



# Annual Report 2015



## About Simon Community

The Simon Communities in Ireland are a network of eight regionally based independent Simon Communities based in Cork, Dublin, Dundalk, Galway, the Midlands, the Mid West, the North West and the South East that share common values and ethos in tackling all forms of homelessness throughout Ireland, supported by a National Office.

Whatever the issue, for as long as we are needed, Simon's door is always open.

For more information please log on to [www.simon.ie](http://www.simon.ie)

### Services range from:

- **Housing provision, tenancy sustainment & settlement services, housing advice & information services** helping people to make the move out of homelessness & working with households at risk;
- **Specialist health & treatment services** addressing some of the issues which may have contributed to homelessness occurring or may be a consequence;
- **Emergency accommodation & support** providing people with a place of welcome, warmth & safety;
- **Soup runs & rough sleeper teams** who are often the first point of contact for people sleeping rough.

Supported by:



**An Roinn Tithíochta, Pleanála,  
Pobail agus Rialtais Áitiúil**  
Department of Housing, Planning,  
Community and Local Government

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## A Message from our Chair

2015 was a year that saw the homeless and housing crisis escalate further with the numbers in emergency accommodation increasing month after month, social housing at a virtual standstill with over 100,000 people on the housing waiting list and rents continuing their upward spiral. In the Simon Communities, our key focus is to work with people to address their immediate issues while also supporting them to plan for their future. At the time of writing, nearly 7,000 people are trapped in emergency accommodation; most of them have no place to go.



In 2015, the Simon Communities worked with over 8,300 people around the country. For over 47 years the Simon Communities have maintained a proud tradition of not only providing much needed services and housing for thousands of people experiencing the trauma and stress of homelessness, but also campaigning to make sure the State recognises this injustice and responds with more effective policies and appropriate legislation. Sadly, the numbers of people turning to us for help have increased significantly over the last few years; however we are facing these challenges head on, working with all of our partners across the sector.

I would like to thank all the people who use our services around the country, their courage and tenacity encourages us to do more and better each and every day. To all of the staff and volunteers across the eight local Simon Communities we could not continue to do what we do without your hard work and dedication. I would also like to thank the Board of the Simon Communities of Ireland for their guidance and support and to acknowledge the excellent work and commitment of the team in National Office over the last year.

On behalf of the people we work with, our staff and volunteers, we would like to thank our statutory funders, loyal donors and all our supporters for their generosity this year. Across the country, with you by our side, we ensure that whatever the issue, for as long as it is needed, our door is always open.

Dermot Kavanagh  
Chair of the Simon Communities of Ireland

## A Message from our Head of National Office

As the homelessness and housing crisis continues, the Simon Communities have seen increased pressure on our services across the country. We have risen to the challenges of this crisis by continuing to provide high quality services and meeting the needs of people experiencing and at risk of homelessness.

Our work in the National Office, focuses on policy, communications and campaigning; national fundraising partnerships; and best practice and training. Some of the key moments you will see highlighted in our review are *Simon Week*, the National Client Festival and the RIAI *Simon Open Door* fundraising campaign.

The Simon Communities of Ireland is committed to openness and transparency both within the organisation and externally with donors, funders, supporters and the public. The Board of directors have put in place a governance policy manual, and have signed up to the Code of Practice for Good Governance of Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations in Ireland. We adhere to the statement of guiding principles for fundraising and we are registered with the Charity Regulatory Authority.



In the area of fundraising, we are very grateful to all our funders who supported us throughout the year. These included Ulster Bank, PwC Ireland, Global Giving and the RIAI who continue to support us through RIAI *Simon Open Door*. We wish to also thank the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government for their ongoing support through the *Scheme to Support National Organisations*.

Without our 2,300 dedicated volunteers around the country we could not achieve all that we do. Their support is indicative of the strength of support that the Simon Communities enjoy from the general public. And we say a heartfelt thank you! With this support, we can continue to provide the best possible services and support for the people who turn to us for help when they need it most.

