



# Ending Homelessness Creating Homes

Annual Review  
and Calendar 2008

*Sponsored by*





## January '08

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The Simon Communities of Ireland provides a coordinating and support role, based on an affiliation agreement, for the eight communities in Cork, Dublin, Dundalk, Galway, the Midlands, the Mid West, the North West and the South East.

Simon has been working with people who are homeless in Ireland since 1969.

The Simon Communities of Ireland is governed by a Board, which is made up of a representative from each of the local Simon Communities and outside members with expertise from different related fields

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# Simon's Story

## Denis Doherty, Chair, Simon Communities of Ireland

The Simon Communities of Ireland have a vision of society where no one is homeless. By this we mean that no one has to sleep rough, no one is without a home for longer than is an emergency and everyone will receive the support available that will allow them to progress out of homelessness. Since we began our first service in 1969 our focus has been on facilitating a route out of homelessness for all who find themselves in that situation. Throughout the country we deliver a range of activities based on a continuum of care approach including: outreach; day centres; emergency shelter; addiction support; transitional accommodation; long-term supported housing; resettlement; prevention services; and training and employment projects.

Simon is always changing as the needs of people experiencing homelessness change over time. We are constantly learning and challenging our existing ways of doing things in order to deliver the most effective solutions to our service users. It has become apparent in recent years that the unique and complex needs of individuals experiencing homelessness are not confined to the major cities but exist throughout the State. Therefore the long established Simon Communities in Cork, Dublin, Dundalk and Galway have been joined by new Communities serving the Midlands, Mid West, North West and the South East, meaning Simon now covers every local authority area in the State. In promoting and supporting these new

Communities, our overriding objective has been to ensure that regardless of the place where a person experiences homelessness, he or she can access the accommodation and services necessary locally to progress out of that situation as quickly as possible.

Although we know that there is a critical need for these Simon Communities, it has been difficult to secure support from some local authorities and the HSE in certain areas to provide the services necessary to meet clearly identified local needs. The Simon Communities aim to improve responses to homelessness; we are not in competition with statutory bodies or other non-statutory organisations. We need to see more consistent investment, through partnership working as well as financial inputs, in addressing homelessness across the State if the objective we share with Government, of ending homelessness by 2010, is to be achieved.

Despite this need for increased Government investment and recognition by some local authorities and parts of the HSE of the potential benefits of genuine partnership working, we can, nonetheless, demonstrate significant success in working with people experiencing homelessness. This report will highlight how, in 2006, we worked with 3,346 individuals around the State who were either experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. Such work is, of course, only possible thanks to the generous fundraising support from the public that our Communities receive each year. We also rely on the significant support of our Corporate Partners. The RIAI support for the Simon Open Door project and the recent launch of the CRH Simon Safety Challenge are two examples of that type of support. Special thanks must also go to EBS, the sponsors of this Annual Review and

Calendar, who are now in their fifth year of supporting Simon via the Independent Living Initiative. At the time of publication, this initiative had generated over €16million of funding, with 73 houses and apartments either occupied or in progress for people at risk of homelessness or experiencing homelessness.

I thank my fellow members of the board who have given up significant time to support the work of the Simon Communities of Ireland throughout the year. The staffs of both the national office and the local Communities deserve our thanks and praise for the highly skilled and dedicated manner in which they perform their roles. The enormous contribution of our army of nearly 50 full-time and over 800 part-time volunteers is greatly appreciated. With such outstanding people throughout our communities, Simon will continue to offer practical solutions to ending homelessness. By matching our commitment, the Government can be confident that the vision we both share, of ending homelessness by 2010, can be realised.



Denis Doherty, Chair

# A Focus on Health

## **Patrick Burke, Chief Executive Officer, Simon Communities of Ireland.**

It is to the enormous credit of the staff, volunteers, voluntary boards and supporters of Simon that this review once again demonstrates our success in addressing homelessness across Ireland. As 2008 approaches, we are entering a critical phase in our work. We have long shared the view that ending homelessness is possible and, as a campaigning organisation as well as provider of services, have lobbied Government intensively to ensure that they work towards an objective of achieving this by 2010. The Government formalised such a commitment in the 'Towards 2016' social partnership agreement in 2006.

The issue we particularly want to highlight this year is health. The multiplicity of health needs that can result from being in such an extreme situation as homelessness must not be underestimated. The most significant profiling exercise to date, commissioned by the National Advisory Council Against Drugs in 2005, found 90% of people experiencing homelessness had a physical health complaint, 48% reported concerns regarding their psychiatric health, 76% had an alcohol problem and 64% had recently used illicit drugs. Homelessness kills, as we are too often reminded in each of our Communities. In 2006, 25 people supported by Cork Simon services died, with an average age of 42. Dundalk Simon and Galway Simon lost 4 and 8 residents respectively over the same period. In the last 12 months, 18 individuals supported by Dublin Simon have passed away.

