

# Simon Communities of Ireland Annual Report 2017



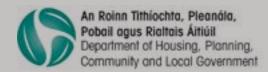
### **About Simon Communities**

The Simon Communities support over 13,300 men, women and children. We have almost 50 years of experience providing homeless, housing and treatment services to people facing the trauma and stress of homelessness. We are a network of independent Communities based in Cork, Dublin, Dundalk, Galway, the Midlands, the Mid West, the North West and the South East, responding to local needs and supported by a National Office in the areas of policy, research, communications and best practice. We share common values and ethos in tackling homelessness and, informed by our grassroots services, we campaign for more effective policies and legislation regionally, nationally and at European level. Whatever the issue, Simon's door is always open for as long as we are needed. For more information, please log on to www.simon.ie.

#### **SERVICES INCLUDE:**

- · Homelessness prevention, tenancy sustainment and resettlement.
- · Street outreach, emergency accommodation and harm reduction.
- · Housing with support and Housing First services.
- Homeless specific health and wellbeing services (counselling; addiction treatment and recovery; and mental health supports).
- · Personal development, education, training and employment services.
- · Foodbanks, drop-in centres and soup runs.

#### **SUPPORTED BY**





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# A Message from our Chair



**DERMOT KAVANAGH** 

Reports from the Simon Communities across Ireland show that over 13,000 received help and support in 2017. Many did not have a place to call home while others were living in fear of losing their home. The devastating impact of the housing and homelessness crisis was literally hitting home and the experience was traumatising for all. The numbers in emergency accommodation continue to increase month after month as rents continued their upward spiral while there are at least 100.000 households in need of social housing. At the time of writing, there are almost 10,000 men, women and children trapped in emergency accommodation. Access to secure, affordable housing is a major challenge, pushing people into homelessness and preventing people moving out of emergency accommodation. Secure housing is the key to addressing homelessness but it's not just about housing; providing people with supports to help address whatever other needs surround their experience of homelessness is also essential.

People in Ireland have not looked the other way. The Simon Communities are so grateful for the support that we receive, not only to help us provide a wide range of services across the country, but also support for our campaigning work. We are extremely proud of our long history of campaigning for more effective policies and appropriate legislation to address the injustice of homelessness and housing insecurity. The Simon Communities of Ireland National Office provides a support and co-ordinating role to the eight Communities across the country and focuses on the areas of best practice, policy, research and campaigns. A communications function underpins this work.

I would like to thank all the people who use our services around the country; they are truly remarkable in their courage and resilience to keep going despite the reality of systemic failures and a State that has failed them. To all of the staff and volunteers across the eight local Simon Communities, we would not be here without your skill, experience and dedication. We are extremely lucky to have over 2,500 volunteers. I would like to thank the Board of the Simon Communities of Ireland for their guidance and support this year. I also wish to acknowledge the excellent work and commitment of the team in the National Office over the last year.

The Simon Communities are doing all we can to address the ongoing homeless and housing crisis. We also look to how we can prevent this from happening again. We must do things differently. On behalf of the people we work with, our staff and volunteers, we would like to thank our statutory funders and all our supporters for their generosity this year. Together we continue to ensure that, for as long as is needed, Simon's door remains always open.



# Looking back on 2018: The time has come for a right to housing in Ireland



#### **NIAMH RANDALL, NATIONAL SPOKESPERSON**

It is hard to look back on 2018 as another year where the housing and homelessness crisis escalated further. It was another year when more and more people faced the trauma, stress and uncertainty of homelessness and housing insecurity; another year when the almost 10,000 men, women and children trapped in emergency accommodation were told they would have to wait longer for a place to call home. Another year where many people in the private rental sector, especially people on low incomes and those in receipt of state housing benefits, lived in fear of receiving an eviction notice, knowing they had nowhere else to go. As you will see in this report, the numbers of people that the Simon Communities all around

