



Simon Communities of Ireland

Annual Review 2007

& Calendar 2009

Sponsored by



Ending Homelessness . . . Creating Homes



December 2009

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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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With thanks to
Service users, volunteers and staff of Dublin Simon Community and Dundalk Simon Community

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November 2009

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Simon: A National Response

Denis Doherty, Chair, Simon Communities of Ireland

The Simon Communities of Ireland believes that nobody in modern Ireland should be homeless: certainly no one should ever have to sleep rough. Where people do become homelessness responses must be swift and effective so that this experience is short lived with limited impact in terms of health and general well being. Support to assist people to progress out of homelessness is critical as is the provision of a range of 'move-on' options to meet differing needs and circumstances. No two people who experience homelessness are the same, have had the same life experiences or have the same needs. They all know what it feels like to live on the margins of society feeling vulnerable and alone. Therefore, responses must be tailor made to meet individuals 'where they are at' and to offer appropriate, lasting solutions.

The Simon Communities have been providing such services to people who are homeless since 1969 and as much as Ireland has changed during this time there have also been significant changes in terms of the people who experience homelessness and their needs. We have always striven to work with those most in need and on the edges of society who have few other supports or options available to them. Therefore, we are constantly reflecting on what we do and how we do it, and adapting accordingly to ensure we are providing effective solutions, while respecting the dignity and individuality of the people who use our services.

Contrary to popular beliefs, homelessness is not confined to our cities and urban centres and the importance of offering services to people, where possible, in their locality or region where they may have existing social networks and supports has become increasingly clear. Thus, in an effort to offer these essential, localised services

there are now eight Communities throughout the State; with the long established Simon Communities in Cork, Dublin, Dundalk and Galway being joined by newer Communities serving the Midlands, Mid West, North West and the South East. The services offered by Simon include: emergency shelters and outreach; day centres and ancillary support; drug/alcohol treatment and support; transitional accommodation and long-term supported housing; tenancy sustainment and settlement services: training and employment projects. In addition, the National Office performs a coordinating role in terms of campaigning in the areas of housing/homeless policy and the wider poverty and social inclusion agenda; best practice in service delivery and working with people who are homeless; and in the area of full time volunteering promoting excellence and providing accredited training.

This annual review showcases the solutions that work throughout our various Communities and demonstrates the effectiveness of our collective working practices. In 2007 alone we worked with 4,830 people who were either experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Such vital work is, of course, only possible thanks to the generous and varied fundraising support we get from the general public each year. We are also very grateful to our Corporate Partners. The CRH Simon Safety Challenge was launched in 2007 with an ambitious fundraising target of €1 million, whilst EBS and RIAI both entered their 4th year of working with us. Their Independent Living Initiative and the Simon Open Door project have gone from strength to strength. You can see fuller details of our company partnerships in the Fundraising section. A special thank you finally goes to CRH who also supported the production of this Annual Review.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow members of the board for their time, expertise and guidance in supporting the work of the Simon Communities of Ireland throughout the year. The staff of 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. In addition, the enormous contribution of our 45 full-time and over 800 part-time volunteers is greatly appreciated and is at the heart of all we do at Simon. Finally, but most importantly I thank the people who use Simon services throughout the State: that people turn to us at such a vulnerable point in their lives is incredibly humbling and reinforces our faith in the high quality of the services we provide. We strive at all times to do them justice. With such outstanding people throughout our communities, Simon will continue to offer practical solutions to ending homelessness and to be creative and innovative in responding to needs as they arise. By matching our commitment, the Government can ensure that the vision we both share, of ending rough sleeping and long-term homelessness by 2010, is realised.



Denis Doherty, Chair



October 2009

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Realising the Dream - The Governments 2010 Commitment to Ending Rough Sleeping and Long Term Homelessness Draws Ever Nearer

**Patrick Burke, CEO Simon
Communities of Ireland**

This annual review demonstrates the broad spectrum of services and solutions working effectively across the eight local Simon Communities throughout Ireland. In addition, the strength of our collective working, as the Simon Communities of Ireland, is evident in terms of campaigning in the areas of housing/homeless policy and the wider social inclusion agenda; promoting best practice when working with people who are homeless and at risk of homelessness; and in supporting and training the full-time volunteers who work in many of our services.

We in the Simon Communities of Ireland see the impact that homelessness has on people everyday. While there are many different reasons why a person becomes homeless generally the explanation lies in a combination of structural factors (such as poverty or unemployment) and personal factors (such as family breakdown or health issues). What is clear is that once a person becomes homeless, the deterioration in their physical and mental health is both rapid and debilitating. In addition, problematic drug and alcohol use amongst people who are homeless is high. Some people who are homeless have a range of complex (multiple) needs; imagine somebody who is rough sleeping with chronic physical health needs, a mental health problem and also an alcohol problem. Such needs are often interconnected therefore holistic responses are critical to respond to all these needs simultaneously.