These individuals meant a lot to our staff, volunteers and fellow residents and we are determined that their deaths are not in vain. We need the HSE to build on the many examples of good work undertaken to date by continuing and expanding its commitment to addressing health issues of people experiencing homelessness. This means focusing resources on the addiction, mental health and physical health issues of people, and providing effective services that will allow progression to permanent, sustainable accommodation. It also means providing such support consistently across all areas of the country.

In recent years, we have worked to make our services more effective, with key developments including: identification of gaps in homeless services around the country and development of approaches to meet these gaps; implementation and monitoring of good quality standards throughout our services; making service users central to our governance to ensure that services focus on meeting individual needs; focusing on a continuum of care approach to ensure a clear pathway out of homelessness for all our service users; and investment in move-on accommodation.

Government can also be credited with investing considerably in interventions to address homelessness in recent years. The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the HSE and local authorities have supported a number of initiatives that have impacted significantly on homelessness in Ireland. Momentum has been built up to the extent that ending long-term homelessness now seems a feasible goal, and this must not be lost now that an opportunity presents itself to move towards this within a relatively short period of time.

Therefore in addition to giving increased focus on health, there is also a need to fund homeless services adequately, with existing gaps in emergency accommodation and other service provision filled and controls in place to ensure that all services conform to best practice standards. Investment is required in social housing and sufficient move-on accommodation for people to progress out of homelessness. The welfare system must be reformed in order to ensure that accommodation is sustainable when it is secured. Finally, initiatives should be developed to address barriers to education, training and employment for people experiencing homelessness to ensure that they can meet accommodation costs once they move out of this situation.

None of these steps conflict with Government policy. All we are asking is upfront investment and commitment to demonstrate that they are serious when they talk about ending homelessness by 2010. If they do this, it will rank as one of the most important achievements in modern Irish social history.



**Patrick Burke, CEO**

# What Our Communities Do

## Our Communities make a significant impact in addressing homelessness around Ireland, including:

- Working with 3,346 service users in 2006.
- Providing 96 units of emergency accommodation for people experiencing homelessness.
- Providing a residential detox programme in Dublin for up to 8 people at any one time.
- Providing 21 units of transitional accommodation to deliver a focused programme of support leading to progression out of homelessness.
- Providing 141 units of long-term supported accommodation.
- Purchasing 28 units of move-on accommodation for people experiencing homelessness in 2006.
- Operating 6 Simon shops around Ireland to generate much needed additional income for our services.
- Over 800 volunteers giving support to our services, including 46 full-time volunteers placed with our Communities in 2006.

The services available for people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness across the country are outlined below.

**DAY CENTRES** - Our day centres offer food and a comfortable friendly environment for people experiencing homelessness during the day, when they often have no other place to go. They also provide healthcare access, education and training, counselling and support, information on rights and entitlements and social events. *Day centres currently operate in Cork, Dundalk and Galway. The day centre in Galway also serves as an out-of-hours crisis service.*

**SOUP RUNS** - Our soup runs provide much needed sustenance and friendship for those living on the streets, operating 365 days a year. *Both Dublin Simon and Cork Simon currently provide soup runs in their respective cities.*

**OUTREACH/ROUGH SLEEPING TEAMS** - We work with rough sleepers to ensure they have access to the care and support they need and to facilitate access to accommodation. *An Outreach Team in Cork and the Rough Sleeper Team in Dublin provide day and night support throughout these cities.*

**EMERGENCY SHELTER** - We operate a number of hostels around the country that meet the short-term accommodation needs of people experiencing homelessness. *Emergency shelters are provided in Cork, Dublin and Dundalk.*

**SPECIALIST TREATMENT SERVICES** - Our specialist services offer short focused and longer-term residential rehabilitation programmes to alcohol problems. *The Dublin Simon Alcohol Treatment Service delivers a 21-day residential treatment programme for up to 8 people in the detox unit.*

**TRANSITIONAL ACCOMMODATION PROJECTS** - Our transitional accommodation services deliver programmes lasting 6 months – 2 years with the aim of developing each individual's capacity to enable them to sustain long-term accommodation on completion. *Residential transitional projects currently operate in Dublin and Galway.*