We in the Simon Communities are doing all we can to address the ongoing homeless and housing crisis. Preventing homelessness and keeping people in their homes; access to appropriate and affordable housing; and the provision of support in housing are key to ensuring that people can leave homelessness behind for good.

Patrick Quinn  
Head of the Simon Communities of Ireland National Office

## 2016: A Year of Crisis and Change

**Christmas is a special time - a time to be at home; share a meal with family and friends; and hibernate away from the world. But for the almost 7,000 men, women and children living in emergency accommodation it is another painful reminder that they have no home, no place to spend time with family and friends, no place to escape from the harshness of their daily world wondering where they will be next month, next week, and for some, tomorrow.**



2016 saw significant shifts at a policy level but we also saw the housing and homelessness crisis escalate beyond proportions seen before. The year began with the General Election and we, along with most of the country, watched with some frustration as the country waited over 70 days for our elected TDs to form a Government. The most welcome development during this tense period was the formation of the cross party *Oireachas Committee on Housing and Homelessness*. When finally a Government was formed the appointment of a senior Minister for Housing was meaningful, providing the senior voice at the Cabinet table that we had been calling for.

June heralded a very welcome increase in Rent Supplement/Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) limits. This was an issue we highlighted with our series of *Locked Out of the Market* reports which indicated that the gap between market rents and Rent Supplement/Housing Assistance Payments was such that over 95% of properties on the market were unavailable to people in receipt of state housing support. Following the increase in limits, *Locked Out of the Market V*, (August 2016) showed that this had dropped to 80%. However just 20% of properties were available within the limits. Worryingly, there was a fall of 55% in the supply of rental homes since the first *Locked Out* study (May 2015).

In July as numbers in emergency accommodation rose to over 6,500, the *Rebuilding Ireland: Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness* was launched incorporating some of the Oireachtas Committee Report recommendations. The collaborative approach from the Cabinet, led by An Taoiseach Enda Kenny T.D., was significant, committing to ending the trauma of housing insecurity and homelessness for so

many people across Ireland. This is the most comprehensive housing plan ever in the State; bringing together social housing, private housing, the Private Rented Sector and homelessness. For too long these areas have been dealt with separately, missing the point that they are intrinsically linked. Since then detailed plans have been launched including welcome commitments to expand Housing First, provide affordable housing plus support for those who need it most. At the time of writing we await the launch of the Rental Sector Strategy which we hope will provide measures to ensure rent certainty and enhance security of tenure. These reports and plans are necessary, but it is critical to match commitments with urgent implementation, keeping people in their homes and stemming the flow of people into homelessness.

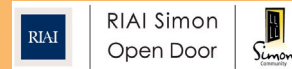
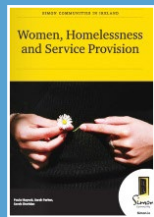
There will be nearly 7,000 people spending Christmas Day trapped in emergency accommodation, many feeling hopeless and forgotten. In our experience people who are homeless and those living in housing insecurity often experience multiple exclusion. Without shelter, safety and security it is almost impossible to function, to participate in society and to get involved in your community. We must let people know they have not been forgotten and left behind. That this is not acceptable for any man, woman or child in Ireland in 2017. In the meantime, the Simon Communities continue our work, which first began over 47 years ago, of providing services and campaigning for those who need us most. With your continued support, we will continue to be there for as long as we are needed.

Niamh Randall  
National Spokesperson

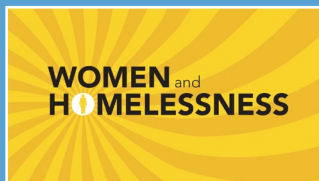
## Key Moments of 2015

Launch of **'Women, Homelessness and Service Provision'**, and **'Women and Homelessness Resource Guide'**.

These publications explored and highlighted the needs of women who are homeless.



The eleventh **RIAI Simon Open Door** took place in May. The national fundraising campaign, a partnership between the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI) and the Simon Communities of Ireland has raised over €500,000 over the last 11 years.



