

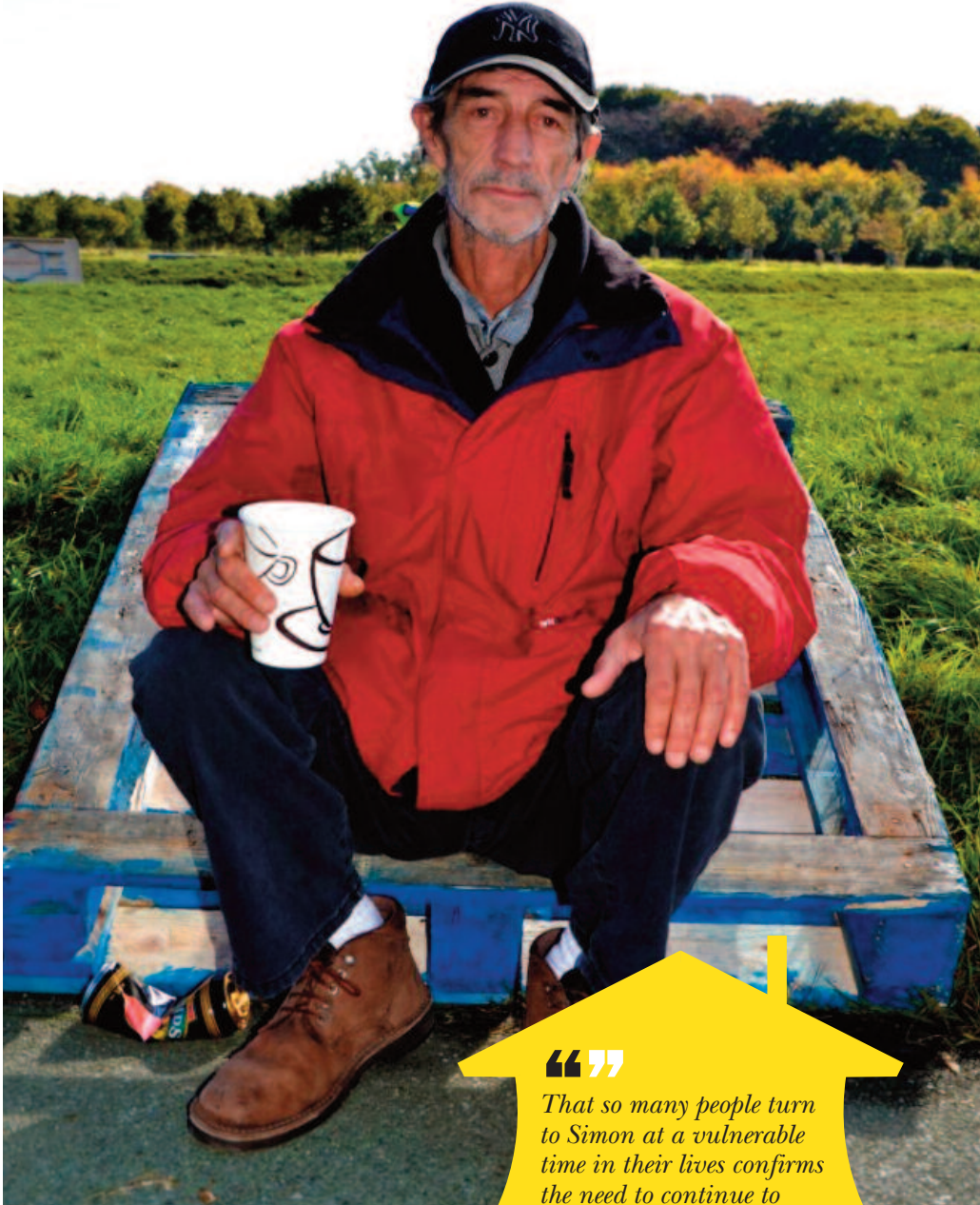
SIMON COMMUNITIES OF IRELAND

Annual Report 2012



Simon
Communities of Ireland

Noel at social outing in the Phoenix Park



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That so many people turn to Simon at a vulnerable time in their lives confirms the need to continue to provide high quality services.

