

SIMON COMMUNITIES
OF IRELAND

Annual Report 2018



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About Simon Communities

The Simon Communities support over 16,700 men, women and children. We have 50 years of experience providing homeless, housing and treatment services to people facing the trauma and stress of homelessness.

We are a network of independent Communities based in Cork, Dublin, Dundalk, Galway, the Midlands, the Mid West, the North West and the South East, responding to local needs and supported by a National Office in the areas of policy, research, communications and best practice. We share common values and ethos in tackling homelessness and, informed by our grassroots services, we campaign for more effective policies and legislation regionally, nationally and at European level. Whatever the issue, Simon's door is always open for as long as we are needed. For more information, please visit www.simon.ie.

SERVICES INCLUDE:

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

SUPPORTED BY:



A Message from our Chair



DERMOT KAVANAGH
CHAIRPERSON, SIMON COMMUNITIES

The Simon Communities across Ireland have reported that more than 16,700 people received their help and support throughout 2018.

This report sets out the work that Simon undertakes across Ireland to provide housing and wide-ranging supports to the growing numbers of people seeking our help. We are very mindful in our work of the fact that those seeking our help suffer not just a lack of housing but also significant trauma associated

with the experience of homelessness, and we are determined to do all we can to see our numbers fall.

It is clear that the lack of secure, affordable housing continues to be the main driver of this crisis, pushing people into homelessness and preventing people moving out of emergency accommodation.

The provision of sufficient decent and affordable housing is essential to ending the current homelessness crisis. But housing alone is not enough. People who have experienced homelessness often also need a range of social, health, educational and employment supports to put their lives back on track and move on from the trauma of homelessness.

The Simon Communities take great pride in providing all of these supports and in securing more and more homes for those experiencing homelessness. We are very grateful for all the support that we receive from both statutory funders and our generous supporters, which enables us to provide housing, services and campaigning aimed at ending homelessness.

From the very start, Simon has campaigned fearlessly for better policies and services to deliver for all those who are homeless or at the edge of homelessness. Homeless crises are neither normal nor inevitable. They result from policy failures, such as the decision to stop investing in private, social and affordable housing after the last financial crash, or the failure to adequately develop a well-regulated housing rental market, or the long-standing practice of developing inappropriate institutional responses to address pressing social problems.

Each day, the Simon Communities see the remarkable courage and resilience of the people we serve as they strive to keep going despite such failures that make their problems sometimes seem insurmountable. I would like to thank those who use our services for that courage, which inspires us all to keep moving forward.

I would also like to thank all Simon staff and volunteers across Ireland. We would not be here without your skill, experience and dedication.

I also wish to thank the Board and staff team at the Simon Communities of Ireland for their guidance, support and hard work throughout the year. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the work of our outgoing National Spokesperson, Niamh Randall, who moved on from the National Office at the end of 2018 after ten years in the role.

Finally, I want to express our sincere thanks to our statutory funders and all of our supporters for their generosity in 2018. Because of you, the Simon Communities are able to do all we can to address the ongoing homeless and housing crisis. Together we continue to ensure that, for as long as is needed, Simon's door remains always open.



Looking back on 2018



WAYNE STANLEY,
NATIONAL SPOKESPERSON

In June of 2019, I joined Simon as Head of Policy and Communication. To assume this role in such a trusted organisation, doing such important work, is a privilege and a weighty responsibility.

The weight of that responsibility is illustrated by the fact that 2018 saw 16,776 people provided with support by Simon. That is more individuals and families than ever before, a startling 24% increase on 2017. Worryingly, all the indications are that 2019 numbers will exceed 2018.

These increases are shocking, but we are also proud that many of these individuals and families have been prevented from having to enter homeless services with the support of Simon. Simon's door is always open to those who find themselves in need of our services, but we are working for a time when they are more rarely needed. For that vision

to be a reality, we need the State's to see ending homelessness as a realistic and urgent necessity.

2019 marks 50 years since the foundation of the Simon movement in Ireland, and the commitment to ending homelessness has been with Simon from the start. While the 1969 cohort are perhaps best known for their soup run, those student volunteers also had a vision that homelessness in Ireland could be addressed. They were right, and a tremendous amount of positive change has grown from their interventions. However, Ireland in 2019 is a very different place to the Ireland of 1969, and the nature of homelessness has changed.