In conjunction with the research on women and homelessness in Ireland, **'Women, Homelessness and Service Provision'** training was delivered to staff nationally on

the gender specific issues connected to women and homelessness and what the needs of the women who access our services are, and how we should meet those needs.

As part of **Simon Week 2015** over 10,000 people signed our Simon Homeless Forecast petition urging the Taoiseach and Tánaiste to put the housing and homeless crisis at the top of the political agenda, helping to change the outlook for people who are homeless in Ireland.

The launch of a series of snapshot studies, **'Locked Out of the Market: The Gap between Rent Supplement/HAP Limits and Market Rents'** which track the disparity between rising rents and Rent Supplement/Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) limits.

### **'My Voice Your Voice Our Voice'**

conference organised and run by the Simon Involvement and Action Group. Over 60 clients from all over Ireland attended this conference organised by, and for, clients.

As part of Simon Week, we held our **Changing the Forecast: Responding to the Housing and Homelessness Crisis** seminar. It was chaired by Today FM's Matt Cooper and opened by Brendan Howlin T.D., Minister for Expenditure and Public Reform.



## A Snapshot of the Services Provided in 2015

Breaking the cycle of homelessness – supporting people to move and stay out of homelessness

**Housing and Housing First Services helped people to make the move out of homelessness**



**1,932**  
People were supported in housing all around the country

- 1,932 people were supported in housing all around the country in 2015 with the support provided being either low, medium or high, depending on need.
- 553 people were supported in Simon Housing.

**Education, Training and Employment Services**

- 911 people accessed Education, Training and Employment Services provided directly by the Simon Communities. Education and training included computer skills, arts & crafts and literacy skills.
- All of our Communities offer referral to external education, training and employment services.

**911**

People accessed Education, Training and Employment Services



**Specialist Treatment and Support Services addressing some of the issues which may have contributed to homelessness occurring or may be a consequence of homelessness**

- 2,384 people accessed Specialist Treatment and Support Services in 2015
- 633 people availed of drug/alcohol treatment services
- 298 people availed of counselling services.
- 1,453 people accessed Multi-Disciplinary Teams and the Mobile Health Unit GP Consultation Service.

**2,384**



People accessed Specialist Treatment and Support Services



People accessed Multi-Disciplinary Teams & the Mobile Health Unit

## A Snapshot of the Services Provided in 2015

### Making contact and offering people a place of welcome, warmth and safety

During 2015 the local Simon Communities worked with 8,297 people including 897 families supporting people to move into housing and providing support in housing.

# 8,297



People worked with in 2015

### Emergency Accommodation, Rough Sleeper Teams and Support and Advice Services are often the first point of contact for people

- Simon Communities provide 161 emergency accommodation beds.
- 1,030 people accessed emergency accommodation over the course of the year.
- 4,134 people accessed Prevention, Early Intervention and Advice services.
- Soup runs were provided 365 days a year in Cork and Dublin



# 1,030

People accessed  
Emergency  
Accommodation

### Supporting the Work of Our Communities

Our work was supported by thousands of amazing supporters, donors and businesses

- More than 2,300 volunteers supported the work of their local Simon Community.
- 10 Simon shops around Ireland generated much needed income for Simon Community services. We thank everyone who supports our shops.
- Our work was supported by thousands of individual donors and many generous corporate supporters.



# 2,300

Volunteers  
supported the  
work of their  
local  
Simon  
Community



# 4,134

People accessed  
Prevention and  
Early Intervention  
Services



Martin King featured as part of the  
Simon Homeless Forecast campaign



## Policy, Research and Communications

The Simon Communities seek to influence Government and key policy and decision makers with our policy, research, campaigning and communications activities. We engage with key stakeholders involved in shaping national homeless and housing policy and other areas which impact on the lives of people who are homeless e.g. health policy, drug and alcohol policy. We are committed to evidence informed policy making and each year we engage in purposeful research to support our policy activities and to influence service delivery across the country. We are represented in all major national policy fora and at key stakeholder meetings including the National Homeless Consultative Committee (NHCC), the Data Subgroup of the NHCC and bilateral Meetings with the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government.