Solutions to homelessness are about more than bricks and mortar; they are also about

health and social care. There must be an acknowledgment of the individuality and range of need amongst people who are homeless, and acceptance that we live in a fundamentally unequal society where there will be people who need our support from time to time. This understanding is essential in determining appropriate solutions. Critical are cross departmental, cross-sectoral and interagency responses which place people who are homeless and those at risk of homelessness firmly at their centre offering a range of responses appropriate to need and the support levels required.

Looking to 2009, we are entering a critical phase in terms of the work that we do and in terms of homelessness across Ireland. It is an exciting time and one of great optimism. The New National Adult Homelessness Strategy 'The Way Home' was launched in Aug 2008 within which the Government renewed its commitment to end the need to sleep rough and long term homeless by 2010. These commitments though ambitious are not impossible when matched with the political commitment, adequate resources and the involvement of all key stakeholders.

The current focus is on the Implementation Plan to accompany the Strategy due to be published in late 2008. We in the Simon Communities of Ireland are greatly heartened by the assurances that this Plan will include essential timelines, key performance indicators, funding allocations, monitoring and evaluation criteria and clear departmental responsibility under each of the six strategic aims. Furthermore, we welcome commitments to involve key stakeholders, including voluntary service providers

throughout the development of this Implementation Plan and indeed the implementation of the Strategy as a whole. We believe that voluntary organisations such as the Simon Communities of Ireland have a crucial role to play as service providers, as advocates, both with and for the people who use our services, and as innovators in terms of best practice and service delivery.

We are only too aware of the current fiscal constraints and the financial uncertainties, which the coming years may bring. However, what is certain is that in the current economic climate with increasing unemployment and poverty, both risk factors for homelessness, more people will turn to our services for support, more people will be at risk of homelessness and more people will become homeless. The time to act is now!



Patrick Burke, CEO



September 2009

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Local Communities Activity in 2007

Our Communities make a significant impact in addressing homelessness throughout Ireland and during 2007 our Communities worked with 4,830 service users. This is an increase from the figure of 3,346 that we reported in our 2006 Annual Review. Undoubtedly some of this increase is attributable to the increase in the geographical spread of the Simon Communities across Ireland and the development of existing services. In addition, more formalised systems of data collection and collation have been further developed across the Communities in recent times, which facilitates more complete and accurate reporting. Notwithstanding these factors, this figure represents a significant number of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness across Ireland availing of high quality services offered by the Simon communities including;

- 107 units of emergency accommodation for people experiencing homelessness.
- A residential detoxification programme in Dublin for up to 8 people at any one time.
- 59 units of transitional accommodation where focused programmes of support are delivered leading to progression out of homelessness, representing an increase of 38 units since 2006.
- 181 units of long-term supported accommodation. This is an increase of 40 units from 2006 figures.
- A further 22 units of accommodation were acquired in established areas of operation such as Galway, Clonmel and Waterford but we also acquired our first properties in the new Mid West and North West Simon regions with acquisitions in Limerick and Letterkenny.
- Approximately 800 volunteers gave support to our services, including 45 full time volunteers placed within our Communities during 2007.
- In addition, 5 Simon shops around Ireland generate much needed supplementary income for our services.



August 2009

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What Our Communities Do

The range of services available for people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness across the eight local Simon Communities based throughout the country are outlined below.

Day-Time Support- Our day time services offer support, food and a comfortable friendly environment for people experiencing homelessness during the day, when they often have no other place to go or no one else to turn to. They also provide healthcare access, education and training, counselling and support, information and advice, referral to appropriate services, and social events. A Day and Outreach Team operates in Cork Simon and Day Centres currently operate in Dundalk Simon and Galway Simon. The day centre in Galway opened in May 2007 and 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. The Soup Runs also serve as a point of contact and provide an opportunity to link people, who may not already be in contact with services, into appropriate services and supports. Both Dublin Simon and Cork Simon continue to provide soup runs in their respective cities.

Outreach/Rough Sleeping Teams -We work with people who are sleeping rough and living in squats to ensure they have access to the care and support they need and to facilitate access to accommodation and other appropriate services. A Day and Outreach Team in Cork Simon, a Rough Sleeper Team in Dublin Simon and an Emergency Outreach Service in South East Simon all provide day and night support throughout these cities. In addition, the Dublin Simon Rough Sleeper Team offer a needle exchange service.

Emergency Shelter - We operate a number of emergency shelters around the country that meet the short-term accommodation needs of people experiencing homelessness. This often serves as a first point of contact for people and referrals can be made into appropriate services and supports as required. Emergency shelters are provided in Cork Simon, Dublin Simon and Dundalk Simon.

Specialist Treatment Services - Our specialist drug and alcohol treatment services offer short focused and longer-term residential rehabilitation programmes. Dublin Simon delivers a 21-day residential detoxification programme for up to 8 people

at one time and a Rehabilitation Programme which runs for a three-month period. This is followed up with an Aftercare Programme. A benzodiazepine detoxification pilot programme was also initiated in Dublin Simon during this period. In addition, Cork Simon hosts the HSE Adult Homeless Multi-Disciplinary Team. The team consists of doctors, nurses and counsellors providing specialist physical and mental healthcare for people who are homeless.

