

Simon Communities of Ireland



Annual Report

2016

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 45 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 homelessness 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.

SUPPORTED BY



An Roinn Tithíochta, Pleanála,
Pobail agus Rialtais Áitiúil
Department of Housing, Planning,
Community and Local Government

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A Message from our Chair



DERMOT KAVANAGH

The year 2016 saw more and more people seeking help from the Simon Communities all around the country. The homeless and housing crisis escalated further with the numbers in emergency accommodation increasing month after month. There are at least 90,000 people on the social housing waiting list and rents continued their upward spiral. At the time of writing, there are nearly 8,500 people trapped in emergency accommodation. The length of time people remain there has increased considerably, with many stuck there for months or even years. Access to affordable housing is a major challenge, preventing people moving out of emergency accommodation. Housing is the key to addressing homelessness but it's not just about housing; providing people with supports to help address whatever other needs surround their experience of homelessness is also essential.

For nearly 50 years the Simon Communities have not only provided much needed services and housing for thousands of people experiencing the trauma and stress of homelessness, but have also campaigned to make sure the State recognises this injustice and responds with more effective policies and appropriate legislation. Our key focus is working with people to address their

immediate issues while also supporting them to plan for their future. In 2016, the Simon Communities worked with over 11,000 people around the country. The work in the National Office focuses on policy, communications and campaigning; national fundraising partnerships; and best practice and training. Some of the key moments you will see highlighted in our review are Simon Week, the establishment of the Needs of Women in Services Group and the RIAI Simon Open Door fundraising campaign.

I would like to thank all the people who use our services around the country; their courage and tenacity is remarkable. To all of the staff and volunteers across the eight local Simon Communities, we could not continue without your hard work and dedication. I would like to thank the Board of the Simon Communities of Ireland for their guidance and support and to acknowledge the excellent work and commitment of the team in National Office over the last year.

We in the Simon Communities are doing all we can to address the ongoing homeless and housing crisis. Preventing homelessness and keeping people in their homes; access to appropriate and affordable housing; and the provision of support in housing are key to ensuring that people can leave homelessness behind for good. We could not do that without the support of so many different people and organisations. On behalf of the people we work with, our staff and volunteers, 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, we continue to ensure that whatever the issue, for as long as it is needed, our door is always open.



Weathering the storm: looking back on 2017



NIAMH RANDALL, NATIONAL SPOKESPERSON

It is hard to look back on 2017 as another year when the housing and homelessness crisis continued to worsen; even more troubling are the recent comments from the Minister for Housing Eoghan Murphy that this will continue before getting better. Homelessness and housing insecurity is never normal, it is never acceptable. The New Year will ring in with more than 5,000 adults and 3,000 children living in emergency accommodation, several hundred sleeping rough on our streets and many thousands more trapped in housing insecurity. With the sheer scale of the crisis, it is important to remember that these numbers reflect real people and families trying to get on with their lives in very difficult circumstances. Every person has their own story; what is common to all is that homeless and housing insecurity is traumatic, stressful and filled with uncertainty. The Government can and must do better in 2018. The Simon Communities will support this in any way we can.

The number of people who are homeless has increased

by 127% since 2011, according to Census data published in August. The data clearly showed people who are homeless, like the rest of the population, represent a wide range of experiences and a broad spectrum of people - single people, families, women, young people, children and drug/alcohol users who are homeless. Of particular note were the increases in young people, women and families who are becoming homeless. The Census data also gave us an insight into the extent of hidden homelessness in Ireland. One in ten people are living in accommodation of less than one room per person, a rise of 28% since the Census of 2011. This shows what the Simon Communities are seeing all around the country; people living in overcrowded accommodation because they cannot access secure social and affordable housing. The real impact of austerity and recession is clear - 55% of people who are homeless are in the labour force. Structural inequality and poverty are at the root of homelessness.

