



Dublin
Simon
Community



ANNUAL REVIEW 2021

Serving Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow, Meath, Louth, Cavan and Monaghan



My partner viciously attacked me when I was pregnant, the next day I waited until he went to work and then crept out of the house, but I had nowhere to go. I thought my life was over. I was 12 weeks pregnant and terrified, the first night I ended up sleeping on a bench and when I woke up the Dublin Simon Outreach team were there waiting to help me



Supported Housing Client

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VISION

Making Home a Reality

MISSION

As a community we support people to exit homelessness, access and retain homes, and rebuild lives by delivering housing, health and wellbeing services.



VALUES

COMMUNITY & INCLUSION:

We provide those associated with Dublin Simon Community a sense of involvement, inclusion and belonging.

RESPECT & EMPOWERMENT:

We are committed to showing respect to each other and creating an environment where staff and the people who use our services are empowered to improve their lives.

EXCELLENCE & INNOVATION:

We provide services to best standards that are cost-effective and we are constantly pioneering new and innovative delivery mechanisms for service provision.


ACCOUNTABILITY & INTEGRITY:

We operate with transparency so that we are accountable for actions, individually and collectively, while being equitable and fair in all our dealings.

SAM'S WELCOME



2021 was immensely challenging for all of us here at Dublin Simon Community, our teams were focused on keeping people safe from Covid-19 and are still going to extraordinary lengths to achieve this. For those in emergency services, and those struggling to keep a roof over their head, the emotional and physical toll has been very severe.



We are proud to have supported 6,602 people across our frontline and support services during one of the most difficult and dangerous years in modern times. We are also proud that our actions directly contributed to the minimisation of cases and deaths from Covid-19 amongst the vulnerable homeless population and that our clinical staff were able to assist in the delivery of vaccinations to this cohort.

All of our teams report that one of the key impacts of Covid-19 lockdowns has been an increase in complex physical, mental and addiction related issues in our services. Many people housed during the pandemic have faced similar struggles and some have found it exceptionally difficult to sustain housing without access to in-person support services.

It is very difficult to tell people in crisis that they will have to wait, but that is exactly what is happening. As the demand for housing and homeless services rise, our clients are becoming hopeless and desperate. In 2021, the number of people exiting Dublin Simon's emergency accommodation was 23% lower than the previous year.

Additionally, the increasing demands mean that our clients have to wait longer to receive critical treatment and more intense supports to enable them to live independently. The waiting time to access Sure Steps Counselling increased from 22 days in 2020 to 37 days in 2021, the waiting time to access our Detox service increased from 76 days in 2020 to 86 days in 2021.

Throughout 2021 we continued to progress the completion of our 100-bed medical facility at Ushers Island and make progress on a range of other development plans that will increase the capacity of medical and long-term housing provision for those experiencing homelessness. We added an additional 20 high-support long term accommodation units at our Chester House service, providing a secure and stable place to live for people who had previously experienced homelessness.

This time last year we were all in a very challenging situation, locked down, social distancing and wondering if we would ever be able to live normally again. While we have by no means left Covid-19 behind us, at this point the worst effects of the pandemic are undoubtedly in the rear-view mirror and we are emerging into another reality.

We are now coming up against unprecedented challenges as we face into a winter with the numbers of people in emergency accommodation at the highest ever. The cost of living crisis is exacerbating the situation for many people and families, putting them at risk. With no affordable rental options, energy prices spiralling and the cost of basic provisions rising constantly, more people will fall into homelessness.

Thank you to all of you who continue to support us, thanks to our clients for their extraordinary resilience and our amazing frontline and support service staff who continue to push forward to deliver a future where we can make home a reality for everyone who needs it.

As you may already be aware, I will be handing over the role of CEO on October 1st, as I head into my retirement from Dublin Simon Community at the end of December 2022. It has been an honour to serve this community alongside the teams who will be continuing their invaluable work after I retire. My fervent wish is that you will continue to support Dublin Simon Community and keep us in your thoughts to help in any way you can.

Stay safe and stay cheerful.