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A message from our Chair



A WORD FROM OUR CHAIR: **BRENDAN RYAN**

In 2012 the Simon Communities experienced another challenging year. During this period of rising demand and decreasing services, we focused on supporting the local Simon Communities to help people to move out of homelessness, while working with people who are currently homeless and those at risk. We continue to look for ways to ensure that we deliver effectively and efficiently on our commitments to those who turn to Simon Services around the country, our Communities, our funders and our supporters.

That so many people turn to Simon at a vulnerable time in their lives confirms the need to continue to provide high quality services. We campaign for the right policies and structures to tackle homelessness in Ireland. We are working closely with the Government and our partners in the statutory and voluntary sectors to help achieve the vision outlined in the Homelessness Policy Statement – ending long term homelessness and the need to sleep rough by 2016, using housing first/led approaches.

However, we cannot allow a good policy - “ending long term homelessness” - to replicate what many feel happened in the mental health

sector where, it has been argued, the laudable objective of reducing long term institutionalisation has been used to reduce inpatient services and inpatient bed numbers. Similarly, housing first/led approaches are entirely laudable. But to use future housing first/ led approaches to justify underfunding of existing overloaded services would be quite scandalous.

The 2016 goal of ending long term homelessness is a challenge to the partnership between voluntary and statutory agencies, which must first be identified by all and then responded to by all. Simon, nationally and locally, always responds to new challenges with imagination and flexibility. All our Communities are under severe financial pressure. Great sacrifices have been made by our staff to enable us to maintain all our frontline services.

We face these challenges with the support of my fellow members of the Board of the Simon Communities of Ireland; their guidance has been invaluable and I wish to thank them. The spirit and commitment of the staff teams in the eight local Simon Communities are at the root of

everything we do; I would like to acknowledge their incredible hard work. And finally, all of this would not be possible without the support of the National Office team and I want to thank them for their work over the last year.

In the area of fundraising, we focused on the corporate side in 2012. We are very grateful to all our funders who gave us incredible support throughout the year. These included American Chamber of Commerce in Ireland (AMCHAM), IBEC TIF Ball, Liberty Insurance, Maxol, Tesco, Ulster Bank and the Royal Institute of Architects in Ireland (RIAI)

We wish to also thank our statutory funders who supported our work over the course of this busy year; in particular, the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and Leargas.

The enormous role played by our volunteers is indicative of the strength of support that the Simon Communities enjoy from the general public. And we say a massive thank you! With this support, we can continue to work towards ending long term homelessness. It is our belief that, with political will, adequate resources and a clear roadmap, this goal can, and must, be achieved by 2016.



Pat Coffey presenting his painting to Minister Jan O'Sullivan, TD with Ciaran Lynch, TD

A message from the Head of National Office



A WORD FROM HEAD OF NATIONAL OFFICE: **PATRICK QUINN**

The prolonged economic crisis means that people have become poorer and more vulnerable across Ireland. As a result more people are at risk of homelessness, more people are becoming homeless and more people are turning to the Simon Communities for support. Unfortunately, the numbers continue to rise. The eight local Simon Communities work with more than 5,000 individuals and families throughout the country who experience – or are at risk of – homelessness every year. There are over 100,000 households currently on the social housing waiting list. Rents continue to increase as the number of properties available, especially in urban areas, decreases. The Simon Communities have risen to the challenges arising from the economic crisis and austerity; continuing to provide high quality services, meeting the needs of some of the most vulnerable people in our society. Services include:

- 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.

- Housing provision, tenancy sustainment & settlement services helping people to make the move out of homelessness.
- Housing advice & information services; working with households at risk and preventing people from becoming homeless.
- Specialist health & treatment services addressing some of the issues which may have contributed to homelessness occurring or may be a consequence.

There are many reasons why a person becomes homeless and in Simon we deal with them all. Our doors are always open.

There has been progress in recent years, particularly with the commitment of the Government to ending long term homelessness using housing first/led approaches and we are very supportive of this. We aim to provide housing as the initial step in addressing all forms of homelessness. Housing is a vital part of the solution; however homelessness is about more than housing. It is also about physical and mental health, it is about drug and alcohol use, and it is often about the complex needs of the person who is homeless.

Therefore, it is critical that health and social care support, based on need, is provided as part of any housing first/led approach. This approach is working in Simon Communities all around the country. However, achieving the 2016 goal requires adequate resources and a plan to guide the way.

