



Ending Homelessness Creating Homes

Annual Review 2007



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The Simon Communities of Ireland is the federation of eight Communities in Cork, Dublin, Dundalk, Galway, the Midlands, the Mid West, the North West, and the South East.

Simon has been working with people who are homeless in Ireland since 1969.

The Simon Communities of Ireland is governed by a Board, which is made up of a representative from each of the local Simon Communities and outside members with expertise from different related fields.

All Calendar photography by Fran Veale.



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Ending Homelessness Creating Homes

Simon continues to be to the forefront of the debate on ending homelessness in Ireland. We have articulated what this means and the political actions that must take place to make it a reality. In our new strategic plan - Ending Homelessness – Creating Homes - we have set out how we in Simon will play our part in making this vision a reality. It is ambitious, but it is achievable.

We firmly believe that homelessness is not and should never be accepted as the inevitable outcome of any person's life. To be homeless is to have your fundamental human rights to housing and to health denied. It means having your right to security and bodily integrity under threat and your right to privacy and to

participate in the life of your society taken away. When discussing homelessness we need to keep these stark realities to the forefront.

Delivering an end to homelessness is not without its challenges. We have committed ourselves to supporting people to move as soon as possible to an appropriate home of their own, and to preventing the incidence of homelessness altogether where we can. While we re orientate our work towards prevention and long term housing solutions we need to ensure that the pressing need for emergency accommodation is not overlooked. Some parts of the country still have little or no emergency accommodation. In other areas the need exceeds what is available, and in the areas where emergency accommodation is currently sufficient we need to ensure that people's specific needs are being responded to. Our challenge is to paint a picture of the future without denying the realities of the present.

We are committed to ensuring that the people who use our services are increasingly and meaningfully involved in everything that we do. This commitment will keep us firmly grounded in the present while allowing the people who know most about homelessness to be actively involved in creating the solutions.

Simon is the people who use our services, it is the hundreds of volunteers who give their skills and time, it is the dedicated and professional staff and the committed boards of governors. Simon is also the businesses, large and small, who through their donations make our work possible; it is the individual who regularly contributes, the person who rings up their radio station to support us, and the communities who welcome our housing projects into their neighbourhoods.

We thank all of you, and need all of you if we are to be successful in our vision of ending homelessness.



Patrick Burke
National Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrick Burke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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Simon Communities of Ireland office update

The Simon Communities of Ireland office, based in Dublin, acts in a co-ordinating and support role to the eight Simon Communities.

Creating Homes

The Housing Association expanded into new geographical areas with the advent of Mid West and North West Simon Communities. We now own 40 units of accommodation throughout the country a further 64 are in the pipeline.

The 'Independent Living Initiative' with **EBS Building Society** has continued to prove tremendously beneficial enabling us to meet the shortfall between Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) funding and the full cost of our various developments.

The length of time funding applications take to be processed continues to put projects in jeopardy. Additionally, despite the increase in CAS funding levels, the caps are still well below market rates in many parts of the country. Notwithstanding these problems, we hope to build on the success of the past year and increase our housing stock.

Generating sustainable income for our work across the country

In 2005, the office generated an income of



Brian Ormond lends his support.

€2,840,347 of which over 92% came from voluntary sources. We hope to have replicated this income by year-end 2006.

One of our main sources of income generation is by direct mail and we are extremely grateful to our supporters who regularly donate to us. Marian Finucane's continuing endorsement for our annual Christmas appeal is invaluable, helping us raise awareness and substantial income from new supporters.

We cannot think highly enough of those people who have given us such amazing and selfless legacies recently. We truly are very grateful.

We are also very grateful for our relationship with **EBS Building Society**, now in its third year. As well as enabling us to purchase homes all around the country

as outlined above, **EBS** has also provided us with professional, organisational and financial advice. Many **EBS** staff have also volunteered with us. Thank you, you really do make a difference.

Many thanks also to the **RIAI** for partnering us again in our Simon Open Door architect fundraiser. This innovative project will be run again in 2007. Thank you also to everyone who participated in this year's House of Cards appeal at Christmas.