Soon after his appointment in June, Minister Eoghan Murphy announced a review of Rebuilding Ireland. The Simon Communities made a submission to this review, suggesting improvements to deliver secure, social and affordable housing across all tenure types within sustainable communities nationwide; to prevent more people from becoming homeless; and to address the complex or multiple needs that can be a cause or consequence of homelessness. However, this requires acknowledgment by the Government that increased housing supply will not impact affordability in short to medium term. The market cannot deliver the required housing mix; therefore, there must be a move away from private sector reliance and the commodification of housing. It is essential to act on the options that can deliver homes quickly such as empty homes and rapid

build housing. Just under 190,000 homes lie empty in Ireland, more than enough to house people living in emergency accommodation. Almost 11% of total housing stock is vacant in Ireland, almost twice the level expected in a functioning housing market. The potential to deliver much needed housing supply quickly is significant. In spring of this year, the Simon Communities published a range of solutions to address vacant and derelict homes in a 10- Point Plan to contribute to the development of the Vacant Housing Re-Use Strategy. The Government were due to publish the Strategy before summer. At the time of writing, that Strategy remains unpublished.

Ensuring that we never experience a crisis such as this again is a key priority of the Simon Communities. To this end in July, the Simon Communities, in conjunction with Mercy Law Resource Centre and Senator Colette Kelleher held a seminar in Trinity College, A Right to Housing. Were Ireland to enshrine the right to housing in the Constitution, this would mean acceptance that everyone is entitled to adequate and decent housing as a right, which could be enforced and upheld. This would provide a clear floor of protection in respect of access to basic adequate housing for all and the State would be obliged to ensure an adequate supply of social and affordable housing, with support as needed.

People in Ireland care deeply about the injustice and indignity of homelessness and housing instability, and the long-lasting impact on the lives of individuals, families and children. Throughout ex-Hurricane Ophelia in October, as the Simon Communities and other organisations worked together to keep people safe, members of the public asked numerous questions about how the Government planned to ensure the safety of those who had no shelter. The awful irony of advising people

to stay home, when we have the greatest homelessness crisis of modern times, was not lost on people.

The huge public concern about these issues is clear to us every day in our work in the Simon Communities; the support we receive is humbling. People want action. We hope that the Government hears what thousands of people standing with us are saying. It is not fair or sustainable to keep offering people short-term solutions with little attention paid to their longer-term needs. In the meantime, the Simon Communities all around the country continue the work that first began almost 50 years ago, providing support and services to 11,000 people and advocating for change. With your continued support, we will be there, our door is always open, for as long as people need us.



Key Moments of 2016

PRE-ELECTION 2016 CAMPAIGN

In the run up to Election 2016, we ran our Ask About Housing campaign encouraging the public to ask local candidates what they would do about housing if elected. The Simon Communities also had a pledge for candidates, which was signed by most political parties and their leaders, committing to prioritising housing and homelessness by resourcing the solutions required to meet people's longer term needs through the implementation of a Housing First approach – ensuring access to affordable, secure housing with support as required.

POLICY SUBMISSIONS

A number of key submissions were made during 2016 including our Election Manifesto on housing and homelessness; Submission to the Oireachtas Committee on Housing and Homelessness; and Simon Communities Pre-Budget Submission 2017.

WOMEN AND HOMELESSNESS

Following on from our 2015 research report, Women and Homelessness, in 2016 the Needs of Women in Services group was formed for staff around the country. The Group share knowledge and evidence based learning and have developed a training module that can be delivered to all relevant staff on a rolling basis throughout the Simon Communities.

RIAI SIMON OPEN DOOR

The twelfth 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 raised €90,000 in 2016.



LOCKED OUT OF THE MARKET

A series of snapshot studies tracked the disparity between rising rents and Rent Supplement/Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) limits., 'Locked Out of the Market: The Gap between Rent Supplement/HAP Limits and Market Rents' The report findings were highlighted in the media and Dail on several occasions.

CUT THE RED TAPE CAMPAIGN

Thousands of people supported our Cut the Red Tape campaign as part of Simon Week 2016 urging the Government to remove the everyday red tape and system failures that are pushing people into housing insecurity, homelessness and preventing people from leaving homelessness behind.

SIMON INVOLVEMENT AND ACTION GROUP (SIAG):

SIAG organized training for their members to become peer trainers. These peer trainers then ran a series of workshops at the Let's Get Together event in November, an event run for clients by clients.

HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS AND RIGHTS

Our Simon Week seminar, Housing, Homelessness and Rights called for the right to a home to be included in the Constitution and for this issue to be referred to the Oireachtas Committee on Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government. The seminar was chaired by Today FM's Matt Cooper and opened by Damien English T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government.

