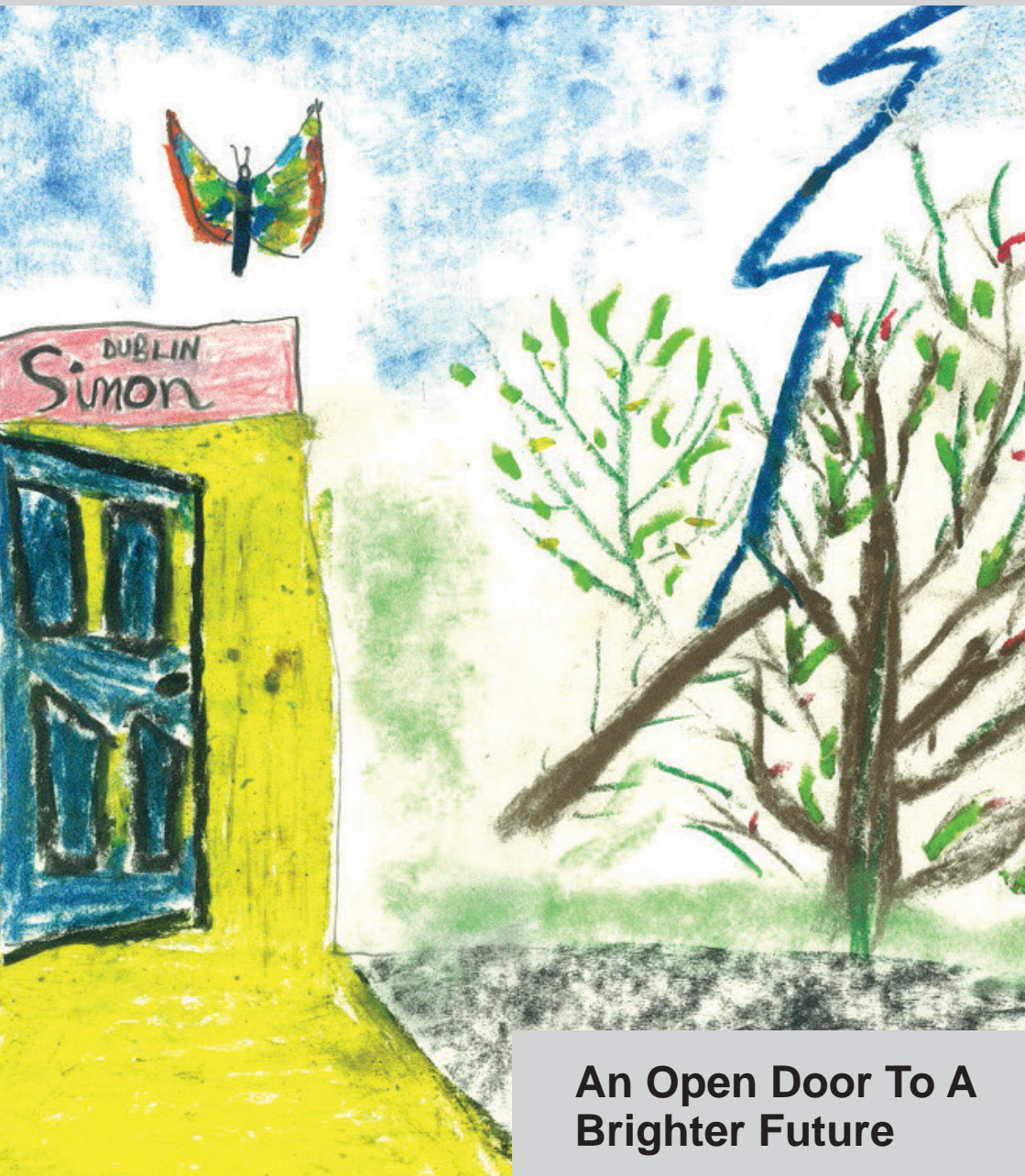


# Annual Review 2014

Serving Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow, Meath



**An Open Door To A  
Brighter Future**

*“Simon has to be as new as tomorrow’s headlines. It cannot be static and must never fear change.”*

Anton Wallich-Clifford,  
Founder of the Simon  
Community



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# Company Information 2014

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## **Directors**

Kevin Loughran  
Dympna Dolan  
Padraig McKeon  
Michael McDermott  
Liam Halpin (Appointed 13th June 2014)  
Seamus Kearney  
Sharon Cosgrove  
Darren McCallig (Resigned 28th May 2014)  
Niall Saul  
Phillip Flynn

## **Secretary**

Martin Hannigan

## **Chief Executive Officer**

Sam McGuinness

## **Company Number**

32955

## **Charity Number**

5963

## **Registered Office**

1-2 Cope Street,  
Dublin 2.