A housing first/led approach is clearly dependent on the availability of appropriate housing. We are doing everything possible to address this. We have put extra beds in our

shelters. We are opening up new projects, sometimes with little or no funding from government, and we are developing new ways of providing housing with support for people who are homeless. But Government action is central. Now is the time to address social housing provision and allocations, now is the time to find other ways of ensuring there is housing available to those who need it most, and now is the time to support people to leave homelessness behind for good and ensure they have a place to call home.



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It is critical that health and social care support, based on need, is provided as part of any housing first/led approach.

Showcasing work from art class at The Exchange in Temple Bar

Looking Back at 2012

The Simon Communities provide a range of effective services throughout Ireland, embracing housing first/led approaches, including:

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

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers again played a significant role within the Simon Communities in 2012, with over 3,600 volunteers contributing in a variety of ways all across the country; helping with the planning of events, attendance at events, supporting our befriending services and working directly in services.

course of the week, demonstrating their commitment to tackling homelessness. Once again, there was an excellent turn out at our political briefing event in Leinster House, with many TDs and Senators joining us to learn about homelessness in their constituency and about the challenge of meeting increased demands with limited budgets and resources.

SIMON WEEK 2012

2012 was the 5th year of Simon Week taking place and yet again it was very successful. This year we asked people to 'Take a Step for Simon', an online campaign to raise awareness of homelessness. A step could be anything from volunteering with a local Simon Community or taking part in an event during Simon Week to donating unwanted clothes to a local Simon shop. Many people took their Step over the

BEST PRACTICE

We were delighted that in 2012, clients, staff and volunteers completed our six day 'Introduction to Facilitation Skills' training module. This was the first time that training has been delivered to a mixed group and the outcome was positive. Having the opportunity to share knowledge and learn from, and with, each other was valued by all participants.

FINDING THE WAY HOME REPORT

In light of the Government's commitment to end long term homelessness by implementing a housing-led approach, we commissioned a piece of research to explore the effectiveness of housing-led services in meeting the needs of people who are homeless with support needs in Ireland. The research was undertaken by Nicholas Pleace and Joanne Bretherton of the Centre for Housing Policy in York University.

Some of the recommendations arising from this report are:

- **Effective service mix** - Housing led approaches should be part of the overall service mix to maximise wellbeing, choice and independence within a framework designed to provide a sustainable exit from homelessness.
- **Adequate housing supply** - The supply of affordable and good quality housing is essential to the success of housing led approaches.
- **Housing plus** - The focus has to be on more than just access to housing, it is also important to explore ways to tackle poor health and wellbeing, loneliness and isolation. There must be open ended and ongoing support; this is critical to the effectiveness of housing led approaches and must be planned for and resourced.
- **Harm reduction approaches** - this ethos contributes to the success of housing led approaches and therefore needs to be integrated, as a key part of housing led models.
- **Resources:** Housing led approaches are of value because they can offer real improvements in the lives and wellbeing of people experiencing homelessness. However, housing led approaches must be adequately resourced now if they are to work effectively.
- **Structures and Processes** - we recommend that the National Homelessness Consultative Committee and each Regional Homelessness Fora establishes a 'Housing/Housing Led Subgroup' to explore housing supply, provision of support and joint working.



Soup run volunteers

Highlights from the work of the local Simon Communities



Gay men's chorus choir sing at 24 Hour Carolsathon



During 2012 the **Simon Communities** worked with 5245 people, using housing first/led approaches – supporting people to move into housing and providing support in housing.

■ **Breaking the cycle of homelessness - supporting people to move out of homelessness**

Housing and Settlement services and Support to Live Independently (SLI) services helped people to make the move out of homelessness.

- 320 long term supported accommodation and high support housing units were provided.
 - Access to specialist treatment and support services included health care, drugs counselling, community alcohol detoxification; 375 people accessed Simon Community residential detoxification and rehabilitation services.
 - All of our Communities offer access to education, training and employment services.
-

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

Day Centers, Soup Runs and Rough Sleeper Teams provided by some of our Communities are often the first point of contact for people sleeping rough.

- Throughout the year over 248,731 meals were provided.
- 1551 people accessed emergency accommodation in the Simon Community services over the course of 2012.
- Soup runs operated in Dublin and Cork 365 nights of the year.