Snapshot of services provided by the Simon Communities in 2016

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

DURING 2016, THE LOCAL SIMON COMMUNITIES WORKED WITH:

A total of:



11,005
people

We worked with:



1,417
families



2,860
children

supporting people to move into housing and providing support in housing.

EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION, ROUGH SLEEPER TEAMS AND SUPPORT AND ADVICE SERVICES ARE OFTEN THE FIRST POINT OF CONTACT FOR PEOPLE

1,150



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



4,547

People accessed prevention, early intervention and advice services

365



Soup runs were provided 365 days a year in Cork and Dublin

Snapshot of services provided by the Simon Communities in 2016

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

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



2,925

People accessed Specialist Treatment and Support Services in 2016

of these:

RECOVERY

1,231

People availed of drug and/or alcohol treatment services.

4,835



There were 4,835 needle exchange contacts.



375

People accessed Multi-Disciplinary Teams...

968



...and there were 968 Mobile Health Unit contacts.

Snapshot of services provided by the Simon Communities in 2016

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

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



2,818

People were supported in housing all around the country in 2016 with low, medium or high support, depending on need.



373

People were supported in Simon Housing.

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES



511

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

Snapshot of services provided by the Simon Communities in 2016

Supporting the Work of Our Communities

OUR WORK WAS SUPPORTED BY THOUSANDS OF AMAZING VOLUNTEERS, SUPPORTERS, DONORS AND BUSINESSES



2,500+

More than 2,500 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.



Our work was supported by thousands of individual donors and many generous corporate supporters.

Policy, Research and Communications

The Simon Communities of Ireland works to influence Government and key policy and decision makers with our policy and campaigning; research; and communications activities. We engage with key stakeholders involved in shaping national housing and homeless policy and other policy areas which impact on the lives of people who are homeless and living with housing insecurity e.g. health policy, drug and alcohol policy. We are committed to evidence informed policy making and we engage in purposeful research to support our policy activities and to influence service delivery across the country.

In 2016 the Simon Communities of Ireland are represented in all major national policy fora and at key stakeholder meetings including the National Homeless Consultative Committee (NHCC), the Data Subgroup of the NHCC and bilateral Meetings with the Department of the 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 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 2011.

Our communications work supports our policy and campaigning activities where we aim to increase awareness of homelessness and associated issues as well as the work of the Simon Communities throughout the country. Throughout the year, we reached thousands of people through significant media coverage; there was over 800 national press articles and over 700 broadcast features in 2016 alone. 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 2016

In September 2016 our annual week of campaigning and awareness raising – Simon Week – took place involving a wide range of activities and events at a national and local level. This year we asked people to support our Cut the Red Tape campaign. This campaign gained huge public support urging the Government to remove the everyday red tape and system failures that are pushing people into housing insecurity, homelessness and preventing people from leaving homelessness behind. These issues act as significant barriers for people in their efforts to find their way out of the housing and homeless crisis.

ELECTION 2016

In the run up to Election 2016, we ran our Ask About Housing campaign encouraging the public to ask local candidates what they would do about housing if elected. We provided three questions for people to encourage them to engage candidates on these issues. The Simon Communities also had a candidate pledge, which was signed by most political parties and their leaders, committing to prioritising housing and homelessness by resourcing the solutions required to meet people's longer term needs through the implementation of a Housing First approach – ensuring access to affordable, secure housing with support as required.



REPORTS AND POLICY SUBMISSIONS

This year we published the following key reports and policy submissions -

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, which had remained unchanged from June 2013 to June 2016. By tracking the number of properties available to rent within these state support limits in ten 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 three Locked Out reports in 2016.

A number of submissions were made during 2016 including:

- Election Manifesto Document.
- Submission to the Oireachtas Committee on Housing and Homelessness.
- Submission to the Oireachtas Committee on the Future of Healthcare.
- Submission to Inform the Department of Social Protection's Statement of Strategy 2016-2019.
- Submission to Inform the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government 2016-2019.
- Submission to Inform the National Drugs Strategy.
- Submission to Inform the Private Rental Strategy.
- Submission to the Pre Budget Forum.
- Simon Communities Pre-Budget Submission 2017.

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.
- Policy development.
- Developing and delivering training.
- Organising and running seminars and workshops on practice issues.
- Auditing services and researching and disseminating best practice initiatives.