Throughout 2015, we participated in a range of partnerships and networks with other organisations that share our aims including Mental Health Reform, Community & Voluntary Pillar, the European Anti-Poverty Network and the Children's Rights Alliance. We are also active members of the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA) and have been nominated onto the FEANTSA Expert Working Group on Health since 2011.

Our communications work supports our policy and campaigning activities where we aim to increase awareness of homelessness and associated issues as well as the work that the Simon Communities do throughout the country.

**“We must find a way to fix this, not just because it's the right thing to do and because people deserve better, but because the right to housing is one of the most fundamental rights which must be supported and protected.”**

Niamh Randall, National Spokesperson for the Simon Communities to the Irish Independent (December, 2015)



Emma, Galway Simon Community

Throughout the year, we reached thousands of people through significant media coverage; there was over 800 national press articles and over 650 broadcast features in 2015 alone. The role of National Spokesperson is supported from within this office, speaking on national policy and strategy matters.

### Simon Week 2015:



Niamh Randall, Head of Policy and Communications at SCI talking to Joan Collins, T.D.

In September 2015 our annual week of campaigning and awareness raising – Simon Week – took place involving a wide range of activities and events at a national and local level. This year we asked people to sign our Changing the Forecast letter to An Taoiseach and the Tánaiste urging them to deliver on their promise to end long term homelessness. This was a very successful campaign with over 10,000 people signing our letter.

### Reports and Submissions:

This year we published the following key reports -

#### **Women, Homelessness and Services Provision**

Women's experience of homelessness can differ significantly from their male counterparts in terms of the causes of their homelessness, their experiences while homeless and their pathways out of homelessness. For example, women's

homelessness is often more hidden and they often have experienced trauma, abuse and violence as children or in intimate relationships. This report explores some of these themes in the Irish context as well as looking at some of the risk and vulnerability factors more generally and makes recommendations.

#### **Women and Homelessness Resource Guide**

This is a guide for service providers focusing on how the needs of women who are homeless can be addressed. The guide is informed by the findings and learning arising from the *Women, Homelessness and Services Provision* report and international best practice.

#### **Locked Out of the Market**

This series of snapshot reports track the growing gap between rising market rents and the Rent Supplement/Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) limits, which had remained unchanged from June 2013 to June 2016. By tracking the number of properties available to rent within these state support limits in ten regions throughout the country, the studies show just how far these payments are from market rates and how people on state housing supports cannot access the private rental market.

### Policy Submissions:

A number of submissions were made during 2015 including

- Submission to the Pre Budget Forum.
- Simon Communities Pre-Budget Submission.
- Election Manifesto Document.

Visit our website [www.simon.ie](http://www.simon.ie) to view our range of publications and submissions.



Dublin Soup Run Volunteer Claire supporting one of our clients

## Best Practice and Training

Best Practice and Training activity supports the local Communities to deliver the best possible provision to people who use our services. The core work includes promoting, developing and supporting opportunities for client involvement, policy development, developing and delivering training, organising and running seminars and workshops on practice issues, auditing services and researching and disseminating best practice initiatives.

Two of the most exciting successful initiatives in 2015 were the focus on the needs of women in services and the Simon National Client Festival.

### The Needs of Women in Services

In conjunction with the research on women and homelessness in Ireland, *'Women, Homelessness and Service Provision'* training was delivered to staff nationally on the gender specific issues connected to women and homelessness and what the needs of the women who access our services are, and how we should meet those needs. The training was delivered in partnership with St. Mungo's Broadway (UK) who are leaders in this field. The training was very well received and sparked much discussion around the issue. This has developed into an ongoing commitment to further understand the needs of women and develop gender appropriate responses.



