

Simon Communities of Ireland Strategic Plan

2022 – 2027

www.simon.ie



Introduction

from our Chair

Our Strategic Plan for the period 2022-2027 is designed to ensure that SCI retains its ability to best represent and advocate on behalf of vulnerable people across Ireland. As a federal organisation it is our clear intent to collaborate with and be the national voice of our independent Simon Communities across Ireland.

At the heart of this strategy is a certainty that homelessness can be effectively brought to an end. We also know that it cannot be achieved by Simon Communities alone it needs a commitment from Government underpinned by a broad political consensus strong enough to hold firm over several Governments. We are looking for this Government to commit to the long-term goal of ending homelessness.

Contrary to popular beliefs, homelessness is not confined to our cities and urban centres. The importance of offering services to people in their locality or region where they may have existing social networks and supports has become increasingly clear. In offering these essential, localised services, there are eight Communities throughout the State located in Cork, Dublin, Dundalk, Galway, the Midlands, the Mid-West, the North-West and the South East.

The services offered by these Simon communities include: - Emergency shelters, Outreach, Day-centres and ancillary support, Drug/ alcohol treatment and support, Transitional accommodation and long-term supported housing, Tenancy sustainment and settlement services, Training and employment projects.

The National Office of SCI performs a coordinating role in terms of campaigning in the areas of housing/ homeless policy and the wider poverty and social inclusion agenda. Research and advocacy remain significant pillars of the work on behalf of our clients.



Homelessness often begins long before the loss of a physical structure occurs. This is why it is an imperative that a fully integrative wrap around approach is to the core of what we advocate for on behalf of our clients.

Looking to the future, over the past eighteen months SCI undertook a Board and Executive structure review, broadened our Board membership and have developed a forensic Strategic Plan. This process will support our organisation in achieving a high standard of excellence.

We have a clear and meaningful Purpose and Mission: SCI will drive positive change in policy based through developing innovative research, advocacy, collaboration and communications.

How do we deliver on it?

The development of the strategic plan was guided by delegated Board members and the Executive of SCI. It was further reviewed and approved at different stages by the Board of Directors of SCI. An independent facilitator, Karen Brosnan was appointed to consult with internal and external stakeholders.

In the development of the strategic plan, consultations were carried out with samples from our stakeholder groups including:

- Participants from across our services
- Our full Board of Directors
- Members of the Board Sub-Committees
- The independent Chairs of the various Simon Communities
- Staff members

In addition to the above consultations we also consulted with external stakeholders from both the statutory and voluntary sectors.

The strategic plan for the period 2022-2027 pivots off four pillars: - Research, Advocacy, Collaboration and Communication. It is contingent on and underpinned by our commitment to organisational effectiveness, good governance, financial sustainability and a capacity to deliver.

This new plan will set the strategic direction of SCI over the coming five-year period.

We recognise that in a rapidly evolving world that SCI will need to be flexible in order to respond to any paradigm shifts that arise as we go forward e.g. COVID. Hence the delivery of the strategic plan will be reviewed on a regular basis with our Board of Directors. We have a relentless commitment to the pursuit of excellence in the quality of services we provide.

We might take heed of the wise words of poet Brendan Kennelly in committing daily to deliver on our purpose and mission:-

*“Though we live in a world
that dreams of ending that
always seems about to give
in something that will not
acknowledge conclusion
insists that we forever begin.”*



Mick Price

Chairperson, Simon Communities

Executive

This Strategic plan has not been developed in a vacuum. The pandemic saw a noted fall in the number of families in homelessness. That success was proof if proof were needed that the answer to homelessness is a home and to see an end to homelessness we need to implement policies that can prevent it from happening in the first instance.

The pandemic also seemed to cause a refocusing of commitment to the issue of housing and homelessness across Europe. This culminated in Ireland signing the Lisbon declaration and in line with that declaration making the commitment as a government to working to end homelessness by 2030.

This Strategic plan puts in place a strong framework for the Simon Communities in Ireland to take a leading role in advocating for the change that we need to see an end to homelessness in Ireland. The pillars of the Strategic plan of, - Research, Advocacy, Collaboration and Communication are the collaboratively identified pillars of the Simon Communities of Ireland's successful advocacy over the previous years.

Over the life of the strategy our mission will be to drive positive change in policy based through developing innovative research, advocacy, collaboration and communications. This Strategic plan and the Implementation plan to be developed alongside this are devised to build on previous success and include ambitious but achievable level of growth particularly in the areas of research to see our collective ambition realised.

The collective breath and depth of the services provided by the Simon communities across Ireland allow enormous opportunities to learn and to be informed both on the changing nature of homelessness and on the effective responses to the challenges that this represents.

