deepening the ways people stay connected after treatment — through alumni groups, volunteering, and opportunities to give back.
Recovery thrives in community, and these connections help prevent relapse and build lifelong support networks.

2. Digital Inclusion

We're expanding hybrid and online delivery to reach people who can't attend in person.
Digital innovation allows us to meet people where they are — ensuring that no one is excluded from recovery because of distance, health, or circumstance.

3. Neurodiversity & Inclusion

We're adapting our services and governance to reflect a wide range of lived experiences, including neurodiverse clients and trustees.
By celebrating difference, we create an environment where everyone feels seen, safe, and supported.

4. Sustainability & Growth

We're strengthening partnerships, diversifying funding, and investing in staff development.
This ensures we remain resilient, ethical, and ready to support our community for another 25 years.

5. Governance Excellence

We're embedding the **Charity Governance Code 2025** across every level of our work.
From transparency and risk management to Board culture, our aim is to model good governance that earns public trust and inspires confidence.

terms of appointment

clarity, commitment and care

Becoming a trustee means joining a team of people who share a commitment to recovery, connection, and hope. This role carries important responsibilities — but it also offers the reward of seeing lives change through the work you help guide.

Length of Appointment

Trustees are appointed for an **initial term of three years**.
Trustees may be **reappointed for up to three consecutive terms** (a maximum of nine years in total).
Each reappointment is reviewed by the Board, considering contribution, attendance, and organisational needs.
Trustees may step down at any time with appropriate notice.

Induction and Support

All new trustees receive:

- A structured induction (including safeguarding and governance training).
- A named mentor or fellow trustee for peer support.
- Invitations to visit our centres and meet our teams in person.

Expectations

Trustees are expected to:

- Attend **quarterly Board meetings** (in person or online) and the **annual strategy day**.
- Join at least one **subcommittee or working group** aligned with their skills.
- Read Board papers in advance and contribute constructively to discussion.
- Act in the charity's best interests and uphold our **values**: *Caring, Competence, Community, Customer Focus, and Integrity*.
- Serve as positive ambassadors for The Living Room in their networks.

Remuneration and Expenses

Trustee roles are **voluntary**.

We reimburse all **reasonable expenses** related to your role, such as travel, childcare, and accessibility needs — because we believe serving should never be a financial burden.

"Trusteeship is about stewardship — helping The Living Room grow, adapt and remain a place where people can recover with dignity and hope."

Key Internal Resources

Specific Board Policies

All current policies, minutes, and board materials are available through our **HR.**

- **Board papers and meeting minutes**
- **Policies and procedures**, including:
  - Safeguarding Adults at Risk
  - Code of Conduct for Trustees
  - Conflict of Interest Policy
  - Reserves, Finance, and Risk Management Policies
  - Diversity, Equality, Equity & Inclusion Policy
- **The Living Room Strategy 2025–2028**
- **Annual Reports and Impact Summaries**

Essential External Resources

For broader guidance on charity governance and best practice:

- **Charity Commission for England and Wales:** www.gov.uk/charity-commission
- **Charity Governance Code 2025:** www.charitygovernancecode.org
- **NCVO (National Council for Voluntary Organisations):** www.ncvo.org.uk
- **Getting on Board:** trustee recruitment and training hub — www.gettingonboard.org
- **DSC (Directory of Social Change):** trustee learning and charity resources — www.dsc.org.uk

Learning and Development

We encourage every trustee to continue learning throughout their term.
Opportunities include:

- Induction and refresher training on safeguarding and governance.
- Specialist briefings on topics such as finance, equality and inclusion, and digital strategy.
- Charity sector webinars and trustee conferences.

Your experience and insights are what make The Living Room's Board so effective

— and your curiosity will help us keep improving.