**LONG-TERM SUPPORTED HOUSING** - Our long-term supported accommodation services provide a friendly comfortable environment for those incapable of living independently in the short or medium term. *Long-term supported housing projects are currently operated by Cork Simon, Dublin Simon and Galway Simon. Mid West Simon are currently seeking to establish a long-term supported accommodation project.*

**RESETTLEMENT AND HOUSING PLUS** - We offer support services to people that have moved into permanent housing for an initial period of residence to help ensure that this accommodation can be sustained in the long-term and that homelessness does not re-occur. *Cork Simon's Housing Plus project, Dublin Simon's resettlement service and Galway Simon and Dundalk Simon's tenancy sustainment services all provide ongoing support for people that have progressed into independent living. A regional settlement service is delivered by Midlands Simon Community for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath. South East Simon provides resettlement services in South Tipperary, Waterford and Kilkenny.*

**PREVENTION AND TENANCY SUSTAINMENT** - We offer prevention and tenancy sustainment services for people identified as being at risk of homelessness to address their particular issues and ensure that homelessness is avoided. *Dublin Simon and Dundalk Simon deliver an early intervention project to prevent people becoming homeless. North East Simon is currently seeking support for a tenancy sustainment service for Sligo and Leitrim and Donegal focusing on people at risk of homelessness.*

**EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES** - We operate projects and deliver supports to facilitate access education, training and employment opportunities for people experiencing homelessness. *Specific initiatives are delivered in Cork and Dublin.*

**SIMON HOUSING** - Housing has been purchased around the country for use by service users that are ready to progress out of homelessness into independent living. *Housing has been purchased in the following Community areas: Cork Simon (25 units), Dundalk Simon (10 units), Galway Simon (17 units), Midlands Simon (6 units), Mid West Simon (8 units) and North East Simon (7 units)*



# Simon Communities of Ireland

The Simon Communities of Ireland National Office provides a coordinating and support role to the eight Communities.

It is responsible for delivering a series of discrete functions based on a shared service model to maximise cost effectiveness. All our activities are framed within the National Strategy 2006-2009, 'Ending Homelessness Creating Homes'.

## Campaigning

Campaigning is an important function of the National Office. Our vision of ending homelessness cannot be achieved without addressing the systematic causes of homelessness in the country. For this, we are dependent on Government developing and implementing appropriate policies. It is therefore essential that we influence the approach of Government as far as we possibly can and this is done via our campaigning activities.

We are therefore represented in all major decision-making policy forums and lobby key stakeholders that have an involvement in shaping national homeless policy. This allows us to input into development of Government policy documents and we follow this up by

making submissions whenever appropriate opportunities arise. Agreed policy positions are developed across our Communities in relation to all aspects of homelessness, enabling us to communicate common campaign messages that exert maximum influence and improve awareness of homelessness issues around Ireland.

We work to ensure that the voices of our service users, staff and volunteers are reflected in the policy positions developed for our campaigns. We are also committed to basing our campaigning on sound evidence and periodically commission research to inform our understanding of particular issues. In the past year we have conducted or commissioned research into barriers to education, training and employment, service user participation, a right to housing and housing policy.

## Volunteering

Volunteers have played a key role in the development of the Simon Communities. It was through the innovation, commitment and energy of volunteers that our organization was founded. We recognise the important and unique role that volunteers continue to play in our organization and are committed to recruiting, training and supporting them on the principles of best practice and equal opportunities.

*"The period of time I was working as a volunteer in the Simon Community is a time full of enriching work and life experience which I do not want to miss and which I only can recommend to others"*

*Karoline Burger, Full Time Volunteer, Dundalk Simon 2007.*



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# Simon Communities of Ireland

## Housing Development

The National Office Housing Development function facilitates development of move-on accommodation for people who are homeless across the country on behalf of the local Simon Communities. This function was established in response to a lack of move-on accommodation for people experiencing homelessness around the country, resulting in blockages in emergency accommodation and other homeless services. It has been very successful in establishing a portfolio of property for this purpose, mainly via use of the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) run by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. The contribution made by EBS via the Independent Living Initiative has allowed the development of many new homes under CAS for people moving out of homelessness. By the end of 2006, funding had been secured for 47 new homes in this way, spread across the following counties: Galway, Limerick, Louth, Laois, South Tipperary, Waterford and Westmeath.

## Best Practice

The best practice function in the national office focuses on the key areas of building service user participation in services, internal service auditing, dissemination of best practice and training to ensure quality of service delivery in local Communities.