In the last ten years the pace of that change has quickened, in the early stages of the current crisis, homeless figures were mainly driven by increased family homelessness in the Dublin region. National figures on homelessness show that while to some degree the growth of family homelessness has slowed in the Dublin region, it continues to gather pace in the rest of the country. Meanwhile, we have seen a different trajectory for those without children, with significant increases in the number of homeless adults without accompanying children in the Dublin region. Rural and long-term homelessness are both increasing, along with the phenomenon of 'hidden homelessness'; those forced to stay with family or friends as they have nowhere else to go. We know that the main driver of homelessness is a critical lack of secure affordable accommodation.



But perhaps the most consequential change in the area of homelessness since 1969 is the way in which the State now views its responsibilities with regard to housing. In that time, our policy-makers seem to have lost sight of the critical social function of a house as a home. The UN Special Rapporteur for Adequate Housing, Leilani Farha, has noted the global commodification of property has put having a secure, affordable place to call home out of the reach of too many around the world. Ireland is evidently not immune to these global pressures. To combat them, we have to get to a place where the importance of a home as social and economic infrastructure is understood and acted upon.

In 2018, Simon welcomed Ms Farha to Ireland as part of our work on 'Making the Case for a Right to Housing in Ireland', at which a paper sharing this title was launched. This work is part of the long-running campaign of Simon to ensure that we have a balance in our constitution that will see our home given the same respect as our property. That constitutional balance would give us a legal framework that with the right mix of policy can see social and affordable homes provided by the state where needed. Such a framework would ensure that

those at risk can be diverted from homelessness, and those experiencing homelessness can be responded to with the support they need to address the associated trauma, and to move on quickly.

Simon is committed to pursuing a country where homelessness is rare and short-term. This is not a utopian vision; it is eminently attainable. We draw strength from the support that we receive from the public, and we know that there is real anger and dismay at the housing and homelessness crisis that has gripped our country now for too many years. People are right to be dismayed; this should not be seen as normal but they should also know that public support for those experiencing homelessness will drive the political action we need.

In the meantime, the Simon Communities all around the country will continue our work, providing support and services to over 16,000 people and continuing a proud history of campaigning for change. This report sets out Simon's tireless work to keep individuals and families out of homelessness, and to support people through the trauma of homelessness and into a home. With your continued support, we will be there, our door always open, for as long as people need us.

Key Moments of 2018



RIAI Simon Open Door:

The fifteenth RIAI Simon Open Door took place in May. This national fundraising campaign, a partnership between the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI) and the Simon Communities of Ireland, saw RIAI architects donate their time and expertise by offering an hour long consultation to members of the public, who in turn make a donation to the Simon Community.

Homelessness is Not Normal Campaign:

Almost 20,000 people signed our Homelessness is Not Normal petition as part of the Simon Week 2018 campaign. The idea was to send a strong message to Government that the housing and homelessness crisis is not normal; it is unacceptable. Over 20,000 people signed the Simon Communities petition calling on the Government build social and affordable housing.

The Right to Housing:

In 2018, we published a document titled 'Making the Case for a Right to Housing in Ireland', which outlines the case for a right to housing and examines how we might set about implementing such a right in Ireland. We were pleased to welcome Leilani Farha, UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, to launch the report in Dublin in June 2018.

'What Works: Ending the Housing and Homelessness Crisis':

Our Simon Week seminar featured a range of expert speakers giving their perspectives on potential solutions to the ongoing homelessness and housing crisis. The seminar was chaired by RTÉ's Audrey Carville and opened by journalist and writer Fintan O'Toole.

Locked Out:

We continued our research into the gaps between HAP and Rent Supplement limits and market rates around the country in 2018 with our Locked Out of the Market series of reports. The report series looks at the current state of Ireland's rental market and its effects on the country's most vulnerable people.

Policy Submissions:

A number of key submissions were made during 2018, including the Simon Communities' Pre-Budget Submission on housing and homelessness, and submissions to the Oireachtas Committees on Housing and Homelessness, Education and Skills and the Future of Mental Care. The Simon Communities also made a submission to the Public Consultation on the Personal Possession of Illegal Drugs in 2018.

Snapshot of services provided by the Simon Communities in 2018

DURING 2018, THE LOCAL SIMON COMMUNITIES WORKED WITH:

A total of:



16,776
people

This included:

2,834
families



with

5,331
children



providing the following services:

EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION, ROUGH SLEEPER TEAMS, FOODBANKS, DROP-IN CENTRES AND SOUP RUNS ARE OFTEN THE FIRST POINT OF CONTACT FOR PEOPLE

1,738



People accessed emergency accommodation provided by the Simon Communities over the year.