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 Cork Simon, Dublin Simon and Galway Simon.

Long-Term Supported Housing - Our long-term supported accommodation services provide a safe, friendly and comfortable environment for those who are unable to live independently in the short or medium term. Long-term supported housing projects are currently operated by Cork Simon, Dublin Simon and Galway Simon. In addition, Dundalk Simon runs a unique long-term supported housing project catering for people with learning disabilities. Mid West Simon began providing supported housing during 2007 and plan to expand this service in 2008 with the appropriate funding provision.

Resettlement and Housing Plus - We offer support services to people moving into permanent housing and assist them to sustain this in the longer-term helping to prevent homelessness re-occurring. Cork Simon's Housing Plus project, Dublin Simon's resettlement service, Galway Simon and Dundalk Simon's tenancy sustainment services and Mid West Simon's 'Start' project all provide ongoing support for people who have progressed into independent living. The Midlands Simon regional settlement service targets those experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath. In addition, 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 Galway Simon delivered early intervention projects to

prevent people from becoming homeless. During 2007, Dundalk Simon established their new Outreach Prevention Service (ASSERT) and South East Simon expanded their Prevention and Tenancy Sustainment service significantly. Midlands Simon's regional settlement service also targets those at risk of homelessness in Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath. Cork Simon's Housing Plus project also has a preventative role working closely with other agencies in Cork to identify and support 'at risk' households. Furthermore, North West Simon Community will commence tenancy sustainment work in Donegal and a shared service in Leitrim/Sligo focusing on people at risk of homelessness during 2008.

Education, Training and Employment Services - We operate projects and deliver supports to facilitate access to education, training and employment opportunities for people experiencing homelessness. Specific initiatives are delivered in Cork Simon and Dublin Simon offering tailor made opportunities and support.

Simon Housing - Housing has been acquired around the country for use by service users ready to progress out of homelessness into independent living. The number of housing units in each Community area are: Cork Simon (27 units), Dundalk Simon (7 units), Galway Simon (10 units), Midlands Simon (6 units), Mid West Simon (8 units), North East Simon (7 units) and South East Simon (23 units).

Service User Participation- The issue of Service User Participation arose throughout many of our Communities during 2007 with many Communities establishing groups or working groups to explore the issue further. This built on the work of the 'National Group for People who use Simon Services', which was established in 2005, (with Galway Simon Service User Group being instrumental in this development). This group continues to meet on a monthly basis producing a Services User newsletter 'Simon Voices' on a regular basis. Some other practical examples of service user participation within Communities includes participation on management boards, input into policy development and the development of a Welcome Pack for new service users.



July 2009

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Some members of The National Office



Simon Communities of Ireland- National Office I

The National Office performs a coordinating and support role in terms of campaigning in the areas of housing/homeless policy and the wider poverty and social inclusion agenda; best practice in service delivery and working with people who are homeless; and in the area of full time volunteering, promoting excellence and providing accredited training. This office is responsible for delivering a series of discrete functions based on a shared service model to maximise cost effectiveness. All activities fall under the strategic aims as outlined in the Simon National Strategy 2006-2009 'Ending Homelessness Creating Homes'.

Campaigning

It is widely acknowledged that structural issues, such as poverty and social exclusion, lie at the root causes of homelessness in Ireland. The vision of ending homelessness cannot be achieved without addressing the systematic causes of homelessness. Therefore campaigning is an important function of the National Office. The solutions to homelessness are multifaceted and require more than bricks and mortar; public health and social care responses are also required. To achieve this the Government must develop and implement a range of appropriate and targeted policies. It is essential that the Simon Communities of Ireland and our local communities as service providers and as advocates seek to influence the approach of Government. We do this via our campaigning activities.

We are represented in all major national policy fora including the Homeless Forum and the National Consultative Committee on Homelessness. We lobby key stakeholders involved in shaping national homeless policy and other policy areas which impact on the lives of people who are homeless e.g. health policy. This allows us to have an influence on the development of Government policy. We follow this up by making submissions where appropriate opportunities arise. In addition, we perform a 'watch-dog' role in terms of the implementation of government policy and bring attention to deficits and time delays between policy development and implementation.

Agreed policy positions are developed across our Communities, 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. To this end we have established an internal 'Policy Development Committee', which has representation from all of our Communities. In addition, we also participate in a range of partnerships and networks with other organisations that share our aims e.g. MakeRoom Alliance together with St Vincent de Paul, Focus Ireland and Threshold; Community Platform; the European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN) and FEANTSA - the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless. We are also committed to evidence based policy making and basing our campaigning on sound evidence. We periodically commission research to inform our understanding of particular issues. Visit the publications sections of www.simon.ie to view the range of publications and submissions from 2007.