Our Communities are doing all they can, working with our voluntary and statutory partners, to house and support the people impacted by the housing and homelessness crisis. Homelessness and living in constant fear of losing one's home is deeply traumatising and damaging and what we know in the Simon Communities is the longer it continues, the greater the impact on people's health and wellbeing. We must never accept homelessness as normal. We must never accept people living with such fear and uncertainty as normal. It is time for the Government to recognise that the private sector alone will not deliver the housing that people need; it cannot solve this crisis. In the midst of the greatest housing and homelessness crisis of our time the Simon Communities have looked to ensure this never happens again; that systems and structures are put in place to protect and support people, preventing homelessness from occurring in the first place. Under international human rights obligations, housing is not a commodity; it is a human right. This acknowledges that housing is a fundamental human need and obliges the state to reasonably protect and fulfil that need. To be adequately housed means having security of tenure - not having to worry about eviction or having your home taken away with very little notice. It means having access to appropriate services, schools, and employment. Eightyone countries around the world have a legal right to housing. Rights are interdependent so without housing it is almost impossible to fulfil a whole host of other

the country are working with are increasing year on year.

rights including the right to health, the right to dignity and the right to privacy. Discrimination is both a cause and a consequence of homelessness. Those who face discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, family status, mental or physical ill health, sexual orientation are more likely to become homeless and, once homeless, experience additional discrimination.

In June, we were fortunate to welcome the UN Special Rapporteur for Adequate Housing, Leilani Farha, to Ireland as the keynote speaker at our event, 'Making the Case for a Right to Housing'. Other speakers included Emily Logan, Chief Commissioner for the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, and Senator Colette Kelleher. It was at this event that we published our paper, 'Making the Case for a Right to Housing in Ireland'. It is time to have this conversation about enshrining the right to housing in the Irish Constitution.

Housing First is the way forward in responding to homelessness - we know this from international evidence. The Simon Communities welcomed the Government's Housing First Implementation Plan, published in September. This model can change people's lives; supporting them to leave homelessness behind for good. Ensuring a supply of secure, affordable housing and then providing support for people in that housing for as long as needed is critical to the success of the Plan and we hope to see this implemented over the coming months. It is crucial that this progressive policy has the necessary supporting infrastructure and funding; positive rhetoric must translate to positive action.

The public concern about housing and homelessness is very clear; people want action. Does the Government truly understand this? People deserve better, it is not fair to keep offering short-term solutions with little attention paid to people's longer-term needs. The year 2019 will mark 50 years since the Simon Communities first began providing services in Ireland. Today, we lament that there is still a need for those services. Never the less, the Simon Communities all around the country continue this work, providing support and services to over 13,000 people and continuing a proud history of campaigning for change. With your continued support, we will be there, our door always open, for as long as people need us.



# **Key Moments of 2017**



#### **RIAI SIMON OPEN DOOR:**

The fourteenth RIAI Simon Open Door took place in May. This national fundraising campaign, a partnership between the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI) and the Simon Communities of Ireland raised €124.000 in 2017.

#### LOCKED OUT:

We had a huge response to our Locked focused on the rental market and the impact that the lack of certainty and permanence is having on people. People responded by sharing their experiences of renting on social media The campaign tied in with the launch of one of our Locked Out of the Market reports, highlighting the gap between Rent Supplement/Housing Assistance

#### **PORTRAITS OF HOMELESSNESS SEMINAR:**

This client led seminar was on the subject of how clients are portrayed within homeless organisations and the media. Clients wanted to explore how people experiencing homelessness could be portrayed more positively in the media. The seminar was an opportunity to explore this with staff and look at other ways of representing people in this situation.

#### NO ONE LEFT BEHIND CAMPAIGN:

was that no one should be left behind Government to build social and

#### **NOBODY LEFT BEHIND:** ADDRESSING THE HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS CRISIS **EFFECTIVELY:**

Our Simon Week seminar examined how and leave homelessness behind them and how we can prevent those at risk from losing the homes they already have. The seminar was chaired by Today FM's Matt Cooper and opened by Eoghan Murphy T.D., Minister for Housing, Planning, and Local Government.