19,656

Contacts during soup runs provided 365 days a year in Cork and Dublin.



6,380

People accessed food bank services in the Midwest.



Snapshot of services provided by the Simon Communities in 2018

SPECIALIST TREATMENT AND SUPPORT SERVICES ADDRESSING SOME OF THE ISSUES WHICH MAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO HOMELESSNESS OCCURRING OR MAY BE A CONSEQUENCE OF HOMELESSNESS



2,812

People accessed Specialist Treatment and Support Services in 2018.

of these:



1,125

People availed of drug and/or alcohol treatment services.



5,674

There were 5,674 needle exchange contacts.



1,811

Contacts were made with health and specialist supports, such as drug and alcohol treatment, counselling services, GP services, health aftercare supports, and multi-disciplinary teams.

419



...of which 419 were mobile health unit consultations.

Snapshot of services provided by the Simon Communities in 2018

PREVENTION, EARLY INTERVENTION AND ADVICE SERVICES.



5,472

People accessed prevention, early intervention and advice services.

HOUSING AND HOUSING FIRST SERVICES HELPED PEOPLE MAKE THE MOVE OUT OF HOMELESSNESS.



5,263

People were supported in housing all around the country in 2017 with low, medium or high support, depending on need.



1,221

People were supported in Simon Housing.



Snapshot of services provided by the Simon Communities in 2018

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES



827

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 also offer referral to external education, training and employment services.

SUPPORTING THE WORK OF OUR COMMUNITIES



1,982

More than 1,900 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.

Policy, Research and Communications

The Simon Communities of Ireland work to influence Government and key policy and decision makers in shaping national housing and homeless policy, as well as other policy areas which affect the lives of people who are living with homelessness and housing insecurity. We also aim to provide support to our evidence-based policy activities and to influence service delivery across the country by engaging in purposeful research in the areas of homelessness and housing.

In 2018, the Simon Communities of Ireland were represented in major national policy fora and at key stakeholder meetings, including the National Homeless Consultative Committee (NHCC), and bilateral meetings with the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government.

Throughout the year, we participated in a range of partnerships and networks with other organisations that share our aims including the Children's Rights Alliance, Community and Voluntary Pillar, the European Anti-Poverty Network and Mental Health Reform, and the Irish Council for Social Housing. We also continue to be active members of the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA).

Our communications work supports policy and campaigning activities with the aim of raising awareness of the ongoing homelessness and housing crisis in Ireland, and to remind the public of the damage that it continues to cause. Through our media appearances and engagement, we also aim to highlight the proposed policies and legislation that the Simon Communities believe would be effective in improving the lives of those affected by homelessness and housing exclusion. Throughout the year, we reached a large national audience through significant broadcast, print and online media coverage. The role of National Spokesperson is supported from within the National Office, speaking on behalf of all eight Simon Communities on national policy and strategy matters.



Simon Week 2018

Our annual week of campaigning and awareness raising – Simon Week – took place in October 2018, and involved a wide range of activities and events at a national and local level. In 2018 we asked people to support our Homelessness is Not Normal campaign. Thousands of men, women and children are homeless or in fear of losing their home. What is becoming an everyday sight and story must not be normalised, and with the scale of the homelessness and housing crisis, it is more important than ever that we highlight this. The Simon Communities campaign asked people to sign our petition to send a strong message to Government that the housing and homelessness crisis is not normal; it is unacceptable. Almost 20,000 people signed this petition. Our national seminar, 'What Works: Ending the Housing and Homelessness Crisis' also took place as part of Simon Week 2018, and featured a range of expert speakers giving their perspectives on potential solutions to the crisis.



Right to Housing

Part of the Simon Communities' core philosophy is a commitment to the right to housing – the belief that everyone is entitled to live in secure and adequate accommodation, regardless of their background or circumstances. In 2018, we published 'Making the Case for a Right to Housing in Ireland', which outlines the case for a right to housing, compares existing international examples, and examines how we might set about implementing such a right in Ireland. We were pleased to welcome Leilani Farha, UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, to launch the report in June 2018. The Right to Housing will remain a crucial part of the National Office's policy and campaigning work in future.