Best Practice and Training Coordinator

The work of the Best Practice and Training Coordinator continues to focus on ensuring delivery of a high quality service to service users. A major focus has been in developing and expanding opportunities for service user participation, facilitating service users to have a voice and to influence all aspects of the work of our Communities. A number of our Communities have established user led groups and working groups where staff and service users work together on various issues.

Involving service users is a way of working that, as it becomes more established and develops, could revolutionise the way our services are delivered. The challenge over the coming year will be to ensure opportunities are developed which are relevant to individual service users.

Keyworking and managing outcomes has been another focus of the work over the year. A training module and a policy on 'Keyworking' were developed, underpinned by an empowerment ethos. Working with service users to monitor and understand the changes happening to them as a result of using our services, through managing outcomes, is becoming established in a number of the local Communities. The collective data we receive from this process will tell us so much about our services, where we are successful and where we may need to improve. An additional function performed by this department is the coordination of Garda vetting of relevant staff on behalf of the local Communities.



June 2009

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Simon Communities of Ireland- National Office II

Housing Development

The focus of the National Office Housing Development function over recent years has been to develop a range of self contained permanent homes both for residents moving on from existing Simon Community shelters or transitional housing units. In addition it focuses on direct housing provision for those persons presenting as homeless referred to us by local authorities, who require a home with support to enable them to establish and maintain their tenancies. A number of bespoke specialist units of supported accommodation have also been developed.

During the course of 2007, we acquired a further 22 units of accommodation in established areas of operation such as Galway, Clonmel and Waterford but also acquired our first properties in the new Mid West and North West Simon regions with acquisitions in Limerick and Letterkenny. By the end of 2007 we had a total of 62 properties in ownership or under offer spread across the following counties: Galway, Kilkenny, Limerick, Laois, Louth, South Tipperary, Waterford and Westmeath with funding applications awaiting approval to further expand provision going into 2008.

The financial assistance of EBS Building Society through the Independent Living Initiative continued to be a major contributory factor in enabling us to continue our expansion programme.

Full Time Volunteers 2007

As with previous years, 2007 has proved to be busy with the recruitment of over 45 full time volunteers each spending a minimum of 6 months living and working in our communities. They assist us in delivering a wide range of services across the country. These included 10 volunteers from the European Voluntary Service programme (EVS), which provides a fantastic opportunity for young Europeans to live abroad whilst volunteering. This year our EVS volunteers came from Italy, Germany, France and Denmark. The programme has assisted us with the recruitment of European volunteers for the last 10 years and we look forward to continuing this work.

All of our full time volunteers participated in our training programme, which included an introduction to Boundaries & Confidentiality, Introduction to Mental Health and Addiction and Dealing with challenging behaviour along with many other modules.

In 2007 we entered into negotiations with the Dublin Institute of Technology with a view to accrediting our full time volunteer programme. It will be a great achievement to have the learning that takes place for our volunteers formally recognised with a third level qualification.

Fundraising

We are only able to continue making such a positive impact addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness in Ireland through the generous support of the general public and of our corporate partners. More than 84% of our total funds came from these sources in 2007. We are extremely grateful to all of our supporters who make Simon's vital services possible.

Our Individual Supporters

Throughout 2007 the Simon Communities of Ireland ran a number of appeals asking individuals to dig deep and support our work. Without the continued support from our committed supporters and regular givers we would not be in a position to continue this work.

Our Corporate Supporters

Sincere thanks to the many organisations that have kindly donated in 2007 and have taken on board the difficulties that so many people face who are experiencing, or are at risk of homelessness.

CRH: In 2007 CRH joined forces with the Simon Communities of Ireland and Simon Northern Ireland to roll out an ambitious new charity venture. The building giant has committed to an annual contribution of up to €1 million towards the campaign to end homelessness, whilst also improving safety in their own workplace! For every accident free quarter achieved at any of CRH's company locations across the country, a sum of money is donated to the Simon Community operating in that region. Any location that achieves a full accident-free year will donate an additional 25% bonus payment on top of the four combined quarterly donations. In addition, we are especially delighted that CRH are supporting the production of our Annual Report.



EBS: The EBS'

Independent Living Initiative, launched in 2004, is central to Simon's strategy of supporting people to move out of homelessness for good. There are many people, given the opportunity and appropriate support, whose lives can be transformed. The Independent Living Initiative provides this unique opportunity, permanently breaking the cycle of homelessness. EBS provides the 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. By the end of 2007, 62 new homes had been secured via the Initiative for people who were ready to move-on into an independent living environment. EBS has also provided us with professional, organisational and financial advice and services.



Royal Institute of Architects in Ireland-

Simon Open Door: Sincere thanks are also due to the RIAI for the continuation of our very successful partnership - the Simon Open Door Initiative. Every spring, participating RIAI architects and Practices around Ireland give members of the public an hour's consultation in return for a donation to Simon of €60, generating significant income. All participating Architects gave their time for free and every cent of the €35,235 raised went directly to Simon. Sincere thanks to all participating architects and members of the public who participated. For more information on Simon Open Door this year check out www.simonopendoor.ie.