Service user involvement is continuing to expand, with the National Group for People Who Use Simon Services actively involved in policy development and working on a Service User's Newsletter. This links in with a major focus at present on creating meaningful use of time for the people who use our services. Being involved in the FEANTSA (a European-wide network of organisations working to address homelessness) Working Group on Participation enables us to share our learning internationally and also to learn from the other diverse groups involved.

We have recently updated our outcome monitoring tool which will allow us to more clearly identify the impact that using our services has on the individual. This in turn will inform the evolution of our services in the future. We are also considering how to ensure that Simon Values underpin every aspect of our work and will progress further activity in this regard in the coming year.

## Shops Development

The National Office also provided a shops development function that focused on maximising the income raised by the Simon Community retail outlets around the country. In 2006 the National Office continued to assist in the effective establishment of the two newest Simon shops, in Athlone and Waterford. Ongoing support and advice was also given to the other existing Simon shops.

## Fundraising

Without funding and other support from both the general public and our corporate partners Simon would be unable to make such a positive impact on addressing homelessness in Ireland. Hence within the National Office we have a dedicated fundraising function that aims to maximise income from these sources. Over 91% of our income came from fundraising in 2006, with direct mail a key mechanism in this regard. We are extremely grateful to our supporters who make regular or once-off donations to support Simon services.

Our relationship with EBS Building Society has been extremely important in allowing us to move towards our objective of ending homelessness. EBS helps in a very practical way via the Independent Living Initiative, providing investment that allows us to contribute the 5% funding necessary via the Government's Capital Assistance Scheme to create homes for people progressing out of homelessness. During 2006, 28 new homes were purchased for users of Simon services who were ready to move-on into an independent living environment. As we move into 2008, we are confident that we will see the 100th home acquired with EBS assistance, an incredible contribution to addressing homelessness from one of Ireland's foremost financial institutions.

In addition to this support, EBS has also provided us with professional, organisational and financial advice. Many EBS employees have volunteered with us, and lunchtime sessions have been held around the country where Simon and EBS staff meet to find new ways in which we can work together to help fight homelessness. EBS also sponsor this Annual Review and Calendar and we hope to continue our successful partnership for many years to come.

Many thanks are also due to the RIAI for the very successful partnership created via the Simon Open Door initiative. Every spring, participating RIAI architects around Ireland give members of the public an hour's consultation in return for a donation to Simon of €60, generating significant income. We are very hopeful that 2008 will see substantial benefits also arising from the recent partnership established with CRH via the Safety Challenge initiative.

Finally, the House of Cards appeal, which asks companies to give a donation to Simon in lieu of sending Christmas cards, continues to be an enormous success. We would like to thank all organisations that participated in House of Cards this year – your help really does make a difference.



**National Group for Users of Simon Services**

# Cork Simon Community



Colette Kelleher, Director



Annual Christmas Day Swim

**Cork Simon Community works in solidarity with men and women who are homeless, offering housing and support in their journey back to independent or supported living. Every night Cork Simon provides accommodation for over 100 people.**

The range of Cork Simon's accommodation services and supports includes:

**Emergency Shelter** - offering safe, secure accommodation and one-to-one support for 44 men and women every night of the year

**Day Centre** - critical support for men and women sleeping rough, offering direct access to a team of doctors, nurses and counsellors

**Outreach Team** - working directly with men and women sleeping rough, linking them into appropriate services and offering care and support

**High-Support Housing** - permanent accommodation for 32 men and women with mental and / or physical health needs at four residential houses across the city

**Housing Plus** - empowering people to return to independent-living in Cork Simon's 25 apartments, in social housing and in the private rented sector, offering a level of support appropriate to each person's needs

**Soup Run** - Cork Simon's original project that continues to be operated year-round by a team of 50 volunteers, offering nourishing food, befriending and support every night to people sleeping rough

**Training** - helping to build the skills and confidence necessary for independent living

Throughout 2006 Cork Simon Community supported 1,347 people across all our projects and services:

- 1,015 people used the Day Centre - up 127% since 2005
- The Outreach Team supported 591 people - up 4% since 2005
- 492 people stayed at the Cork Simon Emergency Shelter – up 17% since 2005
- The Emergency Shelter was full every night - 327 people were turned away because there was no bed available

- 92 people used the Temporary Cold Weather Shelter over a three week period during Christmas / New Year
- The Cork Simon Soup Run supported an average of 31 people per night on the street - up 11% since 2005
- 39 people stayed at Cork Simon's four high-support residential houses
- Cork Simon's Housing Plus team supported 72 people in their journey back to independent living at 25 Cork Simon apartments, in City Council housing and in private rented accommodation

Throughout 2006 there were 455 active volunteers at Cork Simon – up 15% since 2005.