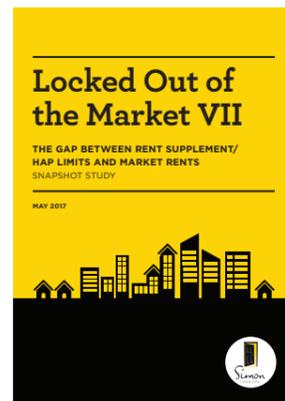
Policy, Research and Communications

Reports Submissions

In 2018, we published the following key reports:



Making the Case for a Right to Housing in Ireland
'Making the Case for a Right to Housing in Ireland' outlines the case for a right to housing, compares existing international examples, and examines how we might set about implementing such a right in Ireland. Through this paper, we hope to contribute to the ongoing conversation on the possible routes to deliver greater protections and obligations with regard to housing and homelessness in Ireland.'



Locked Out of the Market

This series of snapshot reports track the gap between rising market rents and the Rent Supplement / Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) limits. By tracking the number of properties available to rent within these state support limits in eleven regions throughout the country, the studies show just how far these payments are from market rates and how people on state housing supports cannot access the private rental market. We published four Locked Out reports in 2018.

Policy Submissions:

A number of submissions were made during 2018 including:

- 1 Simon Communities Pre-Budget Submission 2019.
- 2 Submission to the Joint Committee on the Future of Mental Health Care.
- 3 Submission to the Joint Committee on Education and Skills.
- 4 Submission to the Public Consultation on the Personal Possession of Illegal Drugs.
- 5 Submission to the Joint Committee on Housing, Planning and Local Government on the Re-Categorisation of Emergency Accommodation in Monthly Homeless Reports.

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.



Organising and running seminars and workshops on practice issues.



Policy development for services.



Auditing services and researching and disseminating best practice initiatives.



Developing and delivering training.

Simon Involvement and Action Group

Simon Involvement and Action Group (SIAG) celebrated its 13th year in 2018. SIAG is a national user led group of clients and ex clients of the Simon Communities who meet monthly to share ideas on and to promote client involvement – clients having a voice in the services they receive. SIAG also produces the Simon Voices newsletter. Simon Voices is uniquely produced by clients for clients, highlighting issues that are important to them, and giving a platform for clients nationally to have their writing and art work published. Two bumper editions were produced in 2018.

Meeting the Needs of Women in Services

The national group continued its bi-monthly meetings to advocate for and develop better responses to women in our services.

A national seminar was held in the spring on the issue of domestic/gender based violence with inputs from the Director of the National Domestic Violence Intervention Agency, Don Hennessy, and Sonas, a provider of frontline services to women and children experiencing domestic violence. Subsequently, the group has developed a working partnership with both Sonas and Safe Ireland as the focus on domestic and gender-based violence continues.

In 2018, an application was made along with European partners for Erasmus + funding for a project to develop a better understanding of the needs of women experiencing homelessness and to meet those needs across Europe. The application was successful and the 30 month project got underway in January 2019.

Best Practice Training Prospectus

Early in 2018, a training prospectus was developed with a calendar of training events to be held across the Simon Communities nationally throughout the year. Bespoke training modules were developed including:

- Developing Client Participation Opportunities in Services
- Keyworking and Motivational Interviewing
- Meeting the Needs of Women in Services
- The Outcome Star, Improving Outcomes for Clients
- Facilitation Skills for Staff
- The National Quality Standards Framework – What We Need to Know

National Fundraising

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

The Simon Communities of Ireland are fully committed to achieving the standards contained within the ICTR Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising. We welcome your queries and feedback via any of the contact points provided.

Your help means we will work together to address the reality of what people are facing, move more people out of homelessness, ensure prevention measures are in place to keep people in their own homes and provide ongoing support to ensure that they are sustained.

We rely on the assistance of corporate supporters and partners in a wide range of areas. 2018 was an exciting year for the Communities across Ireland, with local and national partnerships supporting us both financially and through events and volunteering. 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:

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

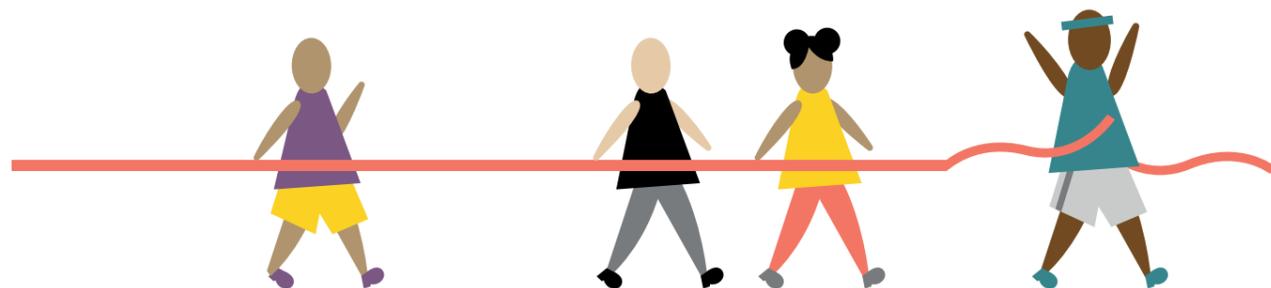
In May 2018, the Simon Communities of Ireland and the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland held the fifteenth annual RIAI Simon Open Door campaign. Certified RIAI architects donate their time and expertise by offering an hour long consultation to members of the public, who in turn make a €95 donation to the Simon Community. Our 2018 campaign built on the success of the previous year, with over 1,400 one hour consultations being held across the country. We would like to thank the RIAI and their members, for their continued support of the Simon Communities across Ireland.

