

Annual Report 2023

Print from Home Again Exhibit:
"Going Home"
by Clare Henderson

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About Us

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 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 a 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

The Scheme to Support National Organisations is funded by the Irish Government through the Department of Rural and Community Development



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



government supporting communities

*Northwest Simon Community's services were fully functional in 2023. Unfortunately, they are no longer operational as they closed their doors in April 2024.

Message from our Chair

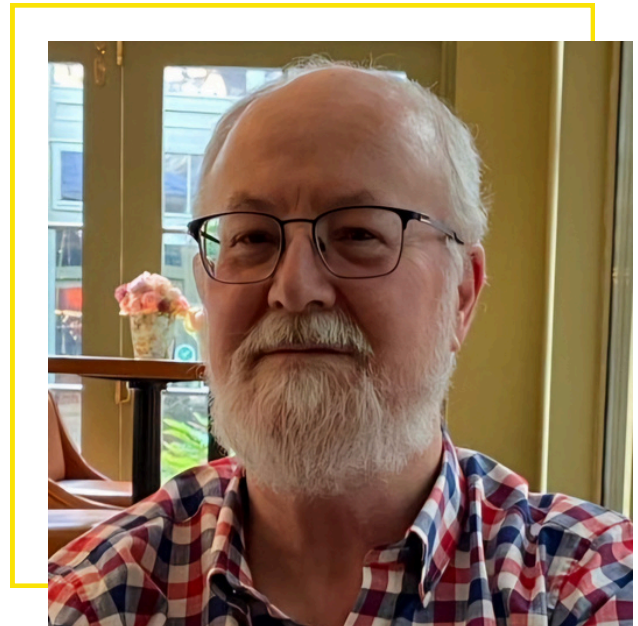
2023 was another challenging year for everyone on the margins of Irish society.

The lack of availability of safe, secure affordable homes continued to worsen throughout the year. Our 'Locked Out of the Market' research demonstrated throughout the year the very low level of properties available to rent and even fewer available within the HAP limits. The current climate is quite depressing in assessing where we are nationally in meeting our housing needs and obligations. Our domestic homeless figures reach new highs every month. We have unprecedented refugee figures and there is now a generation who seem unlikely to ever own their own home. These are unacceptable realities.

However, it is imperative we remain hopeful and positive as we work towards solutions. Tackling homelessness requires new energy and resources to provide a home for all our citizens.

A core belief in SCI is that every person has a right to a secure and affordable place they can call home.

The Simon Communities of Ireland (SCI) National Office 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. Our Executive Director and staff work tirelessly in highlighting the needs of our clients.



To all our donors, whether statutory, corporate, or personal, we extend our heartfelt thanks. With your support, we in Simon will continue to offer practical solutions to ending homelessness and to be creative and innovative in responding to needs as they arise.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Directors for their time, expertise and guidance in supporting the work of the Simon Communities of Ireland throughout the year.

Finally, but most importantly, I want to thank the people who use Simon services throughout the State. The fact that people turn to us at such a vulnerable point in their lives is incredibly humbling and reinforces our belief in the high quality of the services we provide. We always strive to do justice to the faith you place in us.

Mick Price
Chairperson



Message from our Executive Director

2023 was another year with record levels of Homelessness. Throughout the year the Simon Communities across Ireland worked hard to meet the needs of those who came to our door.

In the national office we worked with all stakeholders in our endeavours to achieve positive change at a national level. Change that could support frontline work and secure homes for those in need. We also sought the introduction of the required legislative provisions and preventative structures that could stop homelessness before it starts.

All the work documented in this report is driven by the commitment of those working in the Simon Communities across Ireland. We draw inspiration from the work that they do every day.

Simon is also driven by the fact that when social infrastructure is in place, homelessness becomes a much more preventable issue.

When approaching the end of 2023, we knew that a general election would soon be on the horizon for the Irish government. For that reason, we laid the foundation for an ambitious programme of work for Simon Week 2024, with a strong focus on solutions.

We did so as it is our belief that governments have the capacity to provide infrastructure when it is held as a political priority and maintained as a central focus of the duty to the Irish population, in particular those who are experiencing the trauma of homelessness.

We hope that incoming government whatever its makeup will share our ambition.