Standard Life: We are currently working on partnership plans with Standard Life and are looking forward to a very successful partnership in 2008.



House of Cards

For ten years now, Irish companies and many of Ireland's leading individuals have been contributing to the Simon "House of Cards" Appeal. The money raised helped us to offer friendly support and shelter to thousands of people experiencing homelessness across Ireland. The House of Cards appeal raised €717,000 for Simon's vital services in 2007.



May 2009

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Cork Simon Community



Colette Kelleher,
CEO of Cork Simon Community



Cork Simon Resident

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 almost 120 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 Services and Outreach Team - critical to people sleeping rough, offering direct access to a team of doctors, nurses and counselors.

High-Support Housing – Long-term accommodation for 44 people with a high level of health support needs at five residential houses across the city.

Housing Plus - empowering people to return to independent-living in Cork Simon's 25 apartments, in social housing and 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 2007 Cork Simon supported 1,421 people – up 6% on the previous year

- The Outreach Team supported 507 people.
- 447 people stayed at the Cork Simon Emergency Shelter, which was full every night.
- The Cork Simon Soup Run supported an average of 25 people per night.
- 38 people stayed at Cork Simon's four high support residential houses.
- Cork Simon's Housing Plus team supported 88 people in their journey back to independent living.
- Throughout 2007 there were over 600 active volunteers at Cork Simon and 32 full time Volunteers from 13 countries.
- Cork Simon secured the national FÁS Excellence Through People standard for Human Resource Management.

Throughout 2007 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.





April 2009

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Dublin Simon Community



Sam McGuinness
CEO OF Dublin Simon Community



Tony O'Gorman beside some of his exhibits in the Dublin Simon Photo Exhibition

Dublin Simon Community continued to address the many complex needs of those seeking our services during 2007. Overall, 491 people accessed our supported and emergency accommodation and drug and alcohol services. A further 837 individuals accessed the services of our Rough Sleeper Team, and our recently launched Tenancy Sustainment Team worked with 231 tenants. The Resettlement Team worked with 183 people to access more permanent accommodation.

While providing the first point of contact for many who find themselves homeless, 2007 was also a year when Dublin Simon supported significant numbers of people out of homelessness. Preventative measures were also in place with our Tenancy Sustainment team to assist many families and individuals maintain their homes. A number of other service developments throughout the year include:

- The Dublin Simon Outreach Service was re-launched as Dublin Simon Rough Sleeper Team, providing services to those rough sleeping, with the aim of supporting the move out of homelessness.

- A Needle Exchange Programme targeting rough sleepers was piloted with the HSE. The service offers advice on safer injecting practices, needle packs, and referral into services.
- During 2007 the Learning and Development Service was expanded providing a framework of learning and development for service users including living skills, meaningful activity and literacy/numeracy classes.
- Dublin Simon works with service users who have drug and/or alcohol issues supporting them to stabilise their use and to move out of homelessness.
- The new Stabilisation Unit focusing on harm reduction in our Emergency Shelter helps prepare residents to access our own detoxification programme.
- Dublin Simon Alcohol Detoxification Unit continued to support service users experiencing problematic drug and alcohol use. A benzodiazepine detoxification pilot was initiated half way through 2007.
- Service User participation: Staff engaged in training to enhance service user participation with assistance from UK organisation, Groundswell. The outcome was the establishment of Service User's Support Service (SUSS), which continues to meet on a fortnightly basis to progress this work.



March 2009

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Dundalk Simon Community



Niall Mulligan, CEO
of Dundalk Simon Community



Launch of the Dundalk Simon
Photography Exhibition

Dundalk Simon Community offers a range of options to people who are experiencing homelessness. Operating a 'continuum of care' approach which aims to meet the rights and needs of all service users accessing all parts of the service. The range of services begins with outreach prevention which is supported by emergency accommodation, a day centre, a settlement service, supported housing and move on independent accommodation.

The Day Centre is the base for the settlement team, outreach prevention and administration service. It is a focal point for former residents and people who are living in our emergency accommodation (Community House - 25 beds, and the Gatehouse Project - 7 bed night shelter).

The Crescent Project provides a supported home for four adults with an intellectual disability. This is an innovative project that 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 service for residents and former residents and is a vital source of income.

2007 has been extremely busy. We continued to provide high quality, open and responsive services to people in the area. We furthered the implementation of our strategy with particular emphasis on keyworking and careplanning, staff training, fundraising, internal audit and evaluation, research, service user participation and governance. We began to explore the process of adopting a Human Rights Based Approach to our work and have now mapped out a number of steps that will support us in achieving this aim by January 2010.

Dundalk Simon Community has 39 staff and 54 volunteers, providing services to 290 plus people. Last year 37 people were supported to get new or better homes, 189 people accessed our emergency accommodation and 67 people were supported in their tenancies. Priorities for 2008 include the completion of our strategic plan, developing our fundraising strategy, strengthening staff capacity and skills, the delivery of more move-on supported housing options and the continuation of the process towards becoming a Human Rights Based organisation.