Mind yourself,



CEO, Dublin Simon Community



ANNUAL REVIEW

20 21

AT A GLANCE



6,602

**People and families supported
across all services in 2021**



1,552

**Adults and children supported
by our settlement teams when
moving out of homelessness**



340,032

**Nutritious meals served to
clients throughout the year**

633



Adults and children housed through our independent housing in 2021

859



Accessed Dublin Simon **medical, residential treatment, detox, recovery and aftercare services**

3,466



Hours of counselling and crisis interventions for clients through Sure Steps Counselling

200



People living in our medium and high **support accommodation** in 2021

170



People participated in **Client Development programmes** in 2021



91,120

Hours invested in keyworking with clients in 2021



817

People secured short-term **accommodation** with or due to Dublin Simon referral or support



710

Units in Dublin Simon Community accommodation stock



857

People living in long-term **accommodation** with Dublin Simon Community



5,225

Contacts made by our **Outreach team** with people sleeping rough



32,691

Hours contributed by **volunteers** working alongside our professional staff across the organisation

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

2021 could potentially be considered one of the most challenging years in recent history for people experiencing homelessness, and for those supporting them. A chink of light came in the form of the rollout of vaccines which began in the early stages of the new year, bringing with it the hope that life could return to some semblance of normality.



The impact of Covid-19 is finally receding from day-to-day life, but it is also clear that our initial expectation of a return to normality back in early 2021 was premature, as lockdowns, decongregation measures in homeless accommodation, social distancing measures and PPE measures continued for the remainder of the year.

Dublin Simon Community has played a key role in supporting the safety of the homeless population throughout the pandemic with staff members and teams working in partnership with NGOs and state agencies to facilitate positive outcomes for clients. Additionally, our medical nursing staff supported SafetyNet with testing and vaccination roll-out.

In continuity of our housing-led approach, in 2021 our Property teams progressed a number of key development project in very adverse market conditions. This included securing 27 new independent properties and extending high-support long-term accommodation units by 20. Work commenced on the 100-bed medical facility at Ushers Island and progress was made on a range of other independents housing developments. By the end of the year our portfolio of accommodation stock was 710 units.

Our Assertive Street Outreach team engages with adults sleeping rough, supporting them into temporary accommodation and making appropriate referrals to health and housing services to support permanent housing options. This service, operated in partnership with Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE), made 5,225 contacts across all four local authority areas in Dublin. However, our volunteer led Soup and Breakfast Runs were suspended throughout the year until 4th December 2021 due to the pandemic.

Within our six-month supported temporary accommodation services (STA), 439 people were accommodated in Dublin and Wicklow locations. One night only beds continued to be suspended due to concerns over the spread of Covid-19.

We continued to provide medium and high support long-term accommodation for almost 200 people unable to live independently. These residents receive supports with day-to-day life skills, health and wellbeing and education and training as well as being assisted with issues such as loneliness and social isolation, issues of particular concern for our residents throughout the pandemic.

Our health and treatment service staff assessed and treated 859 people in 2021. Despite the pandemic we provided services in addiction recovery, blood borne virus care, non-residential addiction specific services and aftercare services. Our Step Up Step Down unit maintained an increased bed capacity to support and accommodate clients entering or leaving hospital care and our primary care service continued to operate within long-term accommodation services to improve healthcare for residents. The demand for counselling and crisis interventions through our Sure Steps Counselling service continued apace with 3,466 hours delivered in 2021.

Our tenancy sustainment services operated across Dublin, the Mid-East and North-East.

A total of 1,281 adults and 1,283 dependents accessed our tenancy sustainment services, preventing people from entering homelessness in the first instance or supporting them to move on and sustain their new home.

Client development is a key service in supporting positive quality of life outcomes for clients and access to skills for independent living. The team offers a range of activities and programmes designed to help clients gain confidence to be effective in their daily lives. Programmes include literacy, personal development programmes and employability programmes. 170 people engaged with the programme in 2021.

We continue to be grateful for the support of our partners in 2021 who have been more essential than ever in enabling us to deliver services to the vulnerable homeless and at-risk populations.

