



Annual Report 2014



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. The Simon Communities have been providing services in Ireland for over 40 years.

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

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 homeless 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.

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Cover photographs (L-R) courtesy of Cork Simon, North West Simon and Midwest Simon.

A message from our Chair

2014 was an extremely challenging year, as the numbers of people experiencing homelessness and housing instability continued to grow at a shocking rate. At Simon, our key focus is to work with people as they are, based on where they have come from and where they would like to go to. We give back choice and control, two things that are quickly lost when someone loses their home. At the time of writing, over 5,000 men, women and children are trapped in the uncertainty of emergency accommodation; this is unacceptable.



In 2014, the Simon Communities worked with over 7,000 people around the country. As so many people turn to Simon when they are in need we must continue providing high quality services, whilst campaigning for the right policies and structures to tackle homelessness in Ireland.

There is sadly no abatement to the numbers of people turning to us for help; however we are facing these challenges head on. I want to thank all the staff and volunteers across the eight local Simon Communities for their hard work and dedication;

they are at the heart of everything we do. I would also like to thank the Board of the Simon Communities of Ireland for their guidance and acknowledge the support of the team in National Office for their work and commitment over the last year.

With more and more people becoming homeless we must continue to provide services to meet the growing need. People cannot and must not wait any longer. People who are homeless have the most urgent housing need and must be prioritised. They have nowhere else to turn. It is vital that the Government ensure that people have access to housing – and it must be the right kinds of housing in areas where other support services are also available so that we can tackle the issues that often cause or accompany homelessness.

On behalf of our staff, volunteers and the people we work with, 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, every day we give people the strength and ability to overcome the toughest of times and move forward towards and brighter future filled with hope.



Sam McGuinness

A message from our Head of National Office

For people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, access to appropriate housing and support is absolutely vital. As the homelessness and housing crisis continues, the eight local Simon Communities are working with more than 7000 individuals and families throughout the country who experience – or are at risk of – homelessness every year. We have seen increased pressure on our services across the country. As well as providing necessary services we also campaign for the right policies and structures to tackle homelessness across Ireland. We continue working with our partners in the statutory and voluntary sectors to help achieve the Government's commitment of ending long term homelessness and the need to sleep rough by 2016 using housing led approaches.



The Simon Communities have met the challenges arising from austerity by continuing to provide high quality services and meeting the needs of people experiencing and at risk of homelessness.

In the National Office, we focus on policy, communications and campaigning; national fundraising partnerships and best practice & training. Some of the key moments you will see highlighted in our review are Simon Week, the Client Involvement Conference and the 10th year of RIAI Simon Open Door fundraising campaign.

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

The enormous role played by over 2,300 of our volunteers is indicative of the strength of support that the Simon Communities enjoy from the services – keeping people in their homes where possible. Now is the time to make a difference and to support people to leave homelessness behind for good.



Patrick Quinn

Key Moments of 2014



Launch of **'Homelessness, Ageing and Dying'**, exploratory research supported by Age and Opportunity. The report looked at the needs of older people who are homeless as they age including ill health and end of life care.

Briefing of the Oireachtas Committee on Environment, Culture & Gaeltacht on General **Scheme of Housing Provisions Bill 2014** and addressing housing demands.



Ten years of the **RIAI Simon Open Door campaign**, a national fundraising campaign where we partner with the Royal Institute of Architects in Ireland to raise more than €400,000 over the past ten years.

Launch of **'Which Way Home? The Experiences of the Simon Communities Introducing Housing Led Services'** undertaken by international experts Mark Bevan and Nicholas Pleace of the Centre for Housing Policy, York University, UK.



Launch of **'Left Out in the Cold: A Review of Rural Homelessness in Ireland'** exploring the challenges faced by people who are homeless and service providers in rural areas.

Development and delivery of training for clients on **'Introduction to Facilitation Skills'** and **'Working with the Media'**.

As part of Simon Week, we held our **Home Truths: Women, Homelessness and Risk** seminar. It was chaired by RTE's Audrey Carville and opened by Kevin Humphreys T.D., Minister of State at Department of Social Protection.

'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.

Over 10,000 people signed our **Simon Week 2014 Stand and Deliver petition** urging the Cabinet to stand by their promise to end long term homelessness by delivering sufficient housing.



Some Highlights from the local Simon Communities

During 2014 the Simon Communities worked with 7,273 people and 531 families using a housing first approach– supporting people to move into housing and providing support in housing. The Simon Communities also worked to prevent homelessness from occurring and re-occurring amongst people at risk through Support to Live Independently (SLI), Prevention and Early Intervention and Housing Advice and Information services.

Day Centres, Soup Runs and Rough Sleeper Teams provided by some of our Communities were often the first point of contact for people sleeping rough and those in housing difficulty this year. Specialist Treatment and Support services and Education, Training and Employment Services were also provided across the country.