Wayne Stanley
Wayne Stanley
Executive Director

Services Provided by the Communities



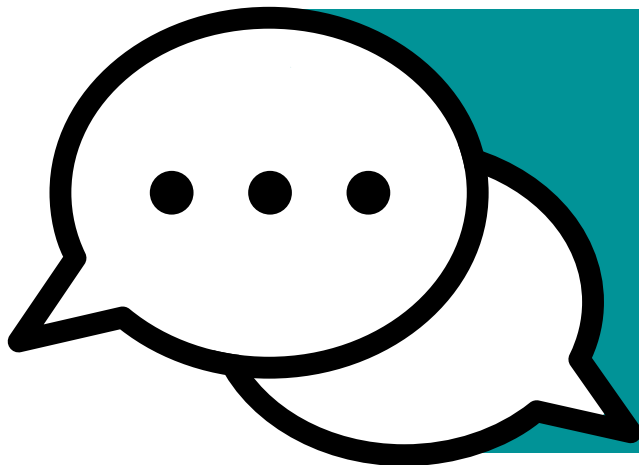
Early intervention, homeless prevention, tenancy sustainment and resettlement

Street outreach, emergency accommodation, and harm reduction



Housing support and Housing First services

Homeless specific health and well-being services (counselling, addiction treatment and recovery, and mental health supports)



Personal development, education, training, and employment

Foodbanks, drop-in centres, and soup runs



Key Moments of 2023



Simon Week 2023

On September 25th we hosted our annual Simon Week Conference in the Spencer Hotel.

The Minister of State with responsibility for Law Reform and Youth Justice, James Browne opened the conference, followed by our Keynote Speaker, Gregg Colburn, Associate Professor at the University of Washington's College of Built Environments and Co-Author of *Homelessness is a Housing Problem*.

Panel discussions were held on Hidden Homelessness, the Trauma of Homelessness, and the Nuance of Homelessness. The conference ended with a political panel featuring Eoin Ó Broin (Sinn Féin), Rebecca Moynihan (Labour), and Cian O'Callaghan (Social Democrats) to discuss the Lisbon Declaration's target to end homelessness by 2030.



Locked Out of the Market

Our Locked Out of the Market series continued in 2023, with four publications. These reports highlight the lived experience of those with access to HAP support in their effort to find a home to rent.

These are snapshot reports of Ireland's rental market, tracking the number of properties advertised to rent on Daft.ie within HAP limits over sixteen areas.

Over the course of the year, we found that despite the total numbers of properties available increasing, the percentage of those under HAP limits were falling, peaking in June at 5.4%, and remaining at 3% for the following reports in 2023.

"I don't look on them (rental websites) anymore. I don't because I was doing it all the time. Very hard to find a place. Very, very hard. There's not even a point emailing your details because there's no one gonna get back to you because the house is already gone. I remember when I was viewing places years ago, I was viewing up to five, six houses a day like and now you wouldn't even get that in a year."

Fiona

Locked Out of the Market Report September 2023

Policy Submissions

Census 2027 Public Consultation

As part of the consultation, Simon Communities of Ireland proposed that a question be included in Census 2027 to capture the extent of Hidden Homelessness in Ireland, as the data to examine and better understand types of Hidden Homelessness is not currently captured.

Submission to the Housing Commission's consideration of long-term housing policy post 2030

For this submission, SCI compiled answers to an online questionnaire with issues ranging from Supply of Housing, Affordability of Private Rental Accommodation, Costs of Construction of Housing, and more.

Public Consultation on diversion paths for young adults aged 18 - 24

SCI provided an overview of youth homelessness and the effects of homelessness on young people. Including recommendations to support young people coming out of prison, and in homelessness who may be at risk of offending and who can be diverted from the criminal justice system.

Submission to the Department of Housing Statement of Strategy 2023-2025

SCI made a submission to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage on the Statement of Strategy 2023 - 2025 public consultation. This was important in the context of the deepening crisis in housing and homelessness that the Department was reviewing its 2021 - 2025 Strategy Statement.

Submission on the Statement of Strategy for the Department of Social Protection

After providing an overview of homelessness, this submission outlines key priorities which the Department of Social Protection should consider including in its Statement of Strategy in order to meet the stated aim of the Programme for Government to tackle homelessness.