Peter and Nicky,  
South East Simon Community

## National Client Festival

Client Involvement thrived again this year. Simon Involvement and Action Group (SIAG) had a productive year, producing two bumper issues of the newsletter *Simon Voices*, written by clients for clients. Articles included advocating for clients to become Board Members in their local Simon Communities and a piece on the growing homelessness crisis.

SIAG also secured funding from EBS Corporate Responsibility Fund to deliver training in Communication Skills which would be put to use in organising and delivering the wonderful National Client Festival that was held in November.

Participants were invited from all the Simon Communities nationally. We invited speakers from Groundswell (UK) to give a presentation and run a seminar. Groundswell is an organisation that involves people with personal experience of homelessness to find the solutions to homelessness. The presentation focused on their successful Peer Health Initiative. We also ran workshops on music and on dance and had a number of stalls offering clients different experiences, from jewellery making to learning circus skills.

What was unique about this event was that it was clients themselves who initiated the application for funding, specified what training they needed and organised and ran the day. It was for clients by clients. Feedback from those who attended was very positive. As one participant said *"The day wasn't long enough, we had to go home!"*

Client involvement is and will continue to be integral to the way we wish to deliver and develop services in the Simon Communities.



Photos courtesy of Galway Simon Community and Dundalk Simon Community



Architect Dermot Bannon with one of our youngest supporters for Simon Open Door 2015

## National Fundraising

The Simon Communities can only continue to make such a difference to the lives of those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness through the generosity of individuals and companies throughout Ireland. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who supported us in 2015 and continue to do so. The Simon Communities of Ireland are fully committed to achieving the standards contained within the ICTR *Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising*.

### Our Individual Supporters:

Without our committed supporters we would not be in a position to continue providing vital services across the country. We would like to thank all our donors and volunteers who have helped in whatever way they could to support the work of Simon.

### Our Corporate Supporters:

We very much rely on the assistance of corporate supporters and partners in a wide range of areas. The Simon Communities would like to sincerely thank each company that donated to us in 2015 as well as their employees who got involved in various fundraising activities. We hope this wonderful support can continue in the future as we work through the challenges we face today. In particular, we would like to thank:

#### Ulster Bank:

Throughout 2015, we benefited from Ulster Bank's ATM Giving Scheme. Staff and Customers of Ulster Bank also supported the Simon Communities through their One Week in June initiative, raising much needed funds by hosting fundraising events in branches across the country.

#### PriceWaterhouseCooper:

The Simon Communities of Ireland benefited from the PwC People Giving Scheme in 2015. This scheme allows PwC staff to make tax-free monthly contributions through payroll deductions to a selected number of charities. The scheme identifies organisations and opportunities that align with their mission, cause areas and commitments. We would sincerely like to thank PwC staff for their commitment and efforts.

#### RIAI Simon Open Door in association with the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI):

In May, the RIAI and the Simon Communities of Ireland completed the 2015 national RIAI Simon Open Door campaign. This campaign has been an annual event in both the RIAI and Simon Communities calendar for ten years. This successful fundraiser involves architects from RIAI donating time and expertise to the public for the benefit of the Simon Communities. We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the RIAI, all the architects and members of the public who signed up to the campaign this year.

### Global Giving:

Global Giving is a charity website that gives non-profits a chance to raise the funds needed to support their projects. We benefited from donations made by the employees of Global Giving's corporate partners throughout 2015. We are thrilled to be part of this innovative online fundraising platform and would like to thank all Global Giving's corporate partners and employees for their continued support.

## Financial Overview 2015

In 2015 the Simon Communities of Ireland generated income of €805,578. This compared to income of €731,347 in 2014. Donations from the general public and from our corporate partners accounted for the vast majority of our income (79.3%). It would be impossible for us to continue the work that we do without such generous support.