- 32 Fulltime Volunteers from 13 countries were assigned to all projects and services
- Voluntarism in Cork Simon was recognised by a Lord Mayor's Community and Voluntary Award in the Equality & Social Inclusion category.

Throughout 2006 Cork Simon continued to actively participate in the Cork Homeless Forum and in the implementation of the city's Integrated Strategy on Homelessness. Cork Simon also continued to work with a broad range of statutory, voluntary, corporate and community groups, establishing strong partnerships for the creation of viable solutions to the changing needs of people in Cork who are homeless.



# Dublin Simon Community



Sam McGuinness, Director

**Dublin Simon Community works at all stages of homelessness, providing outreach and emergency accommodation for people sleeping rough, providing specialist health and education projects, helping people make the transition out of homelessness and by supporting people in their own home.**



Dublin Simon Hike up Kilimanjaro

- The Rough Sleeper Team service consists of 2 projects run by 12 paid staff and 127 volunteers. Staff work with people sleeping rough throughout the day and evening in the city and the suburbs. The Soup run works all year round in the evenings making contact with people sleeping rough.
- The Emergency Accommodation on Harcourt Street provides accommodation and support for up to thirty single people. Counselling, group work and a needle exchange service are also provided.
- The Alcohol Treatment Service comprises a Detox Unit, a residential service and a support service run in partnership with the South Western Area Health Authority. Up to 8 men and women access the 21-day programme in the Detox Unit at any one time. The Residential Service supports people post detox over a 12-week period. Two alcohol workers continue to support residents upon leaving the programmes.

- Three long-term projects provide permanent accommodation for 60 people who have been homeless and need support.
- Resettlement workers support people to move into permanent accommodation. Clients are referred to appropriate accommodation based on their needs
- Our Transitional House provides self-contained accommodation for 15 people. Clients stay for a fixed period of time before moving to their own independent accommodation.
- Our Tenancy Sustainment runs in partnership with Dublin City Council and aims to prevent people from becoming homeless by early intervention to help identify their needs and link people to appropriate services.
- The Learning and Development project delivers a FÁS supported initiative offering skills training to 15 people at any one time.

Our projects are run by approximately 120 staff and more than 250 volunteers. In 2006 we worked with nearly 2000 people and about 600 at any one time. 53% of the people who use our services are between the ages of 25-44, and 60% are male. Our emergency shelter operates at 98% capacity and our other services as approximately 93% capacity.

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# Dundalk Simon Community



Niall Mulligan, Director

**Dundalk Simon Community offers a range of options to people who are experiencing homelessness; from the Gatehouse Project which provides accommodation for up to seven rough sleepers nightly to Sunnyside House which offers emergency accommodation for up to 25 people to our day centre in Seatown House.**

2007 has been an extremely busy year for Dundalk Simon. Our residential services have undergone a major refurbishment as has our Shop. We have continued to provide high quality, open and responsive services to people in the area who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. In July we commenced our new prevention service which is now playing a vital role in supporting people from becoming homeless in the first place.

Dundalk Simon Community has 39 staff and 54 volunteers (both full and part time), providing services to approximately 220 people. In the past year 33 people have been supported to get new or better homes, over 180 people have been provided with emergency accommodation and over 60 people have been supported to maintain their tenancies. Priorities for the year ahead include the continued implementation of our strategic plan, developing our fundraising strategy, strengthening our emergency accommodation provision and the delivery of more move-on supported housing options.



Launch of the Dundalk Simon Photography Exhibition

The day centre is the base for the settlement team, outreach prevention service and administration services. It is a focal point for former residents and people who are living in Sunnyside House or the Gatehouse Project and are being supported in their move to independent living.

The Crescent Project, which is run in conjunction with the Heath Services Executive, provides a supported home for four adults with an intellectual disability. This is an innovative project in that it bridges a service gap for people with an intellectual disability who find themselves homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

The Simon Shop in Yorke Street is staffed by part time workers, FÁS employees and volunteers. It provides an essential support service for Dundalk Simon residents and former residents and is an important source of income for the community.



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# Galway Simon Community



Marlene O'Connor, Director

**Galway Simon Community provides a continuum of care and accommodation which supports and empowers people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This is done by providing shared supported accommodation with 24/7 cover; shared supported accommodation with peripatetic support; a residential Resettlement Service and a client specific Tenancy Sustainment service to people who have moved on into their own accommodation. People who move on into their own accommodation do so into Galway Simon Community and Simon Communities of Ireland apartments; City Council tenancies; tenancies with other Housing Associations and into the Private Rented sector.**



Launch of the 'Out of the West' CD in aid of Galway Simon

During 2006 we provided shared supported accommodation to more than 40 people, Resettlement services to 9 people, 6 people moved on into long term tenancies and we provided a Tenancy Sustainment service to more than 30 people. Six additional Galway Simon Community apartments are being planned for 2007. Activity during 2006 also included making preparations for services and facilities in the new Day Centre which we opened in May 2007 together with an extension to one of the shared residential houses to cater for an additional 3 people.