The two new retail charity shops opened by Simon in Athlone and in Waterford are trading well. They add value to the local communities by providing good quality clothes at reasonable prices in a bright, clean and well-managed environment. These shops will provide a sustainable source of income for the communities in which they operate. Great effort is being made to develop a new sharper image for the shops and this, allied to a competitive management system, will give them every chance of success.

The Simon Communities of Ireland office update contd...

Putting the people who use our services at the centre of our organization

Service User Participation has continued to develop within our Communities, as our understanding of the issue grows. The National Service Users Forum has become firmly established, celebrating its first anniversary in 2006; it meets monthly. Through a subgroup of the forum service users and staff are working in partnership to support developments in opportunities for service user participation Community-wide.

As we move to becoming a user-led organisation, people can begin to play a more active role in their own lives and in shaping the support they receive. This is the route to true equality and mutual respect.

We are also committed to monitoring the outcomes of our work. We have piloted a new outcomes monitoring tool and developed a training module on its use. Auditing of individual communities continues and we are currently reviewing our auditing tool to ensure that we can measure progress on all aspects of our work, including our commitment to and application of our values.

Recruiting and Supporting Full Time Volunteers

Simon continues to attract Full Time Volunteers from many parts of the world to share in our work. Over 90 people were



All parliamentary parties pledge to end homelessness by 2010.

interviewed and 45 were placed as volunteers in Cork, Dundalk and Galway Simon Communities. Our Full Time Volunteers came from Australia, Brazil, China, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Nigeria, Sweden and Ireland.

While it's not possible to mention all our volunteers here, the commitment, drive and energy they bring to the work assists the communities in delivering a wide range of services.

This year we introduced a new and very successful training manual and all our Full Time Volunteers attended national training. We are committed to further developing and valuing the role of Full Time Volunteers to ensure that our communities and volunteers get the best experience based on the highest possible standards.

Effecting changes that will contribute to ending homelessness

Early in 2006 Government published the independent review of the Integrated and Preventative Strategies. Simon participated in the review locally and nationally, with our case management model, the ETHOS definition of homelessness and many Simon recommendations included in the final report. We hope Government will act soon to deliver the recommendations and involve national homeless service providers in the design of the next national homeless strategy.

We also formalised our working alliance with Focus Ireland, Threshold and the Society of St Vincent de Paul to launch **MakeRoom – ending homelessness by 2010**. This public campaign sets out the policies and actions we believe are needed to deliver on the Government's own target of ending homelessness by 2010. The website of the campaign www.makeroom.ie provides information for the public and for policy makers and a specific call to action allowing the public to play their part in ending homelessness.

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Cork Simon Community



Colette Kelleher, CEO

Cork Simon Community works in solidarity with men and women who are homeless, offering housing and support in their journey back to independent or supported living. Every night Cork Simon provides over 100 beds for people in Cork who are homeless.

The range of Cork Simon's accommodation services and supports includes:

Emergency Shelter

Offering safe, secure accommodation and one-to-one support for 44 men and women every night of the year.

Day Centre

Critical support for men and women sleeping rough, offering direct access to a team of doctors, nurses and counsellors.

Outreach Team

Working directly with men and women sleeping rough, linking them into mainstream services and offering care and support.

High-Support Housing

Permanent accommodation for 32 men and women with mental and / or physical health needs at four residential houses across the city.

Housing Plus

Empowering people to return to independent-living in Cork Simon's 25 apartments, in social housing and in the private rented sector, offering a level of support appropriate to each person's needs.

Soup Run

Cork Simon's original project that continues to be operated year-round by a team of 40 volunteers, offering nourishing food, befriending and support every night to people sleeping rough.

Training

Helping to build the skills and confidence necessary for independent living.

2006 saw a continuation of the growing need for homeless services. During the first six months of 2006, the Outreach Team supported a total of 419 people - compared with 567 people for all of 2005. The Emergency Shelter has been full to capacity each night. People in need are being turned away, purely because there are no emergency beds available.