## SIMON INVOLVEMENT AND

**ACTION GROUP (SIAG):** 

Members of SIAG identified the need for training in event planning to provide them with the skills to produce the client led seminar - Portraits of Homelessness. Over the summer months the training was delivered and clients organised Portraits of Homelessness by putting into practice skills as they were acquiring them.

#### **POLICY SUBMISSIONS:**



# Snapshot of services provided by the Simon Communities in 2017

# **DURING 2017, THE LOCAL SIMON COMMUNITIES WORKED WITH:** A total of: people This included: to provide the following services:



# Snapshot of services provided by the Simon Communities in 2016

**SPECIALIST TREATMENT AND** SUPPORT SERVICES ADDRESSING **SOME OF THE ISSUES WHICH** MAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO **HOMELESSNESS OCCURRING** OR MAY BE A CONSEQUENCE **OF HOMELESSNESS** People accessed Specialist Treatment and Support Services in 2017 of these: RECOVERY People availed of drug and/or alcohol treatment services.



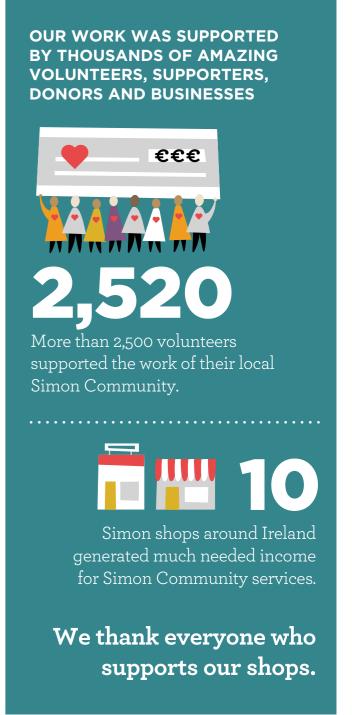
# Snapshot of services provided by the Simon Communities in 2017

# PREVENTION, EARLY **INTERVENTION AND ADVICE** SERVICES. People accessed early intervention and advice services



# Snapshot of services provided by the Simon Communities in 2017





# Policy, Research and Communications

The Simon Communities of Ireland works to influence Government and key policy and decision makers in shaping national housing and homeless policy and other policy areas which impact on the lives of people who are homeless and living with housing insecurity e.g. health policy, drug and alcohol policy. We also engage in purposeful research to provide support for our evidence based policy activities and to influence service delivery across the country.



In 2017 the Simon Communities of Ireland are represented in all major national policy for aand at key stakeholder meetings including the National Homeless Consultative Committee (NHCC), and bilateral Meetings with the Department of the Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government.

partnerships and networks with other organisations that share our aims including the Children's Rights Alliance, Community and Voluntary Pillar, the European Anti-Poverty Network and Mental Health Reform. We are also active members of the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA) and have been nominated onto the FEANTSA Expert Working Group on Health since 2011.

campaigning activities with the aim of raising awareness of the damage being caused by the homeless and housing crisis, as well as recognition of what the Simon Communities believe would be more effective policies and legislation. Throughout the year, we reached thousands over 800 national press articles and over 700 broadcast is supported from within the National Office speaking on behalf of all eight Simon Communities on national policy and strategy matters.

#### **SIMON WEEK 2017**

In October 2017 our annual week of campaigning and awareness raising - Simon Week - took place involving a wide range of activities and events at a national and local level. This year we asked people to support our No One Left Behind campaign. This campaign asked people to sign the Simon Communities petition calling on the Government to build social and affordable housing. The focus was that no one should be left behind; we need to act fast in this crisis - people need permanent, affordable housing first with whatever supports they need to remain in that housing. Many people are/could be left behind trapped in a cycle of homelessness for life. Over 20,000 people signed our petition.