Our partners include the Dublin Homeless Network and regional homeless networks, the HSE, DRHE and other organisations such as Safetynet Primary Care. Additionally despite some curtailment of activity, volunteers continued to play an essential role in our residential and support services in 2021, delivering in excess of 32,000 hours to Dublin Simon Community and playing a major role in keeping our clients safe and well.

Our donors continued to amaze us with their unstinting generosity and willingness to support us in the most difficult of times, without their help we could not have hoped to support the 6,602 people assisted by Dublin Simon in 2021.

Today we are facing a whole new set of challenges as the aftermath of Covid-19 and the cost-of-living crisis makes things tougher than ever before for the most vulnerable in our society. All of us at Dublin Simon Community are committed to continuing to strive to make home a reality for those who need our help.


Diarmuid McNamee

Chairperson of Dublin Simon Community



OUTREACH AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Outreach and Emergency services were at the frontline of the Covid-19 pandemic throughout 2021 and the impact of the virus continued to impact on service delivery throughout the year.




Our supported temporary accommodation services (STAs) in Dublin and Wicklow provide short term accommodation and needs-based support for men, women and couples who are experiencing homelessness. Clients in this type of accommodation receive designated keyworking and wraparound supports.

Due to Covid-19, one-night-only beds in supported temporary accommodation did not resume in 2021. However six-month beds in Dublin and Wicklow saw a marginal increase in clients accessing this accommodation type over the previous year. The number of people moving out of this type of accommodation into a home of their own decreased by 23% for a range of reasons, including lack of suitable Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) properties, and available property types being unsuitable and unavailable for specific client needs.

Throughout the year the accommodation teams in Dublin dealt with 522 cases across all locations. The ratio of males to females accessing this accommodation is 3:1, 26% of those cases were people aged over 45. In 244 cases (47%) the individuals had been homeless for more than five years with a further 30% having being in homelessness for between 1 and 4 years.

For safety reasons our volunteer Soup Run and Breakfast Run was suspended for much of 2021, only resuming in the August for the first time since March 2020. During this period the nutritional needs of our vulnerable clients continued to be supported by our Outreach team as part of their wraparound support for clients who are sleeping rough.

The Dublin Simon Outreach team delivers an assertive outreach service in partnership with Dublin Regional Homeless Executive. The team engages daily with adults with complex needs and supports them into temporary homeless accommodation and onto a pathway to a more permanent home. Some cases are incredibly complex and require months of consistent trust-building with Outreach team members to reach a point where the client is in a position to be linked to the appropriate housing and health services. The Outreach team had 5,225 client contacts in 2021 with 1,898 individuals. Again, the gender balance among those assisted by our Outreach team was 3:1 male to female.



CLINICAL GOVERNANCE AND THERAPEUTIC SERVICES



Clinical Governance and Therapeutic Services cover a range of healthcare and addiction related services delivered by Dublin Simon Community including detox, blood borne virus services, counselling, primary care, recovery and aftercare services, all of which are underpinned by a robust clinical governance structure.



In 2021 the services supported 859 people and staff members supported 49 people to move out of homelessness and into long-term accommodation.

Similar to emergency services, the overall gender breakdown in Clinical Governance & therapeutic Services is 3:1 male to female, however the percentage of clients aged over 45 is 44% and 15% of those are aged 55 or over.

Once again the challenge for many of our clients is the increasing wait times to access these services the wait time for the Detox service increased by 13% to 86 days, exacerbated by delays caused by the need for negative PCR tests impacting the referral process. More than 40% of those accessing the Detox service had spent in excess of five years in homelessness and a further 20% had been homeless for more than three years. 83% of clients within Detox cited substance abuse as the reason for being homeless.

Counselling hours, including crisis interventions delivered by the Sure Steps Counselling service increased by 11% to 3,466 hours and the number of clients availing of the day counselling service increased by 21% to 364. The waiting times also increased in this service for non-crisis services from 22 days in 2020 to 37 days in 2021.


The Blood Borne Virus Unit supports clients in dealing with HIV, Hep C or similar conditions. It dealt with 72 cases in 2021, more than half of those had been homeless from more than three years (43) and 30 cases were people who had been in homelessness for more than five years. The average waiting period to access the service in 2021 was 43 days and the average number of days that clients spent accessing the 8-bed service was 28 days.