## **Auditors**

JPA Brenson Lawlor,  
Brenson Lawlor House,  
Argyle Square,  
Morehampton Road,  
Dublin 4.



# Vision, Mission and Values

## 2012 - 2015

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Dublin Simon Community is committed to providing services at all stages of homelessness. We are focused on offering supportive alternatives to people living in despair, enabling them to rebuild their lives and empowering them to secure a safe home of their own.

### Our Vision

Making home a reality.

### Our Mission

Empower people to access and retain a home, by providing housing, prevention and targeted interventions through advocacy and partnership.

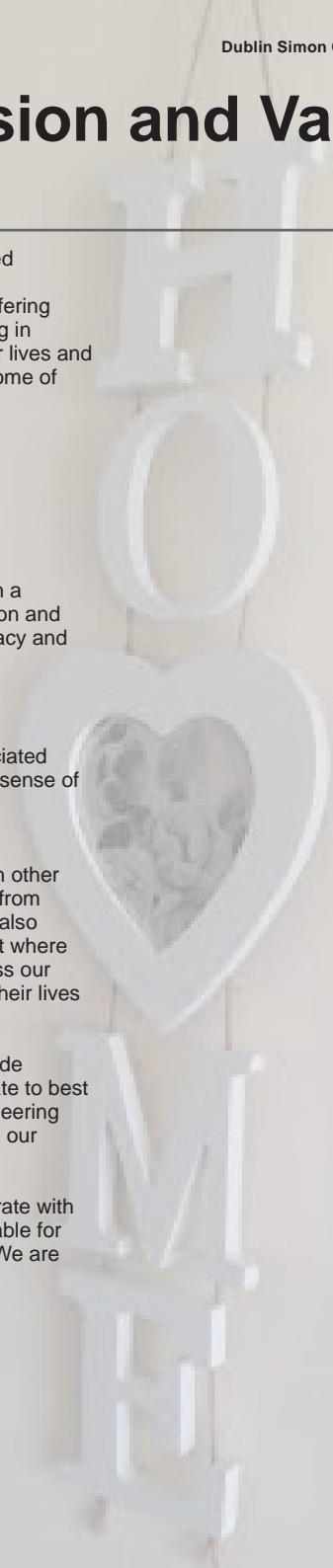
### Our Values

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

*Respect and Empowerment* - We are committed to showing respect to each other and responsible conduct is expected from everybody in our community. We are also committed to creating an environment where volunteers, staff and those who access our services are empowered to improve their lives and that of their local communities.

*Excellence and Innovation* - We provide services that are cost-effective, operate to best standards and we are constantly pioneering new and innovative ways of providing our services.

*Accountability and Integrity* - We operate with transparency so that we are accountable for actions, individually and collectively. We are equitable and fair in all our dealings.





# Poem of Remembrance

---

Remembering the laughter and the tears

Working through worries and fears

The joys that we had

Loving, amazing and sad

And the memories we'll always have.

As we walk through life

Families, friends, loved ones

Walking together through happiness and strife

Thinking of all the times we had.

Now that you're gone

It makes us feel sad

But the memories we have

Make us feel glad

I know that you're gone

But our love is still strong.

We see you in the seasons

The nights and the days

We cherished you so much, in so many ways

As the days continue on, and the birds fly by

Even though we are apart, you are deeply in our hearts.

*Creative Writing Group: Allison, Clive, Martina and Pat*

*Poem taken from Scrappy but Happy 4, a collection of creative writing and artwork by people accessing Dublin Simon Community's Learning and Development service.*

Mural by residents in our Stabilisation/Respite service

# Sam's Welcome



*Throughout 2014 the face of homelessness changed dramatically for the worse as we increasingly saw that "homelessness really can happen to anyone", and it did.*

At Simon, our key focus is to work with people as they are, based on where they

have come from and where they would like to go. We give back choice and control, two things that are quickly lost when someone enters the unrelenting cycle of being without a home. This approach has sustained our services for people most at risk for the last 45 years and will drive the direction of our support in the years to come.