#### **LOCKED OUT 2017**

In May 2017, we ran a two-week national awareness campaign focusing on the rental market and the impact that the lack of certainty and permanence is having on people. The campaign asked people to share their experiences of renting on social media to help us in our campaign for change. The campaign tied in with the launch of one of our Locked Out reports (see further detail below), highlighting the gap between Rent Supplement/ Housing Assistance Payment and the rental market.

#### REPORTS AND POLICY SUBMISSIONS

This year we published the following key reports:

#### Locked Out of the Market

This series of snapshot reports track the gap between rising market rents and the Rent Supplement / Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) limits. By tracking the number of properties available to rent within these state support limits in eleven regions throughout the country, the studies show just how far these payments are from market rates and how people on state housing supports cannot access the private rental market. We published four Locked Out reports in 2017.

#### **Policy Submissions:**

A number of submissions were made during 2017

- Submission to the Pre Budget Forum.
- Simon Communities Pre-Budget Submission 2018.
- Submission to the review of Rebuilding Ireland.
- Submission to Census 2021 Consultation on Ouestionnaire Content.
- Submission to the Oireachtas Committee on Justice and Equality.
- Submission to the Oireachtas Committee on Health.
- Submission to inform the National Women's Strategy
- Submission to the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing.
- Submission to inform the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection Statement of Strategy 2017-2020.
- Submission to the review of the Tenant Incremental Purchase Scheme.
- · Submission to the Working group on the Tax and Fiscal Treatment of Landlords.
- Submission to the review of the Rent Predictability
- Submission to the Oireachtas Committee on Housing, Planning and Local Government on the Impact of Short Term Rentals.
- Submission to the National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence.

# Best Practice and Training

Best Practice and Training activity supports the local Communities to deliver the best possible provision to people who use our services. The core work includes:

- Promoting, developing and supporting opportunities for client involvement.
- Policy development for services.
- Developing and delivering training.
- Organising and running seminars and workshops on practice issues.
- Auditing services and researching and disseminating best practice initiatives.



Artwork by Paul O'Toole, Simon Community Client

#### CLIENT INVOLVEMENT SIMON INVOLVEMENT AND ACTION GROUP

Simon Involvement and Action Group (SIAG) celebrated its 12th year in 2017. SIAG is a national user led group of clients and ex clients of the Simon Communities who meet monthly to share ideas on and promote, client involvement – clients having a voice in the services they receive. SIAG also produces Simon Voices the newsletter uniquely produced by clients for clients highlighting issues that are important to them.

#### **CLIENT TRAINING**

Members of SIAG identified the need for training in event planning to provide them with the skills to put on the client led event - Portraits of Homelessness. Over the summer months the training was delivered and clients organised the 'Portrait of Homelessness' national seminar by putting into practice skills as they were acquiring them. This included choosing and securing a venue, organising catering and publicity etc. to ensuring every aspect of the event ran smoothly on the day. The clients themselves carried out all the roles from meet and greet to workshop facilitator to MC.

This training was funded by a grant from EBS Energy for Generations Fund

#### PORTRAITS OF HOMELESSNESS - NATIONAL CLIENT LED SEMINAR

This year's client led seminar focused on how clients are portrayed within homeless organisations and the media. Members of SIAG Clients wanted to explore how people experiencing homelessness could be portrayed more positively in the media. The seminar was an opportunity to discuss this with staff and look at other ways of representing people in this situation.

To begin the day clients spoke about their own views on the subject and how it had impacted on them. The keynote speech was delivered by New Yorker Michael Middleton, photographer and international speaker, on the portrayal of poverty. This was followed by workshops where a number of actions were identified including the development of guidelines on how homeless people are shown and their stories told by the Simon Communities.