Kilkenny Group:

Simon Communities were chosen as charity partner for the Kilkenny Group's Christmas Gift Wrap Appeal with Kilkenny Group stores taking part nationwide. The appeal ran from the 1st of December to Christmas Eve with volunteers wrapping gifts raising vital funds for Simon Communities across Ireland. We would like to thank all involved for raising vital funds to support our work.

Grant Thornton:

Simon Communities were chosen as charity partner for Grant Thornton in 2018. Grant Thornton staff volunteered and fundraised for their local Simon Community, helping with projects including painting and decorating in our services. The GT5K run took place in Dublin, Cork and Galway, with thousands of participants running to support Simon. Our thanks to all staff and participants who supported us throughout the year.



Financial Overview 2018

In 2018, the Simon Communities of Ireland generated income of €2,435,273. This compared to income of €840,472 in 2017. Donations from the general public and from our corporate partners accounted for the vast majority of our income (94%). It would be impossible for us to continue the work that we do without such generous support.

During the year to December 2016, a grant was awarded by Pobal, a grant-making agency funded by the Department of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The amount of grant awarded was €269,602 for the term 1st July 2016 to 30th June 2019. The amount recognised in the financial statements for 2018 is €89,869. The grant programme is the Scheme to Support National Organisations in the Community and Voluntary Sector. This funding was restricted to supporting a percentage of the salary and overhead costs of two posts within the organisation, Best Practice and Training Coordinator and Head of Policy and Communications. Total grants advanced from Pobal during the year ended 31st December 2018 amounted to €89,869. No capital grants were received from Pobal and SCI is fully tax compliant as per the relevant grant circulars including circular 44/2006.

Expenditure in 2018 was €2,592,971, which was up from €810,617 in 2017. Included in this expenditure were fundraising costs of €59,674 and €2,013,531 dispersed to affiliate Simon Communities to support their operational costs. This created a net outgoing for the year on the income and expenditure account of €157,698, (2017 Net Income €29,854).

In 2018, two staff members received salaries in the range of €60,000 to €70,000. Pension contributions made by the organisation in 2018 amounted to €9,541 (2017 €14,552).

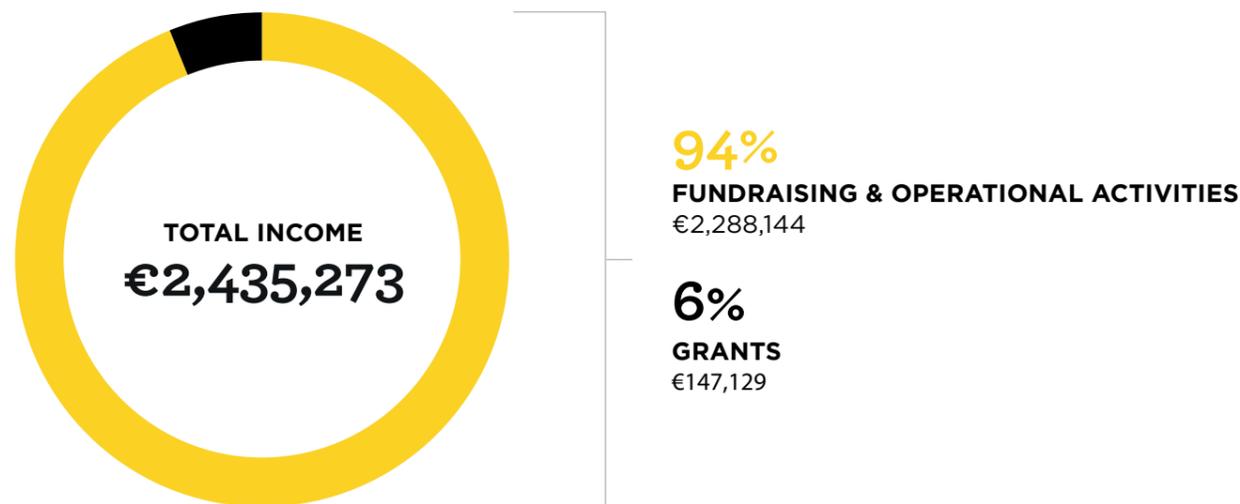
The Simon Communities of Ireland is committed to openness and transparency both within the organisation and externally with donors, funders, supporters and the public. The Board have signed up to the Governance Code for Voluntary Organisations.