The collaboration of the communities to find solutions to homelessness and the commitment of SCI to take an active role in collaborative initiatives on campaigns, research and advocacy on the issues of housing and homelessness is reaffirmed and will be enhanced over the life of the strategy.



The commitment to research in the strategy builds upon the collaboration as it provides an opportunity to stress test the solutions that come from the ground up against best practice and international experience. These reports can also act as road-maps to better services and better policy.

Delivering on the potential that is inherent in the collaborative work and the research of SCI will require the clear communication and effective advocacy. Successful implementation of these pillars will ensure that we see improved outcomes for those at risk of or experiencing homelessness and ultimately progress toward the ending of homelessness.

Having led the executive of the Simon Communities of Ireland for 3 years I am certain that the ambition set out in this plan is achievable. Critically if it is achieved we can make real progress towards the ultimate objective of ending homelessness.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Wayne Stanley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Wayne Stanley

*National Spokesperson,
Simon Communities*

Strategic consultation and planning process

Mar & Apr 21	1	Strategic review with Board of SCI (2 workshops).
May	2	Consultation with Chairs of the Communities.
Oct/Nov	3	External Stakeholder consultation survey.
Dec – Jan 22	4	Findings and recommendations – Steering Group Workshops on Mission/Vision/strategic goals (x4).
Feb	5	High level strategy Feedback to Board.
Feb	6	Consultation with Community Chairs on draft strategic pillars.
Mar	7	Presentation of draft strategy to the Board for discussion.
Apr	8	Engagement with external stakeholders, including service users, on draft strategy.
May	9	Final strategy to Board.

Feedback from External consultation

- Very positive feedback on the Brand.
- Positive sense of how regional Simon Communities are performing.

Focus on

- Policy.
- Housing first – Advocate for/coordinate national response to: Recover services and wrap-around support services.
- Reduce homelessness.
- Regional services v's SCI – confusion.

Purpose/Mission of Simon Communities Ireland

SCI will drive positive change in policy based through developing innovative research, advocacy, collaboration and communications.

Simon Communities Ireland Strategic Pillars



Underpinned by

Organisational effectiveness: Governance, financial sustainability and capacity to deliver.

Goals

Goal 1	Objectives	Outcomes
<p>SCI invests in quality research on homelessness to inform Government policy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCI in consultation with the communities identifies relevant, innovative, timely research which reflects the trends on the ground. • SCI collates the data and experiences of regional services. • SCI partners/collaborates with Academic Institutions and agencies to develop research nationally and internationally. • SCI sets up a research advisory group to develop and enhance research work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T- Influence programme for Government. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submissions to policy. • Involvement in consultation processes. • References in policy • Quoted in Academic publications • International representation/ influence • SCI develops draft policy inputs and sends to the communities for consultations. • SCI develops relevant, innovative, timely research. • Committee for senior service managers set up for consultation on policy.

Goal 2	Objectives	Outcomes
<p>Advocacy</p> <p>SCI advocates for policy changes that directly benefit people at risk and experiencing homelessness.</p>	<p>SCI, in consultation with its communities agree priority policy areas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and actions to achieve our mission. <p>Recognising that nobody should be without a home, realising that there is a journey to achieving this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCI advocates for prevention strategies based on assessment of on the ground realities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government and stakeholders recognise the importance of SCI as a national voice. • We influence policies which directly impact positive changes on the ground. • Cultivation and consolidation of media as a influential stakeholder.

Goal 3	Objectives	Outcomes
<p>SCI is firmly committed to ambition & excellence in our collaboration both externally and internally, in the best interests of our clients.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCI collaborates across regional communities to collate informed insights and recommendations. • SCI coordinates a participative approach to strategic collaborations on all aspects of homelessness nationally and internationally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SCI federation is committed to effective collaboration, influencing change as a cohesive voice on behalf of our clients. • We are playing our part to achieve a cohesive voice as a sector. • EU collaborations and case studies.

Goal 4	Objectives	Outcomes
<p>The Simon Communities of Ireland communicate with a competent, measured voice on solutions to homelessness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCI collaborates on strategic communications to support the delivery of national strategy. • SCI represents the Simon communities, as spokesperson in national media. • Communications strategy to be developed across all media and stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCI informs an understanding of homelessness across society. • SCI shapes the debate on homelessness in government, the sector and society. • Strategy is impactful.



**Carmicheal Centre
Coleraine Street
Dublin 7**

**01 671 1606
info@simoncommunity.com**

www.simon.ie

© Simon Communities of Ireland 2022.
Registration Number: 74038. Charity Number: 8273.