Construction of an additional shared house was completed late in 2006 and this is to provide a home for life for 6 people who have been homeless and living in emergency accommodation for long periods.

Among the additional services we provided in 2006 was a Substance Misuse Councillor for people who use homeless services and we look forward in 2007 to the provision of a Community Mental Health Nurse in the same way.

Arising from our Service Users Forum, which has now been active for 3 years, we set up a Service User Participation Working Group, comprising Service Users, staff and board members, which met on a number of occasions in 2006 to examine meaningful mechanisms for better Service User participation in all aspect of the Community.

We continued to provide and participate in the usual social activities and occasions ranging from a Community Holiday in Mayo, a football team, a Memorial Service and numerous seasonal and social activities.



# Midlands Simon Community



Tony O'Riordain, CEO



Minister Batt O'Keefe at the Launch of the Action Research Report

**Midlands Simon Community works with people who are at risk of or who experience homelessness in counties Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath. One of the highlights of 2007 was the launch by Mr Batt O'Keefe TD, Minister for Housing, Urban Renewal and Developing Areas of the positive evaluation report of the Regional Settlement Service. The report outlines how the Regional Settlement Service, which is an inter-agency approach, was successful in supporting people to move out of homelessness. To date, over 130 referrals have been made to the Service, and 33% of these referrals were families.**

The Service supports people to move out of homelessness by:

- Supporting people to source suitable accommodation
- Assisting people to move into their new homes
- Supporting people to maintain their new homes.

#### Inter-agency Working

Critical to the success of the Midlands Simon Community is the inter-agency partnership with the four local authorities in Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath, the H.S.E. Dublin Mid-Leinster Region. This partnership is illustrated in the protocol agreement that underpins the Regional Settlement Service. The protocol maps out the roles, responsibilities and resource commitments of each agency in the operation of the Regional Settlement Service.

#### Volunteers

Midlands Simon Community is driven by volunteers who are involved in each section of the organisation from the Board of Directors, through to fundraising to service delivery. The Friends of Simon committees in Laois, Offaly and Westmeath contribute to the fight against homelessness through volunteering, campaigning and fundraising.

#### Service User Participation

Midlands Simon Community believes that the people best placed to speak on the issue of homelessness are the people with direct experience. The organisation continues to strive to lead a Service User led organisation and supports the participation of Service Users through the local and National Service User Forum.

#### Future Plans

In 2008, the Midlands Simon Community will continue to develop the Regional Settlement Service, as an effective way of ending homelessness for individuals, couples and families. Midlands Simon Community is also working with the local authorities in the region and the H.S.E. Dublin Mid-Leinster Region to respond to the gaps that still exist in emergency accommodation. 2008, we hope, will see significant advancement in this area of service delivery.



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# South East Simon Community



Chris Anderson, Regional Development Officer



Keyworking with one of our service users

**South East Simon Community works to prevent and address homelessness in the counties of Wexford, Waterford, Carlow, Kilkenny and South Tipperary. Since the establishment of our Community in 2003 we have provided a range of services as a direct response to needs which were identified on the ground. We have pioneered a community based model to addressing homelessness in the South East, with an emphasis on prevention and breaking the cycle of homelessness for individuals and families that end up in such a situation. The interventions we deliver are also consistent with the Government's prioritisation of re-settlement and tenancy sustainment supports to facilitate progression routes out of homelessness.**

2006 was a busy year for South East Simon Community. In total, 164 adults and 134 children experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness used at least one of the five services we deliver:

- Supported advocacy
- Outreach
- Re-settlement
- Tenancy support and
- Supported housing

In 2006 South East Simon Community was also able to support 131 people into secure accommodation using the private rental sector, social housing, local authority housing and Simon Communities of Ireland housing.

Our dedicated team provided 377 supported advocacy, 78 outreach, 1683 re-settlement, 924 tenancy support and 325 supported housing interventions in 2006. Working in partnership with the Simon Communities of Ireland, local authorities and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government we were able to purchase 12 units of good quality accommodation across 3 of our 6 counties. This is an exciting development for us and will allow us to offer real solutions for people who cannot be housed by other services.