Step Up Step Down delivers vital clinical intervention for a range of medical conditions such as medical stabilisation, wound care, pain management, pre and post hospital care and recovery post surgery. There were 193 cases in 2021 up by almost 10% on the previous year. This service also assisted 29% of clients in achieving a valid medical card on discharge to assist them in accessing further medical care. A much higher percentage of clients here are aged over 45 (67%), of that 21% of cases were with people aged over 55.



SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION





During 2021 we continued to deliver both high and medium supported accommodation for people who are unable to live independently.

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This type of accommodation provides stable long-term accommodation people experiencing homelessness who need medium to high levels of supports in the areas of physical health, mental health or addiction. Each person living in this type of accommodation has access to a keyworker to support their specific needs and maximise their independence. Those needs can include self-care, healthcare, independent living skills, training and workplace skills, and achieving personal goals and aspirations.

The challenge of combatting social isolation during the pandemic continued to be an issue throughout 2021 and our teams worked hard on delivering regularly socially distanced activities and entertainment. During 2021 we also opened a state-of-the-art 20-bed supported housing unit at our Chester House service as well as transitioning two other services in Dublin city centre from supported housing to independent housing units.

In 2021 we housed 200 individuals, including 37 newly accommodated adults. The ratio of male to female

clients is 2:1 and the majority of residents are singles adults (62%). Almost three-quarters of our residents are aged over 45 with 44% aged over 55.

This group were cited as being particularly vulnerable to Covid-19 so keeping them safe is a tribute to our staff members and the commitment of the residents in sustaining safety measures throughout the pandemic.

During 2021 we supported 17 residents in moving on to accommodation that was more appropriate to their everyday needs and made 855 referrals for services such as health, social care, learning, participation and development.

The high standard of service within Dublin Simon Community's supported accommodation services was acknowledged through the European Quality in Social Services Standard (EQUASS) which recognises quality assurance in the provision of social services in Supported Accommodation, Emergency and Tenancy Sustainment services.

INDEPENDENT HOUSING AND PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT



Dublin Simon Community takes a housing-led approach and we work to deliver independent housing units to individuals and families. Our Property section comprises the Property Development team, Property Acquisition team, Independent Housing and Facilities Management team.

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Covid-19 caused massive disruption to construction throughout 2021 but despite this, Dublin Simon's Property Development team progressed a number of key projects. This included securing 27 new independent properties and expanding high-support long term accommodation units by 20 thanks to the development at Chester House in Dublin.

Development of the 100 bed residential medical treatment facility at Ushers Island continued apace and the project is on

schedule to open in 2024. Other major property developments are at various stages of re-tendering and funding applications.

The Property Acquisition team has been increasing stock by searching for lease and purchase opportunities in turnkey condition or in need of refurbishment. At the end of 2021 the Dublin Simon portfolio comprised 710 accommodation units.



These units were funded through Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) Grants, Capital Development reserves – build up under the guidance of the Board over a number of years, the Capital Advance Leasing Facility, and the Housing Finance Agency.

The Facilities Management team refurbished 25 properties within the year and completed 17 unscheduled building works projects. However, due to Covid-19 this team could not complete scheduled building inspections.

The Independent Housing team manages the allocations process of accommodation acquired by Dublin Simon Community in partnership with relevant local authorities and other independent housing stakeholders. This team is experienced in tenancy and neighbourhood relations and provides supports necessary to address

issues and sustain clients in tenancies.

The team oversees 269 independent housing units in Dublin, Kildare, Meath, Wicklow and Louth. 91 are one-bed units, 80 are two-bedrooms and 98 are three or more bedrooms.

In 2021 Independent Housing allocated 17 properties to new tenants, accommodating 25 people with Dublin Simon community. This brings the total number accommodated by Dublin Simon community to 633 people.