Sustainable and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities – Proposed Policy Approach

This submission focused on housing availability and standards needed to ensure adequate housing is available to meet the needs of our growing population, to ensure the provision of stable and affordable housing, and to provide housing options for people experiencing homelessness and housing exclusion.

General Scheme of the Registration of Short-Term Tourist Letting Bill 2022

SCI provided an overview of the impact that a lack of supply of affordable homes is having on homelessness. The scope and potential of the General Scheme of the Registration of Short-Term Tourist Letting Bill 2022 to contribute to the efforts to reduce homelessness was addressed.

Letter to Minister Darragh O'Brien

When approaching the end of the 'Winter Emergency Period' as per the Residential Tenancies (Deferment of Termination Dates of Certain Tenancies) Act 2022, there was widespread political and public debate about whether the moratorium on no-fault evictions should continue and what other action was needed.

A letter was written to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage which was signed by eight charity organisations (Simon Communities of Ireland, Threshold, Mercy Law Resource Centre, DePaul, Cope Galway, Focus Ireland, Jesuit Centre for Faith & Justice, and Crosscare).

This was written to encourage Minister O'Brien to extend the eviction moratorium and to consider actioning additional proposals, such as:

- Accelerating further and expanding the 'purchase with tenant in situ' scheme.
- Maximising the impact of newly available social housing.
- Providing resources to the RTB to actively engage with landlords who have issued live Notices of Termination to clarify their reasons for leaving the private rental market.

National Fundraising Campaigns

RIAI Simon Open Door

In May 2023, the Simon Communities of Ireland and the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) collaborated for the nineteenth annual RIAI Simon Open Door campaign.

In return for a €98 donation, homeowners receive an hour-long consultation with an RIAI Registered Architect. All participating Architects are giving their time and expertise for free.



100% of proceeds from these donations go to the Simon Communities of Ireland. Dermot Bannon, renowned architect and presenter, came on board as the Open Door Campaign Ambassador.

Through our 2023 campaign with RIAI, over €90,000 was raised in total. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the RIAI, and Dermot Bannon for continuing to support the Simon Communities of Ireland through this annual campaign.



Folláin Gift of Home

We partnered with Folláin for the third year of the Gift of Home campaign. Over the course of the holiday season 50% of proceeds through the Folláin website were donated to the Simon Communities of Ireland.

Overall, this year's campaign raised €18,000.

We would like to thank the team at Folláin for organising another successful year of the Gift of Home campaign.



Home Again

The Home Again Exhibition was held in collaboration and Graphic Studio Dublin, kindly supported by HLB Ireland.

In 2023, €12,400 was raised through this campaign. All proceeds from the exhibition were split between the artists and Simon Communities of Ireland.

Clare Henderson was HLB Ireland's Commission winner in 2023, her etching Going Home can be seen on the Cover of this booklet. We are incredibly grateful to the team at Graphic Studio Dublin and to all of the artists who contributed their time and work to this collection.

Simon Week 2023

This year's Simon Week campaign revolved around the changes needed to tackle homelessness, and to bring the issue to the forefront of the national agenda.

A three-pronged strategy was proposed to incorporate prevention of homelessness, increased support to deal with the trauma of homelessness and the provision of more homes to end homelessness.



Our annual conference was held on September 25th (see page 6) to foster discussions on the various nuances of homelessness. We hosted a range of speakers, from academics to politicians, to share their expertise on the issue.

Fundraising Overview

In 2023, the Simon Communities of Ireland generated income of €951,909. This compared to income of €1,136,759 in 2022. Donations from the general public and from our corporate partners accounted for the majority of our income (86%). It would be impossible for us to continue the work that we do without such generous support.

A new grant was awarded by Pobal in 2022, funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development through the Scheme to Support National Organisations 2022 to 2025. The amount of grant awarded was €227,375 for the term 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2025. The funding is restricted to support a percentage of the salary and overhead costs of two roles: Policy Officer, and Head of Policy and Communications.

No capital grants were received from Pobal and SCI are fully tax compliant as per the relevant grant circulars including circular 44/2006 and DPER Cir 13/2014.