A lack of statutory funding to date means we rely heavily on our fundraising activities to generate sufficient income to run our services. We had our first ever parachute jump in September and intend to make this an annual event in the future. Through the public's generosity we raised €119,575 via such fundraising activities and public donations. We continue to work towards securing statutory funding to underpin the essential work that we do. Political support and momentum has gathered pace and we look forward to a secure future.



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# Mid West Simon Community

Mid West Simon Community, covering counties Clare, Limerick and North Tipperary, launched our 3 year Strategic Plan in May 2007. We are currently developing quality units of accommodation in Limerick City for move on accommodation as part of a continuum of care for people homeless and to ensure a pathway from essential emergency accommodation right through to more permanent options, either independent or supported housing depending on peoples' needs.

To date, we have acquired 8 units of accommodation under the CAS scheme for people progression out of homelessness in the Mid West region. There are two supported housing projects that are currently in development, one in North Tipperary and one in Clare, and we will work hard to bring these to fruition over the coming year.

We are working in partnership with all our local Homeless Fora and our future plans are to look at developing settled accommodation and settlement support schemes enabling people to be supported on their journeys out of homelessness.



Sarah Birchett, Regional  
Development Officer, Mid West  
Simon Community



# North West Simon Community

North West Simon Community has a vision that everyone in Donegal, Leitrim and Sligo will have a place that s/he can call home. In its strategic plan, launched in June 2006 by Minister for Agriculture and Food, Mary Coughlan TD, the Community sets as its main priority the establishment of a Settlement and Tenancy Sustainment Support Team to work in each county in the region with the aim of preventing homelessness and adding value to the services being provided by voluntary and statutory agencies in the region. North West Simon Community has made service proposals in each local authority area and negotiations for funding to establish the service are ongoing.

In order to meet existing gaps in provision of long-term housing solutions for people requiring assistance, North West Simon Community has purchased of 7 units of accommodation in Letterkenny under the Capital Assistance Scheme in partnership with the Simon Communities of Ireland. Plans are in place for the purchase of additional units and these should come available in the first quarter of this year for persons on the housing list and who require additional housing supports.

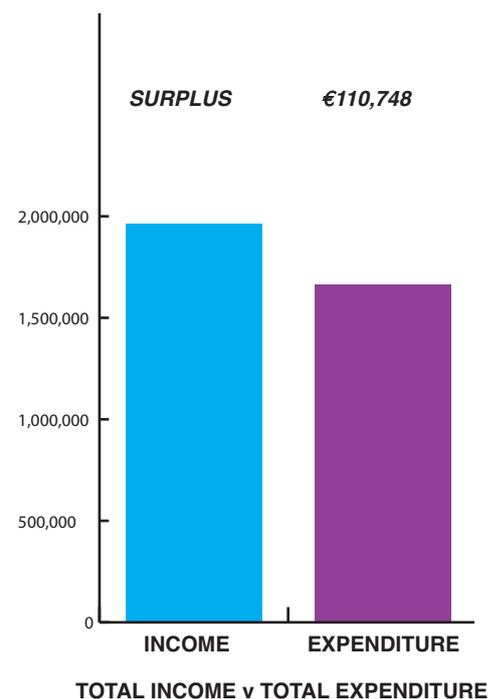
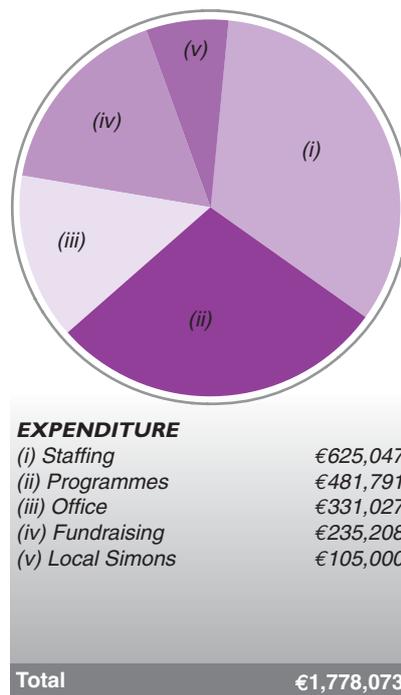
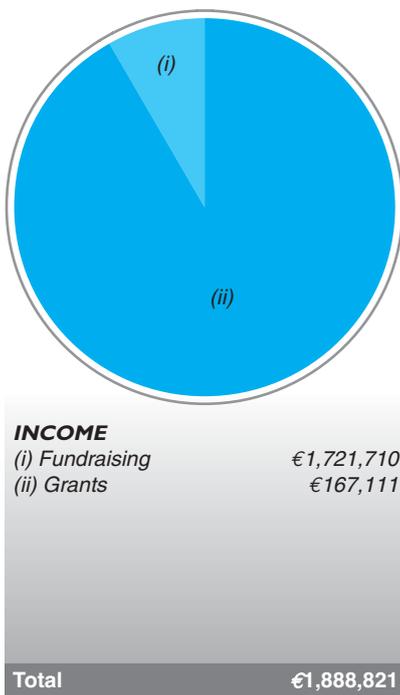