Dublin Simon Community is always seeking opportunities to make an impact on the homelessness crisis through capital development support. If you are in a position to provide assistance, advice, direction or support please contact Meadhbh Langton by email at meadhbhlangton@dubsimon.ie

TENANCY SUSTAINMENT



Dublin Simon Community's tenancy sustainment teams operate a variety of supports and services including, prevention, settlement, outreach and shared housing. Their remit extends across Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow, Meath, Louth, Cavan and Monaghan.

Teams support people with every aspect of finding and moving into a tenancy, managing their current tenancy or moving to a new tenancy should their existing one be inappropriate to their needs.

For people at risk of homelessness, the typical issues they face include: being issued a notice to quit, difficulty finding alternative accommodation, rent increases, overcrowding and breakdown of insecure or informal living arrangements. For people moving on from homelessness the team offers support with settling into their new home and local community, setting up utility bills and developing life skills in the home.

Covid-19 continued to impact on tenancy sustainment with drop-in clinics suspended throughout the year. Teams

were adaptable in their approach and made sure that client needs were met through visiting, phone and email support.

In 2021 2,564 people were supported by our tenancy sustainment teams across Dublin, the Mid-East and the North-East regions. This figure was made up of 1,281 adults and 1,283 children and dependents. Within this group 52% of households were single adult households and 47% were families. Almost one third were single men and 20% were single mothers with children. One fifth of the people we supported were aged over 55, highlighting the precarious situation faced by many older tenants.

“

In an exceptionally challenging year we collaborated with local authority partners to achieve successful outcomes on some heartbreaking cases involving senior citizens at risk of homelessness. No-one should be facing homelessness in their twilight years.

”

Adrian - Tenancy Sustainment Project Worker

CLIENT DEVELOPMENT

Dublin Simon Community's Client Development team is focused on achieving quality of life outcomes for the people accessing our services with view to assist clients in gaining the confidence to be effective in their daily lives both as an individual and as a contributing member of society.

The service delivers a range of programmes in the areas of social inclusion, personal development, health and wellbeing and employability.

There is a broad range of support offerings from practical and educational assistance such as literacy courses and education grants, to self-esteem and confidence activities such as client forums, art and advocacy programmes, right through to structured employability supports such as Community Employment Engagement schemes specific to the homeless sector, and mainstream Community Employment schemes to support long-term unemployed back into the workforce. Additionally Dublin Simon delivers volunteering opportunities so that participants can gain valuable real-world experience.

2021 saw 170 total participants in Client Development activities with a 4:1 ratio of male to female involvement. The number of people newly referred in 2021 was 154, comprising 143 internal referrals and 11 external referrals.

Employability Pathways had 28 new participants in 2021, joining existing participants from previous years still engaging with the programme. Within those new participants, 15 availed of an education grant, nine were engaged in CEE, two engaged in client volunteering opportunities, and two were in a mainstream CE programme. Also notable is that in the five-year period from 2016 to 2021, 222 people engaged with the pathways and 33 people progressed from employability pathways to employment.

Creative and arts programmes were engaged in by 66 people throughout the year. Scrappy But Happy 11, the annual exhibition and publication of client artwork and literature was published in November 2021, and guest launched by actress and writer Clare Dunne, who paid tribute to the high standard of art, stories and poetry produced by Dublin Simon clients.

FUNDRAISING, COMMUNICATIONS & VOLUNTEERING



Dublin Simon Community would like to say a huge thank you to all donors and supporters in 2021 whose assistance allowed us to keep our doors open during the darkest days of the pandemic.

We were once again amazed at the generosity and support from our community of donors, corporate and community partners who found creative ways to support us when we were unable to engage in in-person fundraising activity.

Once again our annual Christmas Busk made a massive splash after it was rescued at the eleventh hour by the generosity of artists and creatives, who came together in 12 days to bring about an incredible recorded event captured in late December in St Patrick's Cathedral and streamed across the globe on Christmas Eve, raising essential funds from generous viewers and keeping the spirit of the Dublin Simon Christmas Busk alive.

In the absence of our flagship five mile race, Home Run in 2021, we ran a virtual event for the second year in a row. Run@ Home helped us to achieve our fundraising targets to support vital life saving and life enhancing programmes for our clients.