■ **Preventing people falling into homelessness all around the country**

All of our Communities worked to prevent homelessness from occurring and re-occurring amongst vulnerable people and those at risk

- Support to Live Independently (SLI) and Settlement services.
 - Housing advice and information services.
-

■ **Supporting the Work of Our Communities**

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

- Over 3,600 volunteers supported the work of their local Simon Community.
 - 8 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.
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Dundalk Simon's Mock Wedding Fundraiser featuring Jennifer (bride), Keith (Elvis) and Collie (Groom)

Campaigning and Policy

Structural issues such as **poverty and social exclusion** lie at the root of homelessness; therefore it is only by addressing both of these causes and their consequences that homelessness can be tackled effectively.

Housing First /Housing Led

Homelessness policy in Ireland is working towards a 'Housing first/led' approach, which aims to provide housing, with the necessary supports, as the initial step in addressing all forms of homelessness. This must be pursued as a matter of urgency. Housing is an important part of the solution but it is also essential to provide support to people once they are in housing. Appropriate health and social care support, based on people's needs, must be provided.

Influencing Decision Making

We work hard to influence the approach of Government, as well as key policy and decision makers, with our Campaigning and Policy activities. 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 and drug and alcohol policy. We support these activities by making submissions when appropriate opportunities arise, engaging in purposeful research and developing policy papers.

We are committed to evidence informed policy, making and base our campaigning on the most reliable information and evidence available.

Working with Key Stakeholders

The Simon Communities of Ireland 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 regular Bi Lateral Meetings with the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.

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; *Mental Health Reform, Community Platform*; the *Advocacy Initiative*; the *European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN)*; and *FEANTSA - the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless*. For the two year period of Oct 2011 to Oct 2013 the Simon Community was the Irish representative on the Assembly Council of FEANTSA, representing all Irish FEANTSA members.

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We are committed to evidence informed policy, making and base our campaigning on the most reliable information and evidence available.

Key SCI Campaigning Moments 2012

There were a number **key campaigning moments** during 2012:

- **Research:** Work continued on research funded through the Age and Opportunity *Get Vocal Programme*, looking at the needs of older people who are homeless as they age and are faced with the issues of serious ill health, death and dying.
- **Homeless Suite of Indicators:** We began compiling our *Homeless Suite of Indicators* which help us to understand and track structural factors, including poverty, unemployment and housing issues, that influence homelessness in Ireland.
- **Research:** Work continued on research funded through the Age and Opportunity *Get Vocal Programme*, looking at the needs of older people who are homeless as they age and are faced with the issues of serious ill health, death and dying.
- **Finding the Way Home:** *Housing led responses and the Homelessness Strategy in Ireland.* We commissioned Nicholas Pleace and Joanne Bretherton from the Centre of Housing and Policy in University of York to undertake a piece of research looking at how housing led approaches may work in Ireland.
- **Census Report on Homelessness:** The Central Statistic Office (CSO) published the first attempt to count the number of people who were homeless in Ireland, as part of the census. We liaised with the CSO in advance of the process of undertaking the count and publication of these results. We welcomed the inclusion of people who are homeless in the census as real progress in relation to the measurement of homelessness in Ireland but also added a note of caution in relation to methodology, highlighting that this was a minimum figure.
- **Key Stakeholder meetings:** Over the course of the year meetings were attended with key stakeholders and decision makers including Minister Jan O'Sullivan TD, Minister of State for Housing and Planning, and her officials at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, the Health Service Executive and members of the opposition.



Minister Kathleen Lynch TD with Dermot Kavanagh, Head of Cork Simon Community

■ **Feansta:** As representatives for Ireland on the Administrative Council of FEANTSA and as a member of the FEANTSA Health Working Group, we contributed to the work of FEANTSA during 2012, in particular a number of European reports, position papers and submissions.

■ **Roundtable Meeting of EU Ministers with Responsibility for Homelessness:** We began working with our European FEANTSA colleagues, the Department for the Environment, Community and Local Government and the Office of the Minister for Housing and Planning, in preparing for this event to take place during the Irish Presidency in 2013.

■ **Simon Week 2012:** In October 2012 our annual week of campaigning and awareness-raising, Simon Week, took place involving a wide range of activities and events taking place nationally and at local level. This year we asked people to 'Take a Step for Simon', an online campaign to raise awareness of homelessness. A step could be anything from volunteering with a local Simon Community or taking part in an event during Simon Week to donating unwanted clothes to local Simon shop.