'PEER TRAINER' TRAINING AND NATIONAL CLIENT WORKSHOP

Building on the success of their enterprises in 2015, Simon Involvement and Action Group -SIAG (SIAG is a client led group for clients of Simon nationally) organised training for their members to become Peer Trainers. This training was delivered over two months in the summer. The training was in preparation for the 'Let's Get Together' event in November.

'Let's Get Together' was significant in that it was run by clients, for clients. The aim was to deliver workshops on the opportunities for clients to participate in their services, to inform and to inspire. Clients who had attended the Peer Trainer training ran a series of workshops. From the evaluation survey after the event it was clear that these workshops were very successful and of value to the participants.



DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEEDS OF WOMEN IN SERVICES NATIONAL GROUP

In 2016 the 'Needs of Women in Services' group was formed. This national staff group meets bi monthly and its purpose is to promote the inclusion of initiatives and services to meet the specific needs of women in all strategic planning and service development, in the local Communities. We also aim to share knowledge and evidence based learning and promote staff training.

The Group has developed a training module that can be delivered to all relevant staff on a rolling basis throughout the Simon Communities. The aim of the training is to inform staff about the specific needs of women who are homeless and discuss issues such as gender, trauma and appropriate service responses.

SIMON VOICES

Simon Involvement and Action Group produced two bumper issues of the newsletter Simon Voices, written by clients for clients, making it a unique publication.

Article topics included:

- Examining homelessness now and in 1916 and highlighting the ongoing housing crisis
- A review of the 'Let's Get Together' National Client event
- A report of one client's involvement at a Summer Camp for people experiencing homelessness in Germany

Also as readers are invited to submit works, Simon Voices continues to provide a place where people who use our services can have their written and other artistic works recognised by being published and disseminated nationally.



National Fundraising

The Simon Communities can only continue to make such a difference to the lives of those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness through the generosity of individuals and companies throughout Ireland. 2016 was no different and we would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who supported us this year 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 2016 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:

RIAI SIMON OPEN DOOR IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE ROYAL INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS OF IRELAND (RIAI):

In May, the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland and the Simon Communities of Ireland completed the 2016 RIAI Simon Open Door campaign. This campaign has been an annual event in both the RIAI and Simon Communities of Ireland calendar for twelve years. This successful fundraiser involves architects from the RIAI donating time and expertise to the public for the benefit of the Simon Communities. In 2016 the campaign raised €92,000 for Simon.

MUSGRAVE MARKETPLACE CHARITY OF THE YEAR

The Simon Communities were chosen as the charity partner in 2016 by the staff of Musgrave MarketPlace. Our Communities around the country were delighted to connect up and work with them on the many and varied fundraising activities which raised over €43,000.

ONE FOR IRELAND CAMPAIGN

The Simon Communities were chosen to be a beneficiary of the innovative One For Ireland Campaign in 2016. €36,000 was raised for two key youth projects in Dublin and Galway.

RESTAURANTS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND (RAI)

The Simon Communities were the official charity partner for the Irish Restaurant Awards 2016. The raffle fundraiser was held at the all-Ireland final ceremony.

ACHILL HALF MARATHON

The Simon Communities of Ireland were chosen as the Achill Half Marathon charity partner with funds raised going to support Galway Simon Community and North West Simon Community services. The event was a huge success and we would like to thank all involved.



Financial Overview 2016

In 2016 the Simon Communities of Ireland generated income of €934,343. This compared to income of €805,578 in 2015. Donations from the general public and from our corporate partners accounted for the vast majority of our income (82.7%). It would be impossible for us to continue the work that we do without such generous support.

During the year to December 2014 a grant was awarded by Pobal, a grant making agency funded by the Department of Environment & Local Government. The amount of grant awarded was €169,175 for the term 1st July 2014 to 30th June 2016. The amount recognised in the financial statements for 2016 is €45,113. 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. During the year to December 2016 a new grant was awarded by Pobal. The amount of grant awarded is €269,602 for the term 1st July 2016 to 30th June 2019. This funding is also restricted to support a percentage of the salary and overhead costs of two posts Best Practice and Training Coordinator and Head of Policy and Communications. The amount recognised in the financial statements for 2016 is €44,932. Total grants advanced from Pobal during the year ended 31st December 2016 amounted to €90,045. 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 2016 was €907,232. Included in this expenditure was €192,088 distributed to affiliate Simon Communities to support their operational costs and

fundraising costs of €53,885. This created a net income for the year on our income and expenditure account of €27,111.