**As we continue to see these changing faces of homelessness coming to our door for help, this is more relevant now than ever and our door at Simon will remain open for as long as we are needed.**

A father living in a hotel with his two children, or a woman sleeping rough, should be able to move on from homelessness into a home of their own. To achieve this we address what circumstances brought them to be where they are and provide the emotional and health supports for them to recover from the detrimental impact of homelessness. We include budgeting advice, meal planning, one to one counselling and medical treatment in each of the services we provide.

In 2014, we focused on developing and adapting our services to tackle the emerging crisis, while also sourcing and acquiring more properties to provide housing for people and families. In order to escape the dangerous trap of rough sleeping and emergency accommodation we helped people find a long term home, with a support network around them.

Using our Housing Development Fund made up of bequests, trusts and generous donor gifts, together with Capital Assistance Scheme funding, in this year alone we increased our accommodation capacity by 59%.

We established our Satellite-Hub model with Simon's floating support staff, in our permanent housing, creating additional independent units that were partnered with other services in their area. Our new High Support Accommodation at Riversdale House opened its doors to 24 residents and we expanded our Prevention service adding Tenancy Advice.

Towards the end of 2014, as the homeless situation and housing shortages changed dramatically for the worse, the tragic death of Jonathan Corrie outside Dáil Éireann generated public consternation and an outcry for immediate action. Still, so much more needs to be done to ensure that Jonathan's passing, and the passing of many other people on our streets, will not be in vain.

As I write this there are over 2,300 adults and in excess of 1,200 children in emergency accommodation in the Dublin region alone. Over 600 families are trapped in terrible despair and uncertainty, with nowhere to go. Too many people are still laying their heads down in miserable circumstances.

**There is sadly no abatement to the numbers of people and families turning to us for help, as we continue to face this homeless and housing crisis head on.** On behalf of our clients, residents, volunteers and staff, thank you for your enduring support. With your ongoing generosity we will do everything possible to give people back their dignity and security, providing them not only with food and a warm bed for the night but their own front door, a caring community and a safe place to call home.

**Sam McGuinness**  
CEO of Dublin Simon Community

# 2014 Highlights

**€1 million saved through Food for Simon**  
Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Simon Coveney, TD and RTÉ's Bryan Dobson joined key players from the food industry at Zaragoza Restaurant in Dublin to celebrate the success of €1 million in cost saving from the Simon Community's Food for Simon Programme. Since it was launched in 2009, the initiative has encouraged companies to donate food, services and other essential items, which would usually be purchased by the Simon Community, to our homeless services.

## #BeyGood for Simon

Dublin Simon Community were delighted to have been chosen again this year by Beyoncé as her charity partner for the Dublin dates of her Mrs Carter Show World Tour in March. Concert goers donated over €13,000 and over 170 bags of clothing and other items.

## Simon Shops

With the support of Ikea, Heineken and Yahoo!, in 2014 we successfully completed refurbishment projects in our Camden Street and Thomas Street Shops to improve our service for clients, donors and customers. The Simon Shops are operated by a dedicated team of staff, Community Employment staff, Full-Time and Part-Time Volunteers as well as Client Volunteers. Any donations received into our shops go to our clients, with the remainder being sold to raise vital funds.

## The High Hopes Choir

Dublin Simon Community were honoured to be part of the High Hopes Choir, created by former principal conductor of the RTÉ Concert Orchestra - David Brophy, for a three part documentary series for RTÉ. The choir was made up of clients, staff and volunteers of Simon, Focus Ireland and Saint Vincent De Paul, in both Dublin and Waterford. The series culminated in the choir recording a version of Kodaly's High Hopes which reached Number One, a live appearance on The Late Late Show and a gala performance in Christchurch Cathedral.

## Transition Year Programme

The Volunteer Office ran a Transition Year pilot programme in conjunction with the Fundraising team from August to December. 15 Transition Year students successfully completed the pilot which will continue in 2015.



## President Visit to Wicklow

The President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, officially opened our Kilmartin Hill service in Wicklow Town on 24th September. Accompanied by his wife Sabina, the President spent considerable time greeting and chatting to the residents who spoke about the support they had received at the service.