#### MEETING THE NEEDS OF WOMEN IN SERVICES

The national staff group 'Meeting the Needs of Women in Services' which meets bi-monthly began the work of developing service responses to intimate partner violence and on developing guidelines in sexual health promotion. Also, the training model that was developed previously on awareness raising in the experiences and needs of women in services, was enhanced after consultations with female clients on their own experiences and needs in services.

#### **NATIONAL BEST PRACTICE SEMINARS**

The first national best practice seminar for staff, held in the spring was on the theme of the National Quality Standards Framework (NQSF). A comprehensive overview was presented by the Dublin Region Homelessness Executive (DRHE) followed by workshops on the specific themes looking at the standards of service delivery required and how they can be evidenced.

The second national best practice seminar, held in November, was concerned with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) as part of the process of ensuring compliance in this area, in advance of the legislation coming into effect in May 2018. Themed workshops looked at the requirements in the areas of service delivery, human resources and fundraising.

# **National Fundraising**

The Simon Communities can only continue to make such a difference to the lives of those who are homelessness or at risk of homelessness through the generosity of individuals and companies throughout Ireland. Without our committed supporters we would not be in a position to continue providing vital services across the country. We would like to thank all our donors and volunteers who have helped in whatever way they could to support the work of Simon.

#### **INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS**

#### **CORPORATE SUPPORTERS**

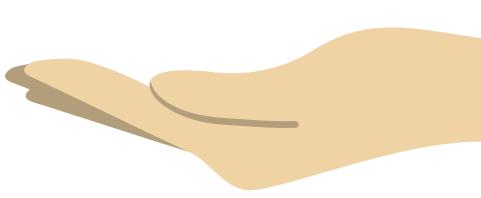
#### **ROYAL INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS OF IRELAND (RIAI):**

In May 2017, the Simon Communities of Ireland and the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland held the fourteenth annual RIAI Simon Open Door campaign. Certified RIAI architects offer an hour long consultation - donating their time and expertise to the public, in return a €90 donation to the Simon Community. Our 2017 campaign has been our most successful year so far, with 1,366 one hour consultations being held across the country. In 2017 the campaign raised €124,000 for Simon. We would like to thank the RIAI and their members, for their continued support of the Simon Communities across Ireland.

#### PETER MARK

Simon Communities were a chosen charity for the 2017 Petermarkathon annual challenge where Peter Mark salons nationwide raised vital funds to maintain the support services for people who are homeless or at risk as part of the "make it home" campaign. The staff and customers of the Peter Mark salons put in a massive fundraising effort and through fancy dress, cake sales, pyjama parties raised an amazing €65,000. We would like to thank all involved. Peter Mark clients and salon teams. All funds raised will go such a long way in supporting our work around the country, helping people move on from homelessness to safe and secure homes of their own.





# Financial Overview 2017

In 2017 the Simon
Communities of Ireland
generated income of
€840,471. This compared
to income of €934,343 in
2016. Donations from the
general public and from our
corporate partners accounted
for the vast majority of our
income (82.5%). It would be
impossible for us to continue
the work that we do without
such generous support.

During the year to December 2016 a grant was awarded by Pobal, a grant making agency funded by the Department of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The amount of grant awarded was €269,602 for the term 1st July 2016 to 30th June 2019. The amount recognised in the financial statements for 2017 is €89,869. The grant programme is the Scheme to Support National Organisations in the Community and Voluntary Sector. This funding was restricted to supporting a percentage of the salary and overhead costs of two posts within the organisation, Best Practice and Training Coordinator

and Head of Policy and Communications. Total grants advanced from Pobal during the year ended 31st December 2017 amounted to €89,869. No capital grants were received from Pobal and SCI is fully tax compliant as per the relevant grant circulars including circular 44/2006.

Expenditure in 2017 was €810,617 which was down from €907,232 in 2016. Included in this expenditure was fundraising costs of €53,607 and €111,405 dispersed to affiliate Simon Communities to support their operational costs. This created a net income for the year on the income and expenditure account of €29,854, (2016 €27,111).