Cork Simon continues to actively participate in the Cork Homeless Forum; to implement its Integrated Strategy on Homelessness. Cork Simon also continued to work with a broad range of statutory, voluntary, corporate and community groups, establishing strong partnerships. Together we are creating viable solutions to the changing needs of people in Cork who are homeless.

Cork Simon have over 400 active volunteers and 100 staff, working with approximately 600 people per year.



Participants on the pilot Parks and Gardens Training course.



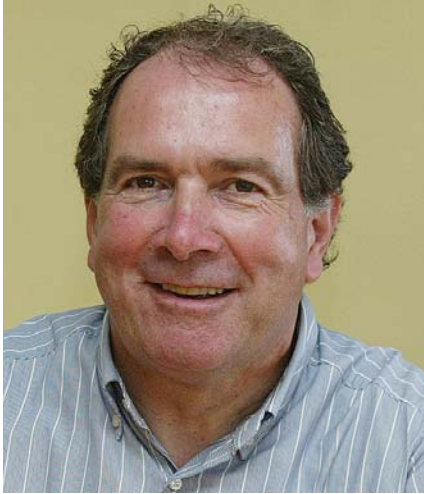
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Dublin Simon Community



Sam McGuinness, CEO

Dublin Simon Community works at all stages of homelessness, providing outreach and emergency accommodation for people sleeping rough, providing specialist health and education projects, helping people make the transition out of homelessness and by supporting people in their own home. We have thirteen different projects across the city.

Two alcohol workers continue to support residents upon leaving the programmes.

The **Outreach** service consists of 2 projects run by 12 paid staff and 127 volunteers. Staff work with people sleeping rough throughout the day and evening in the city and the suburbs. The Soup run works all year round in the evenings making contact with people sleeping rough.

Three **Long-Term projects** provide permanent accommodation for 60 people who have been homeless and need support.

Resettlement workers support people to move into permanent accommodation. A Transitional House provides self-contained accommodation for 15 people.

The **Training and Employment** project delivers a FÁS supported initiative offering skills training to 15 people at any one time.

Our projects are run by approximately 120 staff and more than 250 volunteers. We work with approximately 900 individuals per year, about 600 at anyone time. 53% of the people who use our services are between the ages of 25-44, and 60% are male. Our emergency shelter operates at 98% capacity and our other services at approximately 93% capacity.



And they're off!
Dublin Simon Fun Run.

Our **Tenancy Sustainment** runs in partnership with Dublin City Council and aims to prevent people from becoming homeless by early intervention to help identify their needs and link people to appropriate services.

The **Emergency Accommodation** on Harcourt Street provides accommodation and support for up to thirty single people. Counselling, group work and a needle exchange service are also provided.

The **Alcohol Detox Service** comprises a Detox Unit, a residential service and a support service run in partnership with the South Western Area Health Authority. Up to 8 men and women access the 21-day programme in the Detox Unit at any one time. The Residential Service supports people post detox over a 12-week period.



Dundalk Simon Community



Niall Mulligan, CEO

Dundalk Simon Community offers a range of options to people who are experiencing homelessness; from the Gatehouse Project which provides accommodation for up to seven rough sleepers nightly to Sunnyside House which offers emergency accommodation for up to 25 people to our most recent development, a new day centre in Seatown House.

2006 has been a very busy year for Dundalk Simon. At the start of the year Seatown House, the new Day Centre, was opened.

Every member of the community was actively involved in the creation of the new strategic plan "Planning for the Future 2006 - 2009". Its priorities are: providing high quality emergency accommodation, providing people with homes and the support they need to keep them, and advocating for changes that will end homelessness. Dundalk Simon Community also appointed a new Director in 2006 whose primary task will be implementing the strategy.

Dundalk Simon Community has 37 staff and 17 volunteers (both full and part time), providing services to approximately 130 people. In the past year 34 people have been supported to get new or better homes, over 130 people have been provided with emergency accommodation and over 60 people have been supported to maintain their tenancies. Priorities for the year ahead include the implementation of the strategic plan and the delivery of more move on supported housing options.