# Chairperson's Report 2014



2014 saw the number of people and families entering into homelessness reach crisis levels. Emergency accommodation operated at full capacity with rough sleeping figures continuing to rise. More worrying still, was the number of families being

put into hotels as the waiting lists for social housing spiralled out of control. Serious housing shortages, rapidly growing rents and issues with rent supplement continued to push a frightening number of people and families into the anguish of homelessness and a desperate future. **Short term accommodation became long term, in the absence of available housing.**

Dublin Simon Community are doing everything possible to address this major crisis. In 2014 we focused on sourcing permanent housing options for individuals and families across Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow and Meath to move them on from homelessness for good. Our Prevention services were expanded to prevent as many people as possible from entering the cycle of homelessness. We continued to develop our health, education and specialist services to help people address and overcome what led to them becoming homeless.

In 2014, we welcomed the announcement of the Capital Assistance Scheme, which gave just under €5.7 million to fund the acquisition of 56 units across Dublin, Kildare and Wicklow. We hope this is a sign of things to come as the Government turn their attention to the escalating crisis in homelessness and housing. This announcement supported the work already being done by our own Housing Development Fund made up of wills, bequests, trusts and other large donor gifts. This initiative is essential to sustain and increase our housing stock.

We remain focused on delivering services to a high quality, moving people from rough sleeping to independent accommodation and supporting them to sustain their accommodation. This will require ongoing teamwork to achieve our vision.

**On behalf of Dublin Simon Community, and more importantly the people who rely on our services, I would like to thank all our supporters for their dedication this year. Your generosity to our clients is valued and admired.**

In the toughest of times, the commitment of Dublin Simon Community staff, clients, donors, volunteers and partners have ensured that we can support each other and pull together to meet this extraordinary demand. We are ever mindful that homelessness can happen to any one of us and are responding to each person's need to find a secure home.

**Kevin Loughran**  
Chairperson



# Outreach and Emergency

*2014 was a challenging year for Dublin Simon Community's Outreach and Emergency services with the numbers of people rough sleeping and needing emergency accommodation reaching record levels. The Rough Sleeper Team and Harm Reduction Service were out 365 days and nights of the year engaging with the growing number of people living on the street, providing essential services and interventions. Our Supported Temporary Accommodation on Harcourt Street provided emergency beds for men, women and couples who were experiencing homelessness.*

## **Rough Sleeper Team and Harm Reduction Service**

In 2014, we redeveloped our Rough Sleeper Team to focus on providing Harm Reduction. The service integrated more closely with our Soup Run to support people living on the street to move on from homelessness while providing life saving health interventions through the Emergency Needle Exchange and the Mobile Health Unit primary care facility. The team also continued to carry out an early morning street count twice weekly, where by September 2014 they saw the highest peak in the numbers sleeping rough.

We continued to form partnerships and link in with other services across Dublin such as Chrysalis, Safetynet, Tiglin and the Freephone service so that we could best respond to the needs of our clients. With the increase in reported cases of HIV in Dublin, Dublin Simon Community in conjunction with Safetynet is in planning to respond by offering HIV swab screening in the Mobile Health Unit and follow on support services.

The team is further developing the service and working towards expanding the Mobile Health Unit to offer a dental and chiropody service.

## **Supported Temporary Accommodation**

Our Supported Temporary Accommodation on Harcourt Street continued to operate at full capacity for the majority of 2014. Due to the increasing demand for beds and lack of available housing to move on to, a backlog has arisen in emergency accommodation. 89% of clients in Harcourt Street were deemed "long-term homeless", having been homeless for longer than six months

as emergency accommodation became long term. If people were able to move on to appropriate accommodation the service would be better able to serve its purpose as a stepping stone out of homelessness. Despite these challenges, 10% of clients moved from Harcourt Street to independent living or supported housing.

2014 also saw the service taking part in several Room To Improve projects, where corporate teams paint and decorate a room or an area in one of our services to make the environment better for residents. Two communal rooms were redecorated and renamed 'The Lounge' and 'The Gateway'. The back garden, kitchen and several of the bedrooms were also repainted. In the year clients, staff and volunteers also worked on turning the service into a non-smoking building.