In 2017 the Head of National Office, Patrick Quinn received a salary of €85,000 pro rata up to his retirement date of 29/9/2017. In addition, two staff members receive salaries in the range of €60,000 to €70,000. Pension contributions made by the organisation in 2017 amounted to €14,552 (2016 €16,486).

The Simon Communities of Ireland is committed to openness and transparency both within the organisation and externally with donors, funders, supporters and the public. The Board have signed up to the Governance Code for Voluntary Organisations. The annual financial statements are prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2014 and FRS 102. In addition, the Simon Communities of Ireland adheres to the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising and is registered with Charity Regulatory Authority.

The Simon Communities of Ireland accounts are audited by JPA Brenson Lawlor each year and the financial year runs from 1 January to 31 December.

#### THE FOLLOWING EXTRACTS ARE TAKEN FROM THE AUDITED ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2017

#### 2017 Income

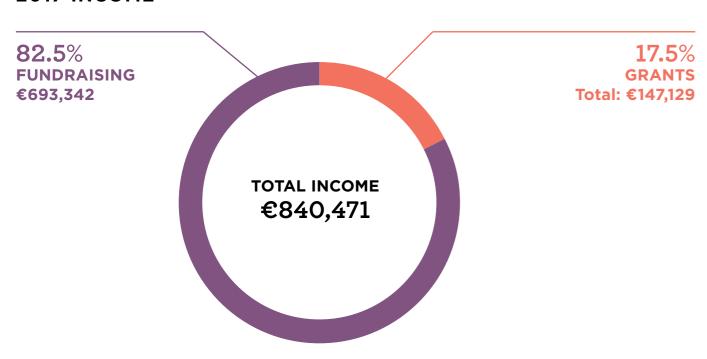
FUNDRAISING   82.5%	€693,342
GRANTS   17.5%	€147,129
TOTAL INCOME	€840,471

#### 2017 Expenditure

PROGRAMMES & ACTIVITIES   92.6%	€750,414
FUNDRAISING   6.6%	€53,607
GOVERNANCE   0.8%	€6,596
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	€810,617
NET INCOME	€29,85

#### 2017 INCOME

SIMON COMMUNITIES OF IRELAND



#### **EXPENDITURE**



# How You Can Help

The invaluable work the Simon Communities do is only possible through the generosity of the public and our corporate supporters. If you would like to help tackle homelessness in Ireland there are a number of ways that you can do so.

#### **DONATE ONLINE**

Log on to www.simon.ie

#### **SEND US A DONATION BY POST**

Donations can be sent to Simon Communities of Ireland, St Andrew's House, 28-30 Exchequer Street, Dublin 2. (Please do not send cash in the post).

#### DONATE OVER THE PHONE

Using a Credit or Debit Card call our fundraising team on (01) 6711606 with your card details and your transaction will be handled in strictest confidence.

#### **LEAVE SIMON A LEGACY**

A legacy is a lasting gift that will ensure Simon can continue working toward a society where no one is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. For further details on how to name the Simon Communities of Ireland as a beneficiary in your will, contact the Fundraising Team on (01) 671 5551 or email joanna@simoncommunity.com

#### NATIONAL CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

The Simon Communities of Ireland work with a number of corporate partners and there are many ways your company can help and get involved. You can contact us on 01 671 5551 to discuss tailoring projects and initiatives to match your company's interests and objectives.

#### **TAX EFFECTIVE GIVING**

If you are a PAYE or self-assessed tax payer and have donated €250 or more in the course of the tax year or in previous years, Simon can reclaim the tax paid on your donations. From 2013 onwards, Simon can claim for self-assessed tax payers who have made donations of €250 or more.

Donations from companies qualify the donor for tax relief.



#### SIMON COMMUNITIES OF IRELAND ST ANDREWS HOUSE 28-30 EXCHEQUER STREET DUBLIN 2

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www.simon.ie

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Registration Number | 74038

Charity Number | 8273