Dundalk Simon Community members launching their CD 'The Soul of the Simon'.

The **Day Centre** is the base for the settlement team and administration services and has very quickly become a focal point for former residents and people who are living in **Sunnyside House** or the **Gatehouse Project** and are being supported in their move to independent living.

The **Crescent Project**, which is run in conjunction with the Health Services Executive, provides a supported home for four adults with intellectual disabilities. This is an innovative project bridging a service gap for people with an intellectual disability who find themselves homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

The **Simon Shop** in Yorke Street is staffed by part time workers, FÁS employees and volunteers. It provides a 'public face' for Dundalk Simon and an important source of income for the community.



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Galway Simon Community



Marlene O'Connor, CEO

Galway Simon Community specialise in providing a continuum of care and accommodation which supports and empowers people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

We do this by providing **shared supported accommodation** with 24/7 cover, by providing shared accommodation with **peripatetic support** and by providing a **tenancy sustainment** service to people who have moved on to their own accommodation.

Galway Simon Community has set up a **Service Users Forum** and currently has a working group comprising service users, volunteers, board members and staff to examine service user participation in all aspects of the organisation.

Galway Simon Community **Shop** is the location for a work project as well as providing funding towards the provision of services. In addition to this we are researching the viability of an organic gardening project in partnership with other organisations in the city.

The community aspect of Galway Simon's work is vitally important providing as it does social facilities and occasions for service users and volunteers. Activities here include holidays, day trips to places of local and national interest, visits to cinemas and theatres, a football team, an artist in residence scheme, a community newsletter and many more seasonal celebrations.

We have a staff team of 29 and more than 30 full and part time volunteers. We work with approximately 100 people per year.



Holidays in Co. Roscommon.

This latter accommodation is provided by Galway Simon Community and Simon Communities of Ireland CAS apartments, by Galway City Council apartments and houses, by lettings from Housing Associations and in the private rented sector. In addition, we have a residential **Resettlement Service** which enables and supports people to address the issues which have previously not permitted them to have get and retain accommodation.

Services are provided to both men and women aged 18 and over and are accessed by referrals from a broad range of statutory and voluntary organisations and by self and family referral.

Currently we provide shared supported accommodation to 40 people, 6 people at any one-time avail of our Resettlement services and in excess of 30 are provided with a Tenancy Sustainment Service.



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Midlands Simon Community



Tony O'Riordan, CEO

Midlands Simon Community works with people who experience homelessness in Counties Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath.

In 2006 the Midlands Simon Community piloted its first service, a **Regional Settlement Service**. This service aims to support people to progress out of homelessness by:

- Supporting people to source suitable accommodation.
- Assisting people to move into their new home.
- Supporting people to maintain their new home.

Midlands Simon are also an active member of the homeless fora in Laois, Longford Offaly and Westmeath and the newly established Regional Inter Agency Homeless Forum.

Friends of Simon Committees have been established in Laois, Offaly and Westmeath, allowing members of the wider community to support volunteering, campaigning and fundraising work of the Community.

Midlands Simon Community aims to become a Service User led organisation and have established a **Service Users Forum**. The aim is that people will have a space where their direct experience is heard and acted on, and that they are involved in every level of the organisation.

A priority concern for 2007 is to work with the statutory partners to implement the findings of the review of the Regional Settlement Service. Gaining access to housing is a constant challenge and we will continue to work with the Local Authorities to ensure that the housing needs of people who experience homelessness are prioritised. Gaps still exist across the Midlands in the need for appropriate services for people who have emergency accommodation needs. We hope to progress solutions to these needs in 2007.



The Robin Hood Foundation donate €25,000.

Over 100 individuals, couples and families were referred to this service in the first year. Research evaluating the efficacy of the service has recorded 'the qualitative improvements in peoples lives and dignity because of the Settlement Service's intervention'.