February 2009

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Galway Simon Community



**Marlene O'Connor, CEO
of Galway Simon Community**



**Sile McNicoll with her olympic
medals**

Galway Simon Community began providing Day Centre Services in May 2007. This services is available 6 days per week and provides access to emergency accommodation (including an 'out of hours' emergency accommodation service), family support services, tenancy sustainment and food and hygiene facilities together with a range of information and advice across a wide number of areas. In addition, it provides an addiction counselling clinic and access to alternative therapies.

The Day Centre had 2931 visits during the year from people from 45 different countries. During the same period services were provided to 91 families with a total 222 children. This being a new service there are no comparable figures for 2006.

Meanwhile, we extended one of the shared residential houses to provide accommodation for an additional 3 people and opened another shared residential house to provide accommodation for 6 men who had been living long term in emergency accommodation.

During 2007

- Sixty people were provided with shared supported accommodation during the year. This is reflective of an increase of 15% in the number of place available.
- The Residential Resettlement Service provided accommodation and support to 8 people. This the same number as 2006 because of the number of places available.
- A tenancy sustainment service was provided to 37 people. This is an increase of 16% from 2006 and is reflective of the progress of the individuals concerned and the greater number of move on accommodation options which became available.

The Service Users' Group and the Service User Participation Working Group continued to meet to develop ways of progressing meaningful participation in all aspects of the Community.

Things were also active on the social side with a Community holiday in Mayo for more than 40 people, the Community BBQ, table quiz, a christmas party for more than 100 people, a children's christmas party, football (both playing and watching), bowling, day trips, a memorial service and many more events.

As part of our advocacy and social policy work Galway Simon Community are active participants in the Homeless Forum, the Community Forum, Voluntary Homeless Services and many other organisations both locally and nationally.



January 2009

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Midlands Simon Community



Tony O'Riordain,
CEO Midlands Simon Community



**Simon Run in aid of
Midlands Simon Community**

Since September 2005 Midlands Simon Community has been supporting individuals, couples and families in the counties of Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath who are at risk of, or who are experiencing homelessness, to move out of homelessness and into a permanent home of their own.

Midlands Simon Community provides a Regional Settlement Service across the region. In 2008 the organisation aims to open a new emergency service in Athlone. The combination of services will allow us to meet the needs of our Service Users by:

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

To date Midlands Simon Community has received over 240 referrals to our services. This represents over 400 people including children.

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. The Midlands Simon Community is active member of the 4 homeless forums in Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath and Tony O'Riordan (C.E.O Midlands Simon Community) is currently the Chairperson of the Regional Adult Homelessness Inter Agency Forum.

Volunteers

Volunteers are involved in each section of the organisation and are vital to our success. The "Friends of Simon" committees in Laois, Offaly, Westmeath and now Longford are significantly contributing to the fight against homelessness throughout the Midlands region.

Service User Participation

Midlands Simon Community continues to strive towards being a Service User led organisation and supports and encourages the participation of Service Users through both the Local and National Service User Forum.

Future Plans

In 2008, the Midlands Simon Community will continue to develop services that are an effective ways of responding to homelessness. In addition, we are committed to continuing to work with statutory and other service providers, service users, volunteers, and all our partners in the wider community to achieve our vision of ending homelessness.



South East Simon Community



Chris Anderson, South East Simon Community Regional Development Officer



Every penny counts 2008 and parachute jump 2008

South East Simon Community works to prevent homelessness occurring and to address homelessness in Counties Carlow, Kilkenny, South Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford. Our services directly respond to the identified needs on the ground in our region and sit within the framework of government policy. South East Simon works in partnership with our service users to prevent homelessness occurring in the first instance and where homelessness has occurred to assist the people to move out of homelessness and into a home of their own as quickly as possible. We do this in partnership with our national office, our volunteers and other agencies across the region. Mostly we do this in partnership with the public whose generosity makes our work possible.

In 2007 we worked with 112 men, 154 women and 276 children across the region who accessed the following range of services.

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

Of those we worked with, 69% were supported to move into homes of their own. We prevented homelessness occurring with 15% of the people we worked with through our supported advocacy service. We helped to re-settle 65 men, women and children across the region, and we provided outreach supports to 11 people sleeping without shelter.

2007 was an exciting year for our small community. The worry about adequate funding is ever present but this was a year of great progress for us too. ESB ElectricAid Ireland funding made a specific re-settlement service possible in Kilkenny which will finish in 2008. We secured our first statutory funding with South Tipperary County Council for an Outreach Tenancy Sustainment service across Carrick-on-Suir, Clonmel, Cahir and Tipperary Town.

Our volunteer numbers increased and we undertook our second annual parachute jump with 16 people taking the plunge and helping us to raise €8,000.