There will always be a need for some emergency accommodation but there needs to be a move away from emergency led responses, we can't just keep offering people short term solutions with little attention paid to their longer term needs. Without access to appropriate, affordable housing options, people are getting trapped in the cycle of homelessness for far longer than is ideal. Urgent action is required to ensure there are sufficient numbers of homes available so that people can move out of homelessness while getting the support they need.



A Snapshot of the Services provided in 2014

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

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



- 1,704 people were supported in housing all around the country in 2014 with the support provided being either low, medium or high, depending on need.
- 865 people were supported in Simon Housing.
- 435 people were supported in social housing.
- 404 people were supported in private rented housing.

- Simon Housing and Emergency Accommodation

- Simon Communities across the country own and manage 427 housing units and provide 134 emergency accommodation beds.



- Specialist Treatment and Support Services addressing some of the issues which may have contributed to homelessness occurring or maybe as a consequence.

- 2,070 people accessed Specialist Treatment and Support Services in 2014.
- 624 people availed of drug/alcohol treatment services; 233 people were referred to external drug/alcohol service services.
- 398 people availed of counselling services.
- 815 people accessed Multi-Disciplinary Teams and the Community Liaison Nurse Service.

2,070



People accessed Specialist Treatment and Support Services

- Education, Training and Employment Services

- 1766 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.

1,766

People accessed Education, Training and Employment Services



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

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

- 1,111 people accessed emergency accommodation over the course of the year.
- 1,507 people availed of Daytime Support and Advice services with 1,376 people accessing Prevention and Early Intervention services.
- Soup runs were provided 365 days a year in Cork and Dublin.

1,376



People accessed Prevention and Early Intervention Services

Supporting the Work of Our Communities



2,300

Volunteers supported the work of their local Simon Community

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

- Over 2,300 volunteers supported the work of their local Simon Community.
- 9 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.

Policy, Research and Communications



Stand and Deliver Campaign 2014

The Simon Communities seek to influence the approach of 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 policy and other policy areas which impact on the lives of people who are homeless, for example, health policy, drug and alcohol policy. Each year we engage in purposeful research activity to support our policy activities and also to influence service delivery across the country.

The Simon Communities of Ireland are represented in all major national policy for a and at key stakeholder meetings including the National Homeless Consultative Committee (NHCC), the Data Subgroup of the NHCC and bi lateral meetings with the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government. In 2014 we were invited before the Oireachtas Committee on Environment, Culture & Gaeltacht and the Oireachtas Committee on Finance.

Throughout 2014, 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 were nominated onto the FEANTSA Expert Working Group on Health in 2014 for the current mandate.

"These are people the state has failed time and time again. People who have been through traumatic experiences... for us to say there is no prospect of a home anytime soon; it isn't good enough"

Niamh Randall, National Spokesperson, to Keelin Shanley, RTE Radio One



**Minister Alan Kelly and Gerry,
a Dublin Simon client**

Our communications work supports our policy and campaigning work. Through our communications we aim to increase awareness of homelessness and associated issues as well as the work that the Simon Communities do around the country. Throughout the year, we reached thousands of people through significant media coverage; a total of over 1000 press articles and over 350 broadcast features.



Niamh Randall, Head of Policy and Communications at SCI talking to Minister Kevin Humphries during Simon Week 2014

Simon Week 2014:

In October 2014 our annual week of campaigning and awareness raising – Simon Week – took place involving a wide range of activities and events taking place at a national and local level. We asked people to sign our Stand and Deliver letter to

Cabinet urging them to stand and deliver on their promise of ending long term homelessness. This was a very successful campaign with over 10,000 people signing the letter which we presented to Minister Alan Kelly on World Homelessness Day, 10th October 2014.

Reports and Policy Submissions:

This year we published the following key reports-

Homelessness, Ageing and Dying

This research looked 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. This research was undertaken by Kathy Walsh. It was launched in January 2014 in Cork. The event was opened by Minister Kathleen Lynch, Minister for Primary Care, Mental Health, people with disability and older people.

Which Way Home? The Experiences of the Simon Communities Introducing Housing Led Services.

Following on from Finding the Way Home research published in 2013, we commissioned a piece of research to help inform and critically assess the use of housing-led services as a response to homelessness at both a national and local level. This research was undertaken by Nicholas Pleace and Mark Bevan from the Centre of Housing and Policy in University of York. This report was launched in Waterford in July 2014, with the Mayor of Waterford City opening the event.

Left out in the Cold: Review of Rural Homelessness:

This report looked at rural homelessness and the challenges faced by people who are homeless and service providers in rural areas.

It was launched in Carrick-on-Shannon in July 2014, with Marian Harkin, MEP, opening the event.