Midlands Simon Community believe that creating an **integrated response** is critical to ending homelessness. We work in partnership with the four local Authorities in Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath, the H.S.E Dublin Mid-Leinster Region. Our shared protocol agreement maps out the roles, responsibilities and resource commitments of each agency in the operation of the Regional Settlement Service.



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South East Simon Community



Chris Anderson,
Regional Development Officer

South East Simon Community was established in 2003, and has worked in the counties of Wexford, Waterford, Carlow, Kilkenny and Tipperary South Riding.

South East Simon Community has a vision that everyone in the South East can have a home for life. Our mission is to help people find a home and to support people to keep their home.

Our work programme is informed by research commissioned by the Board and our strategic planning process out of which emerged a clear picture of the unmet needs of people homeless and at risk of homelessness.

We provide **advocacy, outreach, resettlement and tenancy support services** to an average 68 people and families homeless and at risk of homelessness throughout the region on a monthly basis.

This has been a busy year for the community with a greater than ever demand on our very small staff team, who, with the support of our directors and the Federation office, have risen to every challenge. We celebrated the first ever community based fund raising event and also participated in an independent audit of our services.

South East Simon staff actively participated in the Homeless Forums throughout the region and helped draft the terms of reference for the Homeless Action Teams who will, hopefully be fully established in 2007.

The service provided by South East Simon, without any statutory funding, for the last two years has been identified as a gap in existing service provision. It is acknowledged that the service is very effective and those who have participated have spoken highly of the impact on their lives.

Unfortunately, and despite the evidence of our success, we enter the New Year with no certainty of statutory funding. The community was advised that statutory funding would not be available until the national and local reviews of homeless policy had been completed; this has now happened. Should statutory funding not be forthcoming we will have to consider the sustainability of our services.



Parachute jumping for
South East Simon.



Mid West Simon Community



Sarah Birchett, Regional Development Officer

Mid West Simon Community was formed in 2006, and will operate in the counties of Limerick, Clare and Tipperary North Riding.

A board of directors has been established and towards the end of 2006 the Board appointed a Regional Development Officer.

While policy and service delivery in the region has often been ahead of other areas, there is a need for further service development.

While both emergency and

transitional accommodation are available in Limerick City, access to long-term and supported accommodation is limited. In addition, homeless services outside of the city are scarce.

Mid West Simon Community will develop services in line with local Housing Action Plans and to best practice standards. We will respond to people's needs, look to provide increased and improved housing, support people to the level appropriate to them, and campaign for an end to homelessness in the region. We look forward to working with and complimenting the other voluntary and statutory agencies in the region.

Mid West Simon Community

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North West Simon Community



Claire McTiernan, Regional Development Officer

North West Simon Community was formed in June 2005 with a vision of every person in the region - Donegal, Leitrim and Sligo - having a place that s/he can call home.

A Regional Development Officer started work in November 2005 and the Board of Directors of North West Simon Community set about developing its first strategic plan.

The plan was launched in June 2006 by Minister

for Agriculture and Food, Mary Coughlan TD, and has been well received by the public, political representatives and the voluntary and statutory sector. Many local voluntary and statutory organisations were involved in its formulation.

The current priorities of North West Simon Community are to:

Develop a **Settlement and Tenancy Sustainment Service** in each county in the region. Its aim will be to prevent homelessness and it will compliment the work already being undertaken by voluntary and statutory agencies in the region.

Create more housing options. There is a serious shortage of decent rented accommodation within the rent caps. The low levels of Capital Assistance Scheme funding exacerbate the problem in accessing housing.