Claire McTiernan, Regional  
Development Officer, North  
West Simon Community

We are currently the designated charity of the Bush Hotel, Carrick-on-Shannon and we intend to build our fundraising and campaigning base further through the establishment of a 'Friends of North West Simon Community' scheme.



# Simon Communities of Ireland National Office Financial Overview 2006



In 2006, Simon Communities of Ireland generated just under €1.9million of income. The vast majority of our funding (over 91%) is sourced from donations or contributions from the general public or our corporate partners. Such generosity in 2006 was much needed, as our income from Government grants reduced by some 27.6% from the year before. Public funding remains essential however given its specific focus on support for a number of key activities delivered by the office.

The cost of the work of the Simon Communities of Ireland national office in 2006 was just under €1.8million. The €235,208 spent on fundraising is justified by the significant sums raised as noted above. Over €100,000 was distributed to our local Communities to help with their operational costs.

We would like to thank everyone – corporate, statutory and individual – who contributed to Simon. We continue to strive to give the best possible value-for-money and make a lasting difference to the lives of the people with whom we work.

Full audited accounts are available on request from the Simon Communities of Ireland National Office.



## How You Can Help

### Donate

Simon relies heavily on the generosity of the public and our corporate partners to provide services to people experiencing homelessness. There are a number of ways that you can help Simon including:

- **Online** - By donating at [www.simon.ie](http://www.simon.ie)
- **By Post** - Donations can be sent to Simon Communities of Ireland, 28-30 Exchequer Street, Dublin 2.
- **By Standing Order** - A standing order form is available on [www.simon.ie](http://www.simon.ie) or you can contact your bank directly and provide our bank details as follows:  
*BANK: A.I.B*  
*BRANCH: 100*  
*GRAFTON STREET, DUBLIN 2*  
*SORT CODE: 93 12 33*  
*ACCOUNT NO: 38792094*
- **By Once Off Payment** - You can also make a once off donation to this account at your bank or by internet banking.
- **By Credit/Laser Card** - Please call the fundraising team at (01) 671 1606 with your credit or laser card details and your transaction will be handled in confidence.
- **Leave a Legacy** - Further details on how to name Simon as a beneficiary in your will are provided on [www.simon.ie](http://www.simon.ie).
- **Corporate Social Responsibility Programmes** - If you are a company that would like to discuss ways of creatively working with Simon for our mutual benefit, please contact us.

- **Reclaiming Tax** - If you are a PAYE taxpayer and donate €250 or more a year to us, Simon may be able to reclaim the tax you have paid on your donation - at no additional cost to you. You can print a revenue form online at [www.simon.ie](http://www.simon.ie)

### Volunteer

Simon welcomes both part-time and full-time volunteers. Part-time volunteers work in various roles like on the soup run, fundraising, shop workers, committee members and as befrienders. To volunteer on a part-time basis, please contact your local Simon Community.

Full-time volunteers must be aged over 18 and commit to at least 6 months with Simon working alongside men and women experiencing homelessness. We provide accommodation, supervision, training and a small living allowance. The opportunity facilitates development of many skills both on a practical and professional level and is an ideal opportunity to gain valuable work experience. No formal qualifications are required. However, personal qualities such as compassion, sensitivity, adaptability and a commitment to social justice are most important. If you want to get involved on a full-time basis, contact our Volunteer Coordinator at [volunteering@simoncommunity.com](mailto:volunteering@simoncommunity.com)

### Campaign

Our campaigning mandate is to effect changes in economic and social policy in Ireland that will contribute to the elimination of homelessness and its causes. To achieve this, we need to demonstrate that such an objective is at the forefront of public opinion, and for this we need your help. We ask that you get involved in activities that help influence Government policy on homelessness. You can do this in a number of ways, highlighting the issue of homelessness by writing to your local TD, phoning your local radio talk show or writing to the newspaper, or even just discussing the subject with friends, family and colleagues. You can also sign up to the MakeRoom campaign at [www.makeroom.ie](http://www.makeroom.ie) where you can pledge to end homelessness by 2010.