The hard work will continue in 2008. Ensuring our financial future is a priority for everyone in our community. We have seen time and time again that the model that we use works and is both cost effective and person centred.

Mid West Simon Community



Sarah Birchett, Mid West Simon Community Business Development Manager



Fundraising for the Mid West Simon Community

Mid West Simon Community launched in May 2007. We operate in counties Clare, Limerick and North Tipperary and have been actively establishing ourselves in 2007. We are a Housing Association registered with the DOEHLG and our 'START' – Tenancy Sustainment programme in Limerick City provides permanent accommodation with tenancy supports. We currently have 7 apartments and one 3 bed house and a further 8 units are being planned for the future.

We operate and manage a supported housing project in Thurles, County Tipperary, where we are currently providing services to 7 people. We are hoping to expand our service provision capacity to 13 people and to employ 6 project staff by early next year. The second stage of development providing up to 30 units of permanent accommodation is being planned. This is dependant on capital assistance funding.

We work in partnership with all our local authorities, the HSE and our counties' Homeless Forums. In addition, we have submitted business plans for a mixed development of permanent housing in County Clare and a shared house to provide a home for life for up to 10 people in County Limerick.

We are currently working on meaningful mechanisms for effective Service User Participation and are developing a Service User Participation Group to inform our process in creating our Service Users Forum. We are just beginning producing a service users newsletter.

We have a staff team of 4 and are hoping to expand with 5 more over the coming months; our focus is on capacity building. We are delighted to welcome 2 European Voluntary Service volunteers who will be working with us in our Tipperary project for the year. We are also delighted to have 10 part time volunteers and 8 board members as well as a number of other volunteers who have been happy to join us in event planning and delivery.

We have had fantastic support from our regular donors, our corporate sponsors and volunteers. This has helped us participate in events from running the Dublin Women's Mini Marathon; the Limerick Women's Mini Marathon and the 'Hell of the West' Triathlon, quiz nights and flag days to planning and producing our events for Simon Week 2008 and in planning exciting events for next year.



North West Simon Community



Claire McTiernan, North West Simon Community Regional Development Officer

North West Simon Community works to prevent people from becoming homeless in counties Donegal, Leitrim and Sligo. The organisation also works to develop and facilitate services that respond to individual needs and enable people to live in their own home. This is done in partnership with the voluntary and statutory agencies in the region.

Looking forward to 2008 we plan to:

- Pilot a Tenancy Sustainment Service aiming to work with tenants referred through the local authorities who are finding their tenancy particularly challenging and work through the issues with the tenant and their families that are contributing to their difficulties.
- Complete the purchase of our long-term housing in Letterkenny. This initiative is aimed at providing safe, comfortable, secure accommodation with some supports, where required, for 7 tenants. There remains a need for permanent housing for vulnerable people on the housing list and we will continue to source and purchase suitable housing in the region where possible.
- In addition, we will continue to work with the Local Authorities to ensure that the needs of people who experience homelessness in the region are prioritised. Key to this is re-establishment of the homeless fora in each county in the region. We look forward to progressing further initiatives under the auspices of the New Homeless strategy during the year particularly in the area of Settlement.