## **Additional Emergency Beds**

As part of the Cold Weather Initiative, in December Dublin Simon Community supported the Salvation Army in opening a 25 bed night shelter in North Dublin. Beds were allocated by the Central Placement Unit and the service opened each night from 7pm to 10am the following day. Clients received a light meal on arrival and a breakfast in the morning. Transport from Dublin City Centre was provided by the Simon Rough Sleeper Team and the service has operated at full capacity since opening.



# 2014 Snapshot



Our Rough Sleeper Team spent over **6,000 hours** engaging with clients sleeping rough.



A peak of **111 people** were counted on our inner city Early Morning Street Counts on one morning in September.



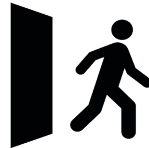
**150 Cold Weather Packs** were given out between November and December.



**528 people** had GP consultations with the Mobile Health Unit.



**433 people** accessed our Supported Temporary Accommodation.



**10% of Harcourt Street residents** moved on to independent living or supported housing.

“

*It wasn't gold they were giving out, but to me that sleeping bag meant so much.*

”

- Outreach Client



# Housing Services

*Dublin Simon Community expanded our Supported Housing Services in 2014, increasing the number and type of permanent housing options for people who are moving on from homelessness. We established the Satellite-Hub model in our Medium Supported Housing, each linked to independent units with staff providing floating support to clients. 2014 also saw our Permanent High Support Accommodation service at Riversdale House welcome its first residents. Our Supported Housing Services worked together to facilitate residents moving from our service at Sean MacDermott Street, which closed temporarily for refurbishment.*

## Satellite-Hub Supported Housing Model

In 2014, we introduced the Satellite-Hub Model between our Dorset Street and Blessington Street services. New policies, procedures and guidelines were drawn up in order to reflect the changes to the service and to ensure that the residents were correctly matched to the new support levels on offer. The services also expanded their client group to include couples and improved both buildings through Room to Improve projects.

2014 saw a year of positive changes in Canal Road. Residents with higher support needs moved on to the new service at Riversdale House while residents who were ready for independent living moved to the new satellite unit on Clanbrassil Street. These residents continued to visit and contribute to the strong sense of community within Canal Road. The service also ran an active schedule of activities such as weekly group work, cookery lessons, photography classes, art classes, pampering days, barbecues and the Personal and Professional Development programme, operating as an additional support alongside key-working. The service hosted a very successful Christmas Awards show for the current and recent residents, recognising the achievements accomplished in the year. Forest Avenue, a nearby restaurant, provided a highly enjoyable meal for Canal and Riversdale residents at the end of the year.

## High Support Housing

2014 was a time of new beginnings for the community of Chester House and by the end of the year the service was settled and involved

in the Phibsborough community. The service had recently moved from the old premises to provide a higher standard of housing for our residents. The service launched a gardening project and by summer was growing their own vegetables and had a wonderful garden for residents to enjoy. Chester House also supported the temporary closure of Sean MacDermott Street by successfully resettling clients to alternative accommodation and welcoming six new residents. Christmas celebrations were a great success with the team working with Localise who donated gifts for all residents. Chester House is looking forward to 2015 with optimism when we will be launching our satellite apartments for independent living and a training facility for the organisation.

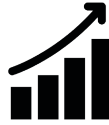
In April, Riversdale House opened its doors to welcome our first residents. The building had been renovated and designed to ensure that residents would receive the highest standard of accommodation to meet their specific needs. Our residents used the communal areas for individual activities such as reading and knitting. They also showed a sense of pride in their new home by taking responsibility for looking after the building, the garden and the local area. As part of the ongoing work by the Riversdale and Palmerstown community and Dublin Simon Community, a Memorandum of Understanding and Service Level Agreement was developed and a monitoring group was set up. This included a number of key stakeholders such as local residents groups, the Palmerstown Community Council, local elected representatives, community Gardaí, South Dublin County Council, the Health Service Executive and Riversdale House.



# 2014 Snapshot



**152 people** accessed our permanent supported housing services in 2014.



We increased our housing stock by **59%**.

**77% Male**



**23% Female**

Average demographics who accessed our housing services.



Our Dorset Street service successfully introduced **couple's accommodation**.

# 100%

Of residents in Riversdale House had experienced **homelessness for more than five years**.