■ **Finding the Way Home:** As part of Simon Week 2012, we organised a Breakfast Seminar where Nicholas Pleace presented the preliminary findings of *Finding the Way Home* report. This event was opened by Minister for Housing and Planning Jan O'Sullivan TD, with a strong attendance from interest groups and key stakeholders.

■ **Simon Week Political Briefing:** As part of Simon Week 2012, another successful political briefing event was held in Leinster House. Well over 50 members of both houses



Minister Jan O'Sullivan TD with Patrick Quinn Head of National Office & Niamh Randall Head of Policy and Communications, SC1

of the Oireachtas attended and were updated on the work of the Simon Communities in their constituencies and the challenges facing people who are homeless and at risk of homelessness, particularly in the current budgetary context. Many of the attendees took their 'Step for Simon' pledging to prioritise homelessness.

■ **Pre-Budget Submission:** In conjunction with the eight Simon Communities around the country we compiled our 2013 Pre-Budget Submission and liaised with relevant Ministries, officials, members of the opposition and the media.

■ **MakeRoom:** We continued to work with our partners in the MakeRoom Alliance over the course of this year and made a joint submission to the DECLG on Section 10 of Housing Act 1988 'Preventing Homelessness: The Need for Legislative Change'.

Visit our website www.simon.ie to view our range of publications & submissions.

National Fundraising Success

We would like to take this opportunity to **thank all of those who supported us in 2012** and continue to do so, particularly in this difficult financial climate.

The Simon Communities can only continue to make such a difference to the lives of those experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness through the generosity of individuals and companies throughout Ireland.

Our Individual Supporters

Without our committed supporters we would not be in a position to continue providing necessary services across the country. We would like to thank these individuals 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 of Ireland would like to sincerely thank each

company that donated to us in 2012 as well as their employees who got involved in various activities. We hope this wonderful support can continue in the future as we work through the challenges that we face today.

In particular, we would like to thank:

American Chamber of Commerce in Ireland (AMCHAM):

The Simon Communities of Ireland are delighted to be chosen by AMCHAM as their charity partner from December 2012 – December 2013. This charity partnership gives the Simon Communities the opportunity to meet and communicate with Chamber members across the country. We welcome this opportunity to work with AMCHAM.

IBEC TIF Ball:

The Simon Communities of Ireland was selected as the charity for the IBEC TIF Ball. Each year the Telecommunications and Internet Federation host a gala event for representatives in the electronic communications industry. Simon was honoured to participate in the event which raised nearly €25,000. We are sincerely grateful for all of the TIF members' generosity.



We very much rely on the assistance of corporate supporters and partners in a wide range of areas.

Liberty Insurance:

Throughout 2012, Liberty Insurance has been working with the Simon Communities in each of their three offices in Dublin, Cavan and Enniskillen. Staff participated in local community events, such as the Dublin Fun Run and the Slieve Donard Challenge and also held successful toiletry and clothing collections. Their support is thoroughly appreciated.

Maxol:

Maxol has continued their two year partnership with the Simon Communities across the Republic and Northern Ireland. Staff and customers have been supporting the Simon Communities by contributing to coin boxes in each of the locales and by participating in two successful *Suds for Simon* Carwash Campaigns. We are grateful for this partnership.

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 2012 nationwide Simon Open Door campaign. This campaign has been

an annual event in both the RIAI and Simon Communities calendar for eight years running. The success of this campaign would not be possible without the architects from the RIAI donating time and expertise to the public for the benefit of the Simon Communities. We would like to express our gratitude to all the architects and members of the public who took part.

Tesco:

Simon Communities are now in their second year of working with Tesco. The Tesco Clubcard Initiative is ongoing and in 2012 we worked with Tesco preparing for the National bag pack in 2013. We are looking forward to developing this relationship in the coming years.

Ulster Bank:

In October 2012, Ulster Bank became the first bank in Ireland to enable its customers to donate to charities at any of its ATMs across the country. The Simon Communities of Ireland was one of eight charities selected to benefit from their ATM Giving Scheme. We are thrilled to be working with Ulster Bank on their new initiative.



Bobby with Diarmuid Gavin celebrating 'Garden of Hope' project

Best Practice and Training Co-ordinator

Providing Support to the Communities

The role of the Best Practice and Training Coordinator is to support the local Communities in delivering the best possible service provision to people who use our services. The core work includes developing and supporting opportunities for client involvement, policy development, developing and delivering training, organising and delivering seminars and workshops on practice issues, auditing services and researching and disseminating best practice initiatives.