Policy Submissions:

A number of submissions were made during 2014 including

- Submission to the Oireachtas Committee on Environment, Culture & Gaeltacht on the **General Scheme of Housing Provision Bill** and Addressing Current Housing Demand.
- Simon Communities Pre-Budget Submission.
- Submission to the Department of Social Protection Pre-Budget Forum.
- Submission on Social Housing Strategy
- Submission on Suicide Prevention.
- Submission on the review of rent supplement limits.

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

Best Practice and Training

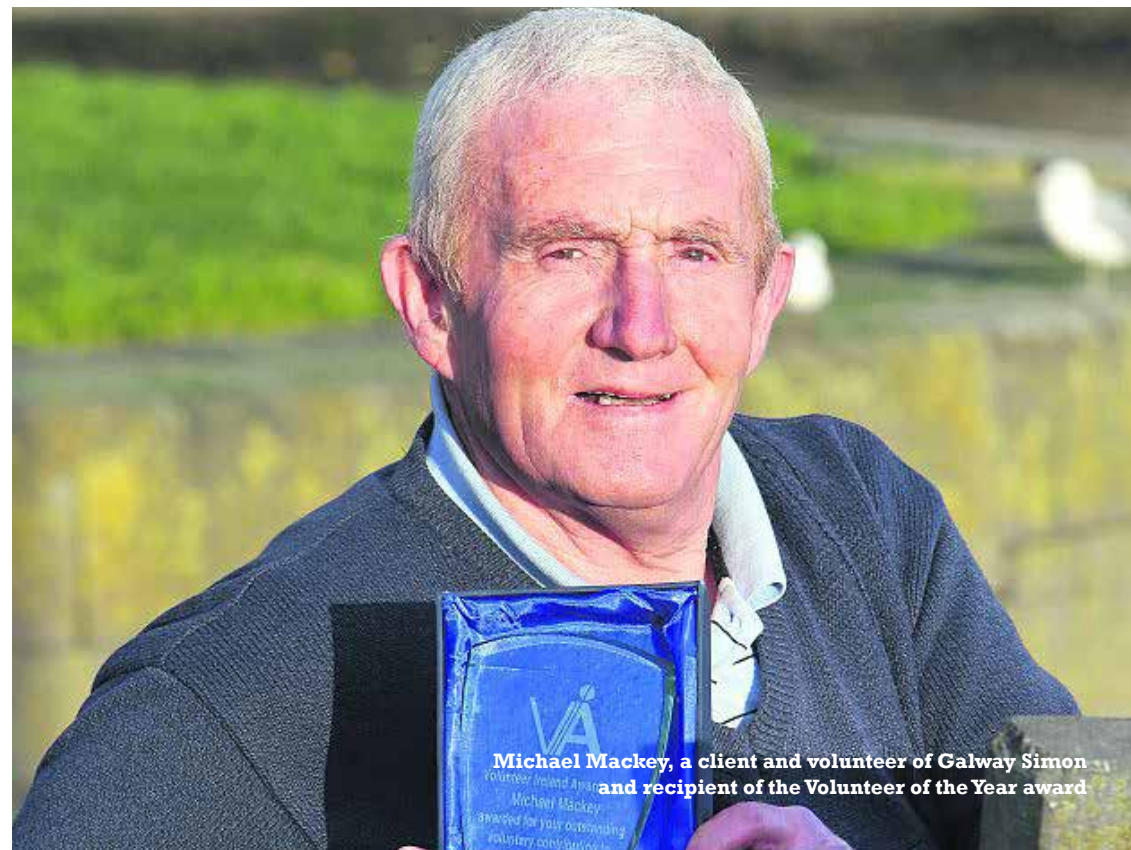
2014 - What a year for Client Involvement in the Simon Communities! The role of the Best Practice and Training Coordinator is to support the local Communities to deliver the best possible provision to people who use our services. The core work includes developing and supporting opportunities for client 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.

‘Working with the Media’ training

Early in the year training was developed and delivered on ‘Working with the Media’ and ‘Introduction to Facilitation Skills’ after consultation with members of Simon Involvement and Action Group. This involved a mixed learning approach with the Facilitation Training, with clients, volunteers and staff participating alongside each other. Evaluation showed that this model is valued by participants as the training received a 100% satisfaction rate. Participants went on to run their own group and facilitate in larger events such as the Dublin Simon Speakout.

Peer Literacy Training Programme

A major project for the year was also the development and delivery of a peer literacy programme using the ‘Toe by Toe’ learning tool. Once they complete the training, clients can work alongside their peers and support them to learn to read. Poor literacy skills can be a serious barrier to moving on into education and employment. Having support to learn, delivered by peers has a proven track record and is something we hope to develop further within our Communities.