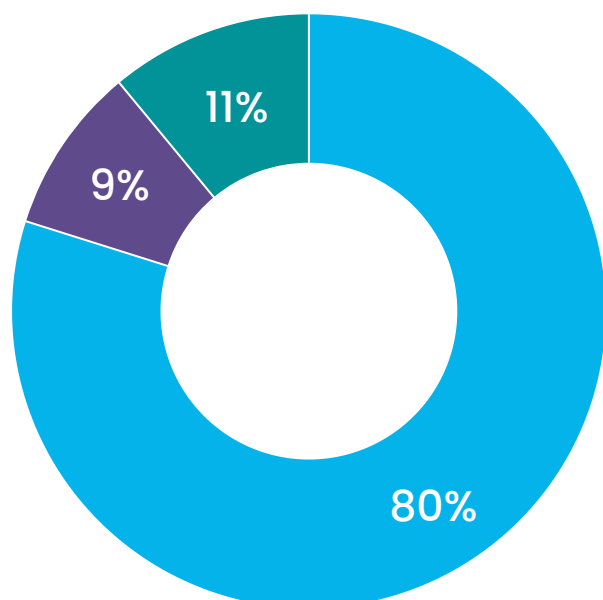
Total expenditure in 2023 was €542,926, in comparison to €1,070,722 in 2022. Included in expenditure are funds dispersed to the affiliated local Simon Communities to support their operational costs of €49,115 (2022: €699,871). Fundraising costs in total expenditure were €61,713.

One staff member received a salary in the range of €70,000 to €79,999. Pension contributions made by the organisation in 2023 amounted to €5,456.

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 following extracts are taken from the audited accounts for the year ending 31 December 2023:



80%

Programmes & Activities
Simon Communities of
Ireland

€432,098

9%

Programmes & Activities
Affiliated Simon
Communities of Ireland

€49,115

11%

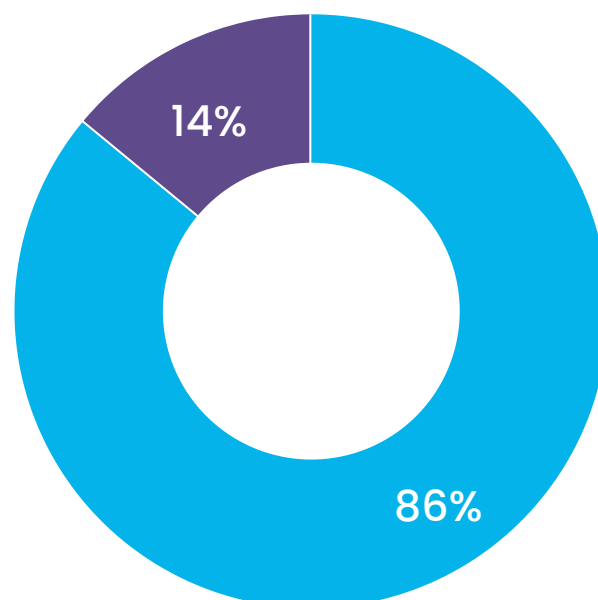
Fundraising

€61,713

Total

Expenditure

€542,926



86%

Fundraising and
Operational Activities

€818,857

14%

Grants

€133,052

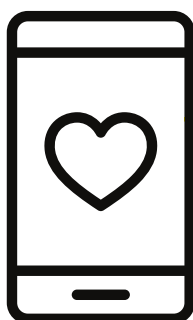
Total

Income

€951,909

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.



Give Online

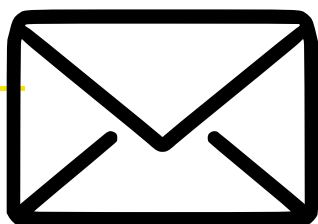
Donate to SCI or your
local community at

www.simon.ie/donate

Donate Over the Phone

Call our fundraising team on

01 671 1606



Send a
donation by
post

Simon Communities of Ireland,
Carmichael Centre,
Dublin 7
D07 E8XF

Please do not send cash in the post

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 tax years, the Simon Communities of Ireland can reclaim the tax paid on your donations. Donations from companies qualify the donor for tax relief.

Leave Simon a Legacy

A legacy is a lasting gift that will ensure Simon Communities of Ireland 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 or your local Simon Community 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. There are many ways for your company to get involved.

For queries on how to partner with us contact us at

Communications@simoncommunity.com

to discuss tailoring projects and initiatives to match your company's interests and objectives.