Training

2012 began with a six day 'Introduction to Facilitation Skills' training module being delivered to clients, staff and volunteers. This was the first time that training has been delivered to a mixed group and the feedback was extremely positive. Having the opportunity to share knowledge and learn from and with each other was valued by all participants.

The theme of the national seminar this year was 'Participation and Social Enterprise'. During the meeting the Training Manager for

Social Enterprise & Vocation gave a talk about the experiences of developing social enterprise in St. Mungos' Homeless Service in London. This generated much discussion and exploration of establishing social enterprise initiatives within the Simon Communities.

The Keyworking training module was revised this year to include new evidence based learning. Specifically, this research demonstrates that what people value, and what supports them in changing, is a relationship with their keyworker that involves persistence, respect, intimacy and reliability. As keyworking is seen as core of our work throughout the Simon Communities, much emphasis is put on getting this piece of work right- developing a meaningful relationship between the client and the keyworker.

Client Involvement & Peer Research

Simon Involvement and Action Group (national client led group) had another good year, celebrating their 7th anniversary in May. Three

editions of the newsletter, 'Simon Voices', were produced. These included articles on recovering from mental illness, moving on from homelessness and how to survive Christmas. Other work included contributing a paper to the 11th Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty at the 'Homelessness Rights in the Context of the Crisis' Conference in Brussels and developing a recruitment campaign for new members.

A comprehensive review of the use of the Outcomes Star was undertaken in one of the Communities. As part of the review, clients were involved in peer research. The standout commentary from the review was how positively the Star tool is perceived and how valuable it is in keyworking. The service user feedback is the most positive. The responses indicated that the Star enhances keyworking in different ways, including assisting people to determine where they are in different areas of their lives and where to focus attention and decide on action to be taken.

Financial Overview

In 2012, **Simon Communities of Ireland** generated an income of €935,088.

The vast majority of our funding (76.8%) is sourced from donations or contributions from the general public or our corporate partners. Our public funding remains essential as it supports a number of key activities delivered by the office.

The cost of the work of the Simon Communities of Ireland National Office in 2012 was just over €1.2 million. Included in expenditure is €329,364 which was distributed to our local Communities to help with their services costs.

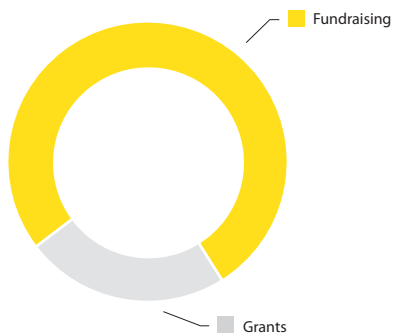
We would like to thank everyone – corporate, statutory and individual supporters – who contributed to Simon. We continue to strive to give the best possible value for money and to make a lasting difference to the lives of the people with whom we work.

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

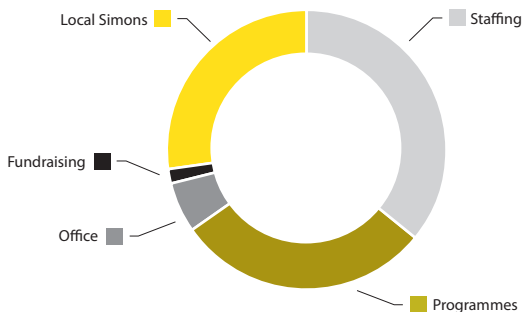
- Phone: 01 671 1606
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	2012
Income	
Fundraising	€718,516
Grants	€216,572
Total	€935,088
Expenditure	
Staffing	€442,920
Programmes	€356,785
Office	€73,284
Fundraising	€20,778
Local Simons	€329,364
Total	€1,223,131
Surplus / Deficit	-€288,043

Income 2012



Expenditure 2012



How You Can Help

The invaluable work Simon 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

■ **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 Laser Card call our fundraising team on (01) 6711606 with your card details and your transaction will be handled in the 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.

■ **Tax Effective Giving**

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

Donations from companies qualify the donor for tax relief.



Jimmy enjoying a social evening



Simon Communities of Ireland

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www.simon.ie

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