Shaping Opportunities

Throughout the year work continued on developing ‘Shaping Opportunities’, Galway Simon’s Client Involvement Strategy. All members of Galway Simon were consulted and client input was central to the development of the aims and objectives. These include - facilitating more opportunities for clients to take a lead, support each other and have a say in how their services are run, involve clients more in hiring staff and making sure that



Dr Sam Tsemberis, CEO of Founder of Pathways to Housing, K.T Murphy, Chairperson of Midlands Simon Community, and Minister Alan Kelly at the signing of the Memo of Agreement between Pathways to Housing USA and Midlands Simon Community



Deirdre Nordon and Seamus Rafferty, support workers in Dundalk Simon

more clients can get involved in making decisions about the running of Galway Simon Community. The Strategy was most fittingly and loudly launched at a Music Night organised by Simon Action Group in October.

Simon Voices

Two bumper editions of the Newsletter, *Simon Voices*, written by clients for clients, were completed. The editions included articles on client's participation in European working groups and conferences and how to survive Christmas alone, poetry and prose sent in by our readers, simple recipes on a budget, and much more.

My Voice Your Voice Our Voice Conference

The year ended in triumph; members of the national, client led *Simon Involvement* and *Action Group* organised and ran on the day, the '*My Voice Your Voice Our Voice*' Conference for clients. The theme was client involvement/participation. Over 60 people attended, from all over Ireland, and seven communities were represented. As well as presentations and discussions the event included a festival element with activities and stalls (some delivered by clients) including live music, massage corner, clay modelling, sign up for an email address, a Tai Chi class and goodie bags.

The event was, in the words of the one of the participants', 'an important day and a great success'.



Dublin Simon House of Cards

Human Rights Advocacy and Homelessness Toolkit

The Human Rights Advocacy and Homelessness Toolkit, which was developed with the input from clients of Dundalk Simon Community, was launched in May. The toolkit gives an overview

of the relevant human rights legislation and practical tools and general advice on how to use the legislation to ensure homeless people's rights are upheld.

National Fundraising Success



Simon Open Door campaign 2014,
supported by Dermot Bannon

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.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who supported us in 2014 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**. We welcome your queries and feedback via any of the contact points provided.

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 2014 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:

Tesco:

The Simon Communities in Ireland rolled out a national bag pack in 2014 across 89 Tesco stores. We would like to thank

Tesco for providing the opportunity to do this and for their support in helping us have a very successful day.

Ulster Bank:

Throughout 2014, 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.

New Ireland Assurance:

New Ireland Assurance staff completed a national cycle fundraiser among their staff to support three charities including Simon. We would like to thank New Ireland Assurance staff for their commitment and efforts.

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 2014 national RIAI Simon Open Door campaign. This campaign has been an annual event in both the RIAI and Simon Communities calendar for ten years. Architects from RIAI donate 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 2014. 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.

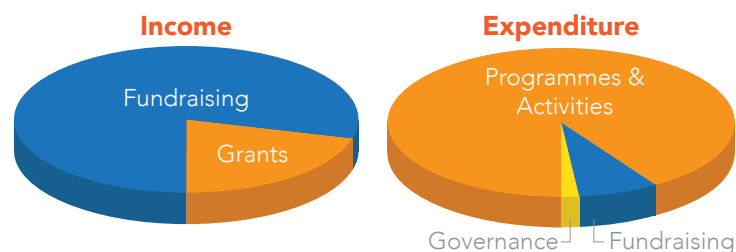
Financial Overview

In 2014 the Simon Communities of Ireland (National Office) generated an income of €731,347.00. Donations from the general public and from our corporate partners accounted for the vast majority of our income (79.31%). It would be impossible for us to continue the work that we do without such generous support.

Our statutory funding from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government under the *Scheme to Support National Organisations* remains essential as it supports a number of core activities delivered by the National Office, notably policy, best practice and training. We tightly manage our operating costs; reducing our overheads where possible, and we strive to give the best possible value for money. We do not pay any salary top ups or pension top ups. We do not provide company cars, bonuses or any other perks or entitlements. In the last number of years, we have reduced staff numbers and costs. We review and revise day-to-day expenditure every year.

The cost of the work of the National Office in 2014 was €757,419.00. This created a deficit for the year on our income and expenditure account of €26,072.00 which was funded from reserves.

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



The following extracts are taken from the audited accounts for the year ending 31 December 2014

2014 Annual Report

Income

Fundraising	€580,063.00
Grants	€151,284.00

Total €731,347.00

Expenditure

Programmes & Activities	€688,972.00	91.0%
Fundraising	€ 57,230.00	7.5%
Governance	€ 11,217.00	1.5%

Total €757,419.00

Deficit -€26,072.00

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 (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

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.



Volunteers at Cork Simon Community

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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