In 2016 the Head of National Office, Patrick Quinn received a salary of €85,000. In addition, two staff members receive salaries in the range of €60,000 to €70,000. Pension contributions made by the organisation in 2016 amounted to €16,486.

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 of have signed up to the Governance Code for Voluntary Organisations. Our 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 Charity Regulatory Authority.

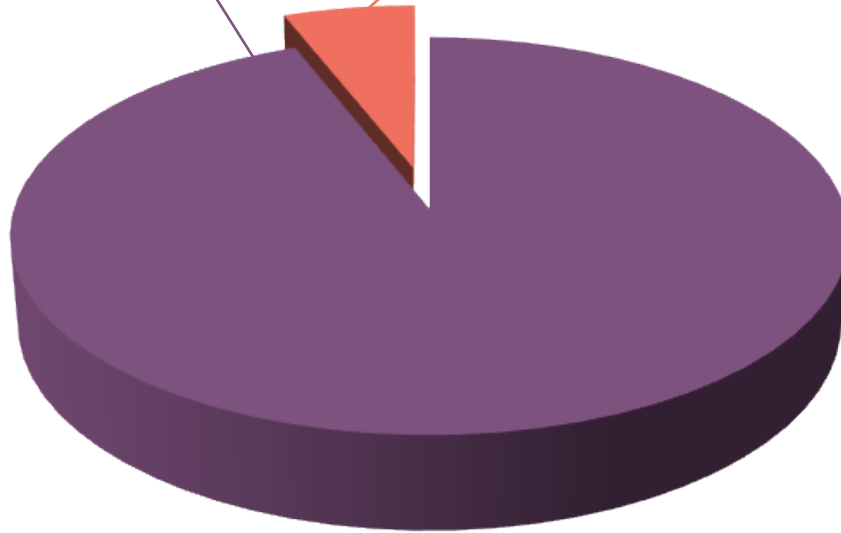
The Simon Communities of Ireland accounts are audited by JPA Brenson Lawlor each year and our financial year runs from 1 January to 31 December.

The following extracts are taken from the audited accounts for the year ending 31 December 2016.

2016 INCOME

82.7%
FUNDRAISING
€772,330

17.3%
GRANTS
Total: €772,330

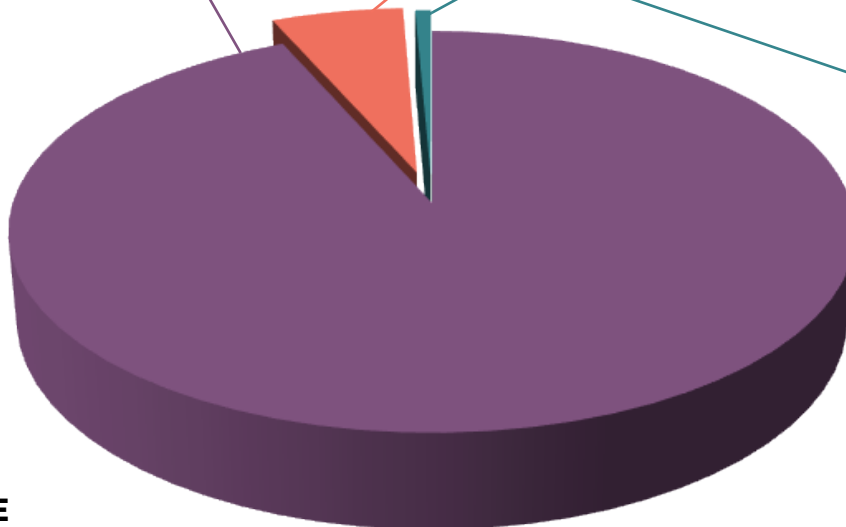


TOTAL INCOME
€934,343

93.4%
PROGRAMMES & ACTIVITIES
€846,697

5.9%
FUNDRAISING
TOTAL: €53,885

0.7%
GOVERNANCE
TOTAL: €6,650



TOTAL INCOME
€907,232

TOTAL INCOME
€27,111

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.

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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Registration Number - 74038

Charity Number - 8273

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