The annual financial statements are prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2014 and FRS 102. In addition, the Simon Communities of Ireland adheres to the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising and is registered with the Charity Regulatory Authority.

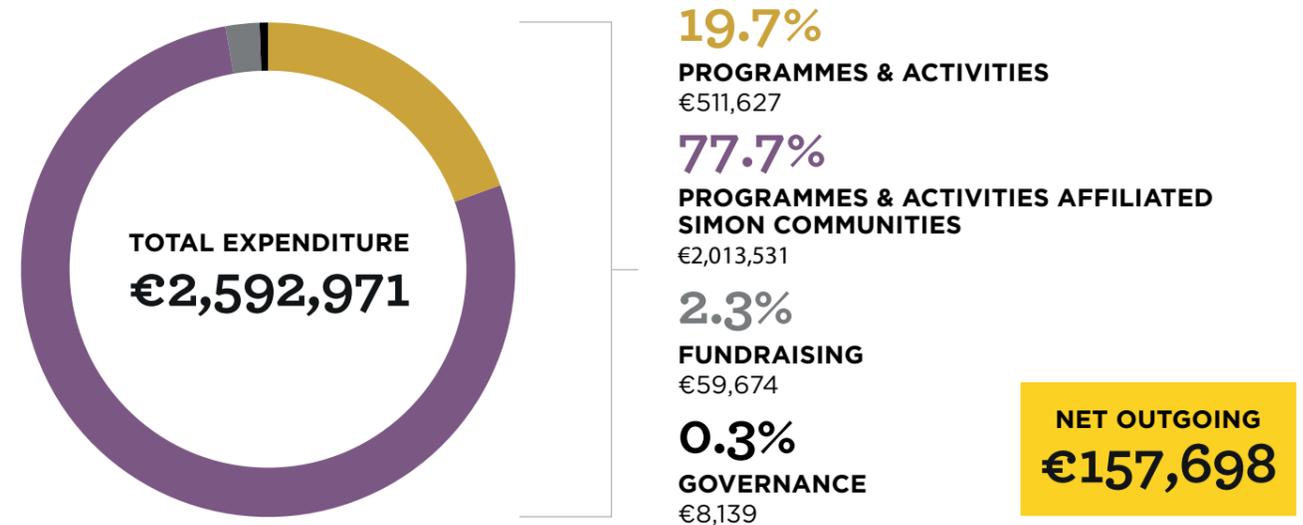
The Simon Communities of Ireland accounts are audited by JPA Brenson Lawlor each year and the financial year runs from 1st January to 31st December.

The following extracts are taken from the audited accounts for the year ending 31 December 2018

2018 Income



2018 Expenditure



How You Can Help

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



DONATE ONLINE

Visit www.simon.ie



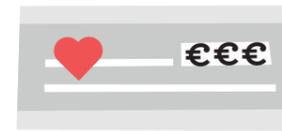
SEND US A DONATION BY POST

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 01 671 1606 with your card details and your transaction will be handled in strictest confidence.



LEAVE SIMON A LEGACY

A legacy is a lasting gift that will ensure Simon can continue working toward a society where no one is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. For further details on how to name the Simon Communities of Ireland as a beneficiary in your will, contact the Fundraising Team on 01 671 1606 or email laurafinn@simoncommunity.com.



NATIONAL CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

The Simon Communities of Ireland work with a number of corporate partners and there are many ways your company can help and get involved. For queries on how to partner with us please contact Jennifer on 01 671 5551 to discuss tailoring projects and initiatives to match your company's interests and objectives. Alternatively, email jenniferkitson@simoncommunity.com.



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. Simon can claim for self-assessed tax payers who have made donations of €250 or more.

Donations from companies qualify the donor for tax relief.

**SIMON COMMUNITIES OF IRELAND
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www.simon.ie

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Charity Number - 8273