“

*I just want to thank Simon for helping me get my own place at last.*”

*- Housing Resident*





# Preventing Homelessness

*Dublin Simon Community provide two services to prevent families and individuals from falling into homelessness – Support to Live Independently and Visiting Tenancy Support Service. The services provide tenancy support, settlement services, housing advice and information to the growing number of households who are at risk of losing their home and people moving on from homelessness. In 2014 each of the services saw the effects that the increased demand in the private rental market was having, both on people who were trying to move on from homelessness, and those who were at risk of losing their homes.*

## Support to Live Independently

In 2014, the Support to Live Independently (SLI) service experienced a large increase in people needing support in moving on from homelessness. In its fifth year of operation, the SLI service fulfils a very important function in stabilising people in their new tenancies and communities, providing practical support with tenancy, education, training, employment, health, budgeting and independent living skills. These supports are essential for clients when going through the difficult transition from homelessness to a new home.

The amount of support people need varies depending on their length of time in homelessness and their previous experience of living in their own homes. Some families in particular will have plenty of experience managing their own homes and became homeless due to the instability of the housing market. We help them with practical issues around finances and we also assess how the children are doing and the effect homeless services may have had on the family unit.

The number of clients who successfully moved on to private rented accommodation unfortunately declined as property on the rental market shrank and rents soared, leaving little options for people. Last year we also observed the negative effects of homelessness on children and families particularly if they have had long periods in homeless accommodation. As a result we made the decision to introduce Child and Family Support to our service. Providing specialist support to families will play a key role in preventing any further episodes of homelessness, while addressing the trauma

experienced while going through a period of having no home.

## Homelessness Prevention Services

2014 was a very challenging time for homelessness prevention services due to the lack of available housing, particularly in the private rented market. Large numbers of people who contacted our Visiting Tenancy Support Service (VTSS) were in private rented accommodation and looking for alternative housing or dealing with a 'notice to quit' from their landlords. As the majority of our clients are dependent on rent allowance they were continuously 'squeezed out of the market' as rents increased and demand for accommodation rose.

Early intervention and identifying warning signs for people at risk are key in preventing people from entering homelessness, however when people contacted our service they were often at the edge of crisis and fewer options were available or time was too limited. To address this, in 2014 we worked on our visibility in local communities by linking in with Citizens Information Offices and Local Authority Offices. We officially launched our Tenancy Advice Service in partnership with Dublin 2, 4, 6 Citizen's Information Service, which had been piloted in 2013, and established a Tenancy Advice Line. We plan to expand this approach further in 2015 to ensure that people will seek advice, advocacy and support at the earliest possible stage. In the coming years Dublin Simon Community will focus on prevention to stop people from going through the trauma of losing their home wherever possible, as once a person enters homelessness the long term impact is extremely detrimental.



# 2014 Snapshot



**811 people** engaged with our Tenancy Sustainment and Prevention services.

# 75%

Of people who contacted our Tenancy Advice Clinic were from the **Private Rented Sector**.



We opened a **Tenancy Advice Line** to respond to the growing need.



**255 people** at risk of homelessness were met by the Visiting Tenancy Support Service or visited our Tenancy Advice Service.



**185 dependent children** were supported by our Support to Live Independently service last year.

“

*The regular support from Simon was vital when I had my own place. I feel secure now.*”

- SLI Client



# Treatment and Recovery

*Dublin Simon Community's residential alcohol Detoxification, Recovery and Aftercare services are provided to people who are homeless or at risk. We also offer a Simon Counselling service and a Stabilisation/Respite Unit for people living with HIV. In 2014, we focused on introducing lower thresholds so that more clients would be able to complete the programmes successfully and worked on helping clients find appropriate move on accommodation.*

## Detox

In 2014, we carried out extensive research on Governance for Quality and Safety and a clinical lead was appointed to take up their post in 2015. This year also saw the first students from the Mental Health Programme in DCU commencing their placements with Detox which has been very successful so far. An external review of the Recovery service had identified a barrier for clients on prescribed Benzodiazepines accessing the programme. As a result a Pilot Benzodiazepine Detoxification service was introduced in January. The unit was also refurbished extensively during the year creating a warm and friendly environment for clients.