Our corporate partners gave us immense support both through donations, fundraising and delivering direct assistance to the organisation through the donations of goods, services and supports to our team.

While we did manage to do a small amount of in-person fundraising in 2021, most

notably our annual Carolathon on Grafton Street, the year saw us largely restricted to virtual and online fundraising.

The Communications & Media team would like to thank all the clients, staff members who allowed us to share their stories, and the journalists and media outlets who supported us in sharing those stories with the public. Shining a light on the challenges facing people experiencing, or at risk of homelessness and highlighting the work of Dublin Simon Community.

Without our Food for Simon scheme we would not be able to deliver in excess of 900 meals per day in our services. This scheme collects contributions of foodstuffs and catering equipment from 17 regular donors and a number of one off supporters, helping us to offset the massive cost of providing nutritious meals to our residents and clients.

Volunteering is at the heart of our community and despite the challenges of Covid-19 our volunteers continued to deliver vital additional support to our frontline services. Over the course of 2021 a total of 35 full-time volunteers and 80 part-time volunteers supported Dublin Simon Community, contributing a total of 32,691 hours of their time.

GOVERNANCE AND FINANCES



In its commitment to providing the highest quality service possible to all stakeholders, Dublin Simon Community adheres to the highest standards of governance and quality.

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The organisation continued to hold a European Quality in Social Services Standard (EQUASS) through 2021 in recognition of the proven quality assurance in the provision of social services.

We have also been awarded the Investing in Volunteers Standard and have a Gold Standard certification in Excellence Through People, a bronze standard in Investors in Diversity and a Keep Well mark from IBEC.

In 2021 the entire organisation and client representatives were involved in a process to review and redevelop Dublin Simon Community's Rolling Strategy for the

next five years. A new and revised Rolling Strategy 2022 - 2026 has been developed to reflect the direction of activity over the next five years.

Our organisation and strategy is underpinned by organisational policies, governance and quality standards within the context of evolving regional and national strategies, standards, policies and action plans.

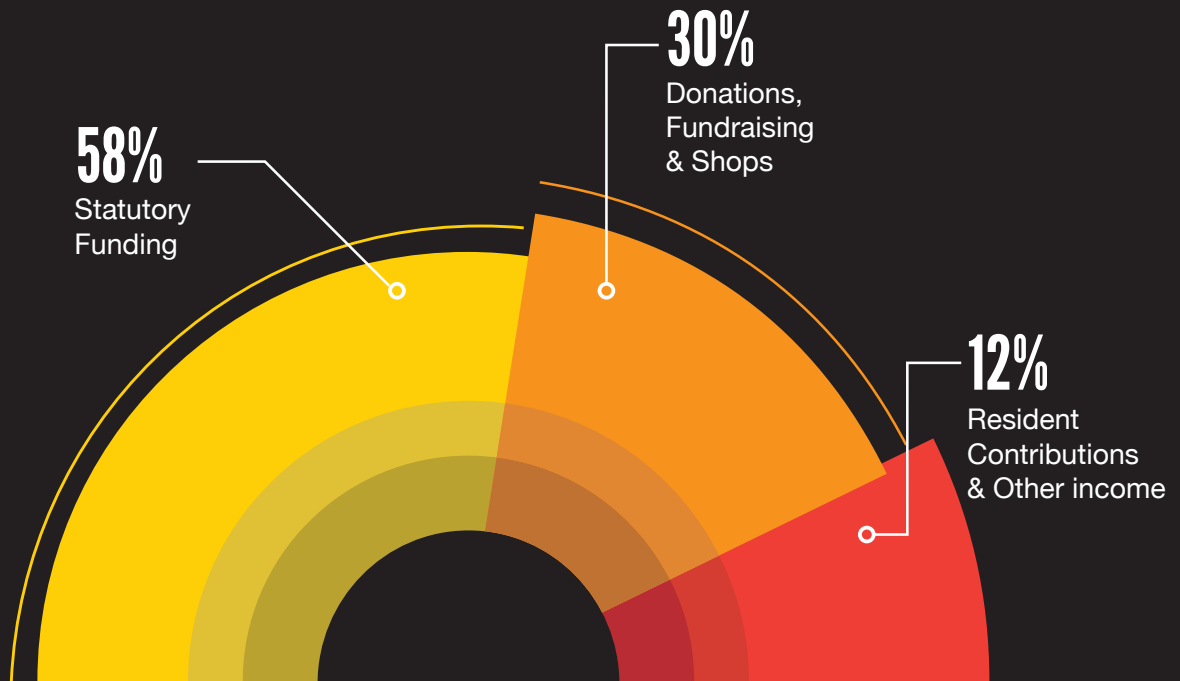
Further details on our governance structure and all of our quality standards visit our website:

www.dubsimon.ie/who-we-are/governance/

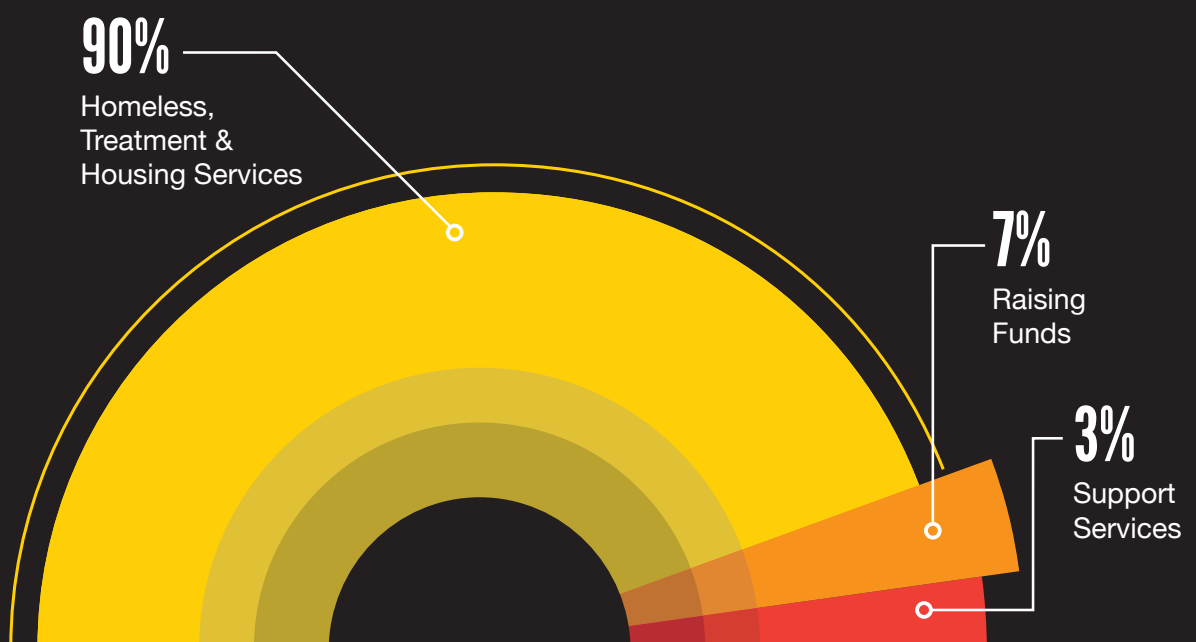
Each year full details of our financial statements are published on our website in full here:

www.dubsimon.ie/who-we-are/finances/

INCOME 2021



EXPENDITURE 2021



**THANK YOU TO
ALL OUR STAFF,
VOLUNTEERS,
PARTNERS AND
DONORS FOR YOUR
SUPPORT IN 2021**





When I moved into the Dublin Simon service it was like they knew me all my life, they couldn't do enough for me. They helped me get my independence back and get life skills, helping me to achieve things I didn't think I would be able to.



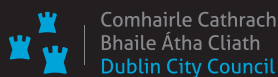
Supported Housing Client



Even when I gave up the drink,
I was finding it really hard and
I had a few suicide attempts,
Simon got me counselling and
other things to help build me back
up. There was no criticism and
no judgement, just a way for me
to get back on my feet.



Sure Steps Counselling Client



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