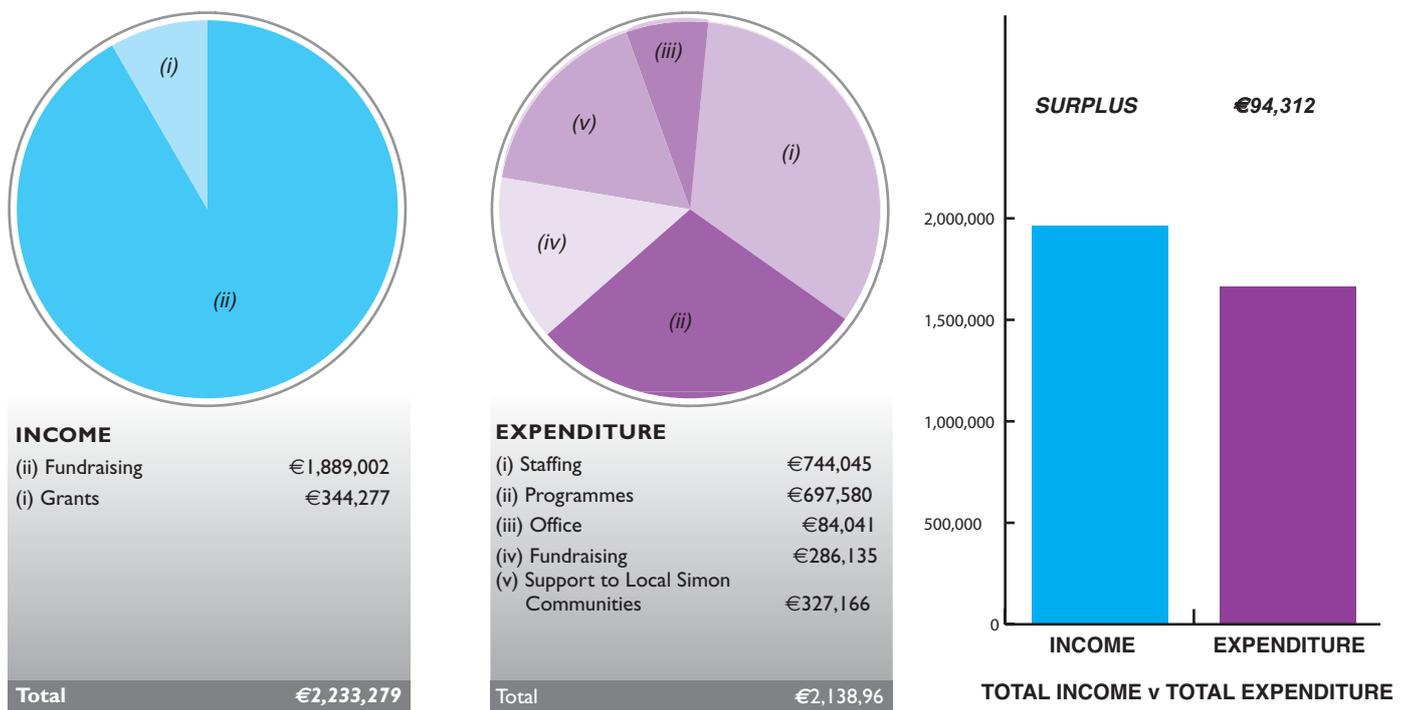


Local Business Woman Rosemary Danaher Supporting North West Simon Community

2007 saw us continuing to build our relationship with local statutory and voluntary service providers working with people who are homeless and at risk of homelessness in the region. Tenancy sustainment is an important element of the range of services from emergency accommodation, supported housing, transitional housing, settlement services and permanent housing necessary for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. We continued to receive tremendous support from donors throughout the region. We wish to acknowledge in particular The Bush Hotel, Carrick-on-Shannon, where we were the designated charity for 2007, and the Mayor of Sligo for 2007, Mr Tom Mc Sharry, who made a generous donation to the organisation from the proceeds of the Mayor's Ball.



Simon Communities of Ireland National Office Financial Overview 2007



In 2007, Simon Communities of Ireland generated just over €2.2 million of income. The vast majority of our funding (over 84%) is sourced from donations or contributions from the general public or our corporate partners. Public funding remains essential to support a number of key activities delivered by the National office.

The cost of the work of the Simon Communities of Ireland national office in 2007 was just over €2.1 million. Included in expenditure is €327,166 which was distributed to our local Communities to help with their operational costs.

We would like to thank everyone – corporate, statutory and individuals – 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. In addition, we would like to thank the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Department of Community, Rural and Gealteacht Affairs for their generous support throughout the year.

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



How You Can Help

Making a donation to the Simon Communities of Ireland

The crucial work The Simon Communities of Ireland is only possible through the generosity of the general public and our corporate partners. If you too would like to help in the fight to end homelessness in Ireland there are a number of ways that you can help Simon including:

Online - By donating at www.simon.ie

By Post - Donations can be sent to Simon Communities of Ireland, 28-30 Exchequer Street, Dublin 2.

By phone - 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.

Become a Regular Giver

By Standing Order - A standing order form is available on 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

A Gift in Your Will Could Change Lives

Leave a Legacy – Further details on how to name Simon as a beneficiary in your will are provided on www.simon.ie or contact the Fundraising Team.

How could your company support the work of Simon?

Company partnerships – there are endless ways that a company can support Simon. Contact to discuss tailoring our projects and initiatives to match your company's interests and needs.

Tax Effective Giving

Reclaiming Tax - At present under government legislation, the Simon Communities of Ireland can claim tax back on all donations over €250. If you are a PAYE taxpayer and donate €250 or more a year to us, we may be able to reclaim 69% of the tax you have paid at no additional cost to you. You must be paying the high rate of tax for this to apply. Please be assured that the scheme is confidential and only your name, tax relief number and amount donated are given to the revenue authorities. You can print a revenue form online at www.simon.ie or contact the Fundraising Team.

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 a full time placement for at least 6 months working alongside our paid staff in a variety of projects across our communities. We provide accommodation, supervision, training and a small living allowance. This opportunity facilitates development of many skills both on a practical and professional level and is an ideal opportunity to gain valuable work experience.

We also offer our full time volunteers the opportunity of gaining a third level qualification as all now take part in our Certificate Programme in partnership with the DIT so you not only assist us in our work but you also gain a practical qualification.

If you want to find out more or get involved, contact our Volunteer Coordinator at volunteering@simoncommunity.com

Campaign

Our campaigning mandate is to affect changes in social and economic policy in Ireland that will contribute to the elimination of homelessness and its causes. To achieve this, we need to demonstrate this is an aim shared across Irish society, and for this we need your help. We ask that you get involved in activities to 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 where you can pledge to end homelessness by 2010.

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Volunteer Coordinator
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