During the year to December 2015 a grant was advanced by Pobal, a grant making agency funded by the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government. The amount of grant advanced was €169,175 for the term 1st July 2014 to 30th June 2016. The amount recognised in the financial statements for 2015 is €90,227. The grant programme is the Scheme to Support National Organisations in the Community and Voluntary Sector. The funding is restricted to support a percentage of the salary and overhead costs of two posts within the organization, Best Practice and Training Coordinator and Head of Policy and Communications. A similar grant of €82,192 was received in 2014 in respect of the 2014 Pobal Grant. No capital grants were received from Pobal and the Simon Communities of Ireland is fully tax compliant as per the relevant grant circulars including circular 44/206.

Expenditure in 2015 was €801,968. Included in this expenditure was €54,037 distributed to affiliated Simon Communities to support their operational costs and fundraising costs of €53,163.

This created a net income for the year on our income and expenditure account of €3,610.00

The Head of National Office, Patrick Quinn receives a salary of €85,000. In addition two staff members receive salaries in the range of €60,000 to €70,000. Pension contributions made by the organisation in 2015 amounted to €16,151.

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

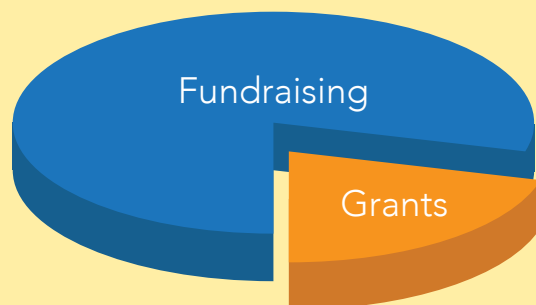


Sam Tsemberis with staff from Midlands Simon Community

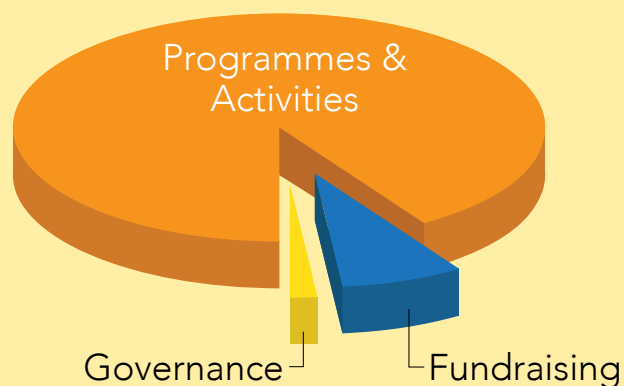


## Financial Overview 2015

### INCOME 2015



### EXPENDITURE 2015



The following extracts are taken from the audited accounts for the year ending 31 December 2015

#### 2015 Annual Report

##### Income

Fundraising	€639,176.00	79.3%
Grants	€166,402.00	20.7%

**Total** €805,578.00

##### Expenditure

Programmes & Activities	€737,260.00	92.0%
Fundraising	€ 53,163.00	6.6%
Governance	€ 11,545.00	1.4%

**Total** €801,968.00

**Net Income** € 3,610.00

The Simon Communities of Ireland are fully committed to achieving the standards contained within the ICTR Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising. The statement was developed by the Irish Charities Tax Research Group and exists to provide charities in Ireland with a Fundraising Code of Practice. For more information please see our independently audited annual accounts, by JPA Brenson Lawlor, available on our website [www.simon.ie](http://www.simon.ie) (National Office)

## How You Can Help

The invaluable work the Simon Community does is only possible through the generosity of the public and our corporate supporters.

If you would like to help tackle homelessness in Ireland there are a number of ways that you can do so.

### Donate Online

Log on to [www.simon.ie](http://www.simon.ie)

### Send us a donation by Post

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

### Donate over the Phone

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

### Leave Simon a Legacy

For further details on how to name the Simon Communities of Ireland as a beneficiary in your will contact the Fundraising Team on (01) 671 1606.

### National Corporate Partnerships

The Simon Communities of Ireland work with a number of corporate partners and there are many ways your company can help and get involved. You can contact us on (01) 671 1606 to discuss tailoring projects and initiatives to match your company's interests and objectives.



Caption here

### Tax Effective Giving

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

Donations from companies qualify the donor for tax relief.



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Charity Number: 8273