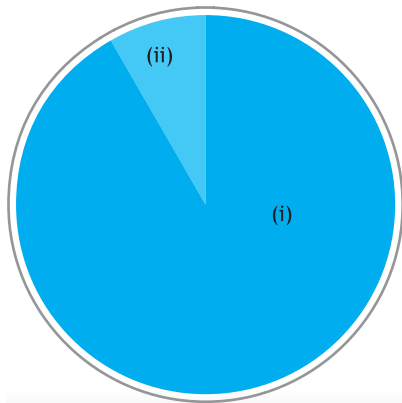
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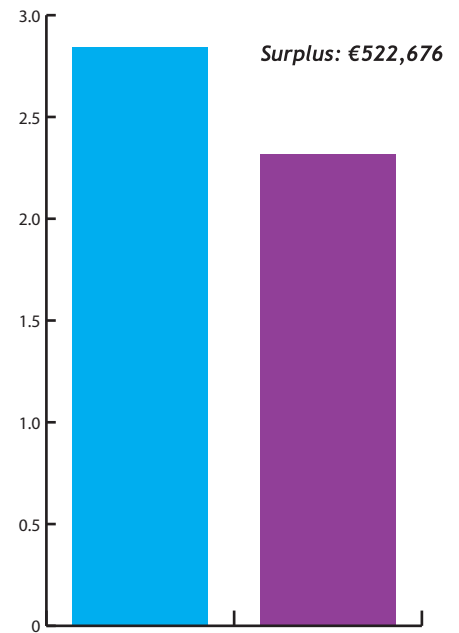
Financial Overview 2005



Income	
(i) Fundraising	€2,609,662
(ii) Grants	€230,685
Total	€2,840,347



Expenditure	
(i) Staffing	€668,571
(ii) Programmes	€250,205
(iii) Office	€263,289
(iv) Fundraising	€363,768
(v) Local Simons	€771,838
Total	€2,317,671



Total Income v Total Expenditure

The success of our fundraising efforts in 2005 in raising €2.6million is a testament to the loyal and increasing public support for our work.

This support has also been reflected in the corporate sector and we are very grateful to **EBS** in particular who through the **'Independent Living Initiative'** make the purchasing of homes for our clients possible. The support from **EBS** goes beyond financial contribution and is an excellent example of real corporate social responsibility in action.

The cost of the work of the Simon Communities of Ireland office for the year totalled approximately €1.5m. Our €363,768 expenditure on fundraising compares extremely well with the overall income generated.

As in 2004 our largest area of expenditure was the redistribution of funds to the local Simon Communities.

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

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



How you can help

Donate: Although statutory funding has increased over the last number of years, Simon still relies heavily on the generosity of the public to provide services to people who are experiencing homelessness. We need funding for a wide range of services including short and long term accommodation projects, street outreach, resettlement and training programmes. There are a number of ways to help Simon including; making a donation, organising an event to raise money, nominating Simon as your workplace charity, naming Simon as a beneficiary in your will. To make a donation or to find out more, please visit our website at www.simon.ie or telephone 01 6711606

Volunteer: Simon has both part-time and full-time volunteers. Part Time Volunteers work in various roles like the soup run, fundraising, shop workers, committee members, social clubs and as visitors to people living in the community. To volunteer on a part time basis, contact your local Simon Community.

Full Time Volunteers must be 18+ and make a commitment of at least six months

with Simon working alongside men and women experiencing homelessness. We provide accommodation supervision training and pocket money.

This opportunity facilitates the development of many skills both on a practical and professional level and is an ideal opportunity to gain valuable work experience. No formal qualifications are required. However, personal qualities such as compassion sensitivity adaptability and a commitment to social justice are most important. If you want to get involved on a Full Time basis, contact our Volunteer Coordinator at the federation office: volunteering@simoncommunity.com

Campaign: Our campaigning mandate is to effect changes in economic and social policy in Ireland that will contribute to the elimination of homelessness and its causes. Our priorities are to increase supply and access to housing for people who are homeless, influence policy and legislative change to deliver on the right to housing and to other support needs, and to build alliances with the public and the political system to deliver these changes.

Simon is committed to delivering solutions orientated campaigning, which is firmly grounded in our experience as a national service provider. You can get involved in activities that help influence Government policy on homelessness. Simon, with Focus Ireland, the Society of St Vincent de Paul and Threshold, has launched MakeRoom – ending homelessness by 2010. You can sign up to MakeRoom yourself, read information about the campaign, and get regular updates by logging on to www.makeroom.ie



Communities of Ireland

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