## Recovery

The focus of 2014 was the implementation of the new Recovery programme and the practices of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and the Community Reinforcement Approach. The new vision for the service was finalised as: "Supporting individuals to begin addressing their addictions as a barrier to exiting homelessness". We introduced lower threshold post lapse interventions to ensure clients who were already participating in the Recovery programme did not have to go back to the Central Placement Service or rough sleeping. Instead they could re-enter the programme and continue with their recovery. We lowered the threshold regarding the admission of clients presenting with Benzodiazepines and for clients that were on prescribed medications or engaging with Methadone programmes.

## Addiction Support Aftercare

Addiction Support Aftercare worked with SLI and Prevention services to address addiction and to support prevention in homelessness. Aftercare Addiction Support Workers continued to build on the progress made in Recovery

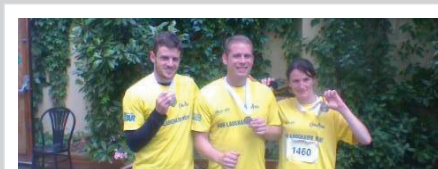
to sustain a positive lifestyle. An anger management programme was incorporated into the Aftercare Treatment programme along with the training and implementation of Mindfulness. In 2015, the main challenge will be to address the need for appropriate move on options for people following treatment. The service is also looking to expand the focus to different types of addictions and health issues including cannabis, gambling and dual diagnosis.

## Stabilisation/Respite

In 2014, one of our visiting GP's along with nursing staff on the Stabilisation/Respite Unit developed and implemented new Librium Detox and Benzodiazepine protocols, in line with international best practice. This was developed with our specific client group in mind to meet their immediate needs to stabilise on their prescribed medication. We welcomed the Room to Improve Project with The Irish Times who spent the day reviving and replanting our garden for the summer. We took on three new nurses to the Unit, a new Project Worker and three new volunteers. We also made two successful referrals over to the Recovery Programme.

## Counselling

The Counselling Service continued in 2014 to deliver a free counselling outreach service to our housing and emergency accommodation services throughout the city and expanded its services in the counties of Kildare and Wicklow. The service has seen a 44% increase in its caseload since 2013. This innovative counselling approach brings the service to clients who may be unable to travel. In order to meet the diverse needs of our clients, efficient screening ensures that the client is matched with the appropriate therapist based on their skill set and clinical experience in the presenting issue of the client. These can vary from addiction, bereavement, depression or abuse to complex trauma.



# 2014 Snapshot



**532 people** accessed our Treatment and Recovery Services.



**1,017 hours of 1:1 counselling support** was provided by Sure Steps Counselling Service.



**90% of clients** who accessed our Stabilisation/Respite Unit were successful engaged with an anti-viral clinic when they left.

**42%**

Of clients accessing our Recovery Programme had been **homeless more than two years**.



**768 key working sessions** took place in our Addiction Support Aftercare Programme.

“

*There's a lot of support here. It's an environment where I feel I can stay sober.*

”

- Recovery Client



# Kildare, Wicklow and Meath

*In 2014 the Simon Community Housing Support Services increased our presence in Kildare and Wicklow and expanded into Meath. These services provide valuable support to families and individuals to prevent them from falling into homelessness as well as providing move on options and securing a home of their own. In Wicklow we also provide Supported Temporary Accommodation for men and women experiencing homelessness.*

## Housing Support Services – Kildare, Wicklow and Meath

The Housing Support Services (HSS) across Kildare, Wicklow and Meath actively work in the areas of outreach, prevention and settlement. The teams worked tirelessly in spite of limited housing options and successfully achieved positive outcomes for people accessing the services, particularly in the areas of pre and post tenancy trainings and prevention. Across the three counties we established a counselling service, with the support of the Simon Community Sure Steps.

The number of people, particularly families, who are presenting to services as homeless increased significantly. The majority have lost their homes for reasons beyond their control, such as their landlord deciding to sell or an increase in rent. It is becoming extremely difficult to find accommodation due to increasing rental prices, now significantly in excess of the current rent supplement limits.

We built strong foundations across the three counties that will allow us to continue to develop and ultimately meet the growing needs of people accessing our services.

In Kildare, we developed an Early Warning System in the north of the County, positively affecting the number of people at risk of losing their tenancies. We initiated a food delivery service, in partnership with Food Cloud and Tesco, to provide food parcels to people most in need. We made many successful applications to the Department of Social Protection to advocate for increases in rent supplement amounts for families. Some cases resulted in families securing private rented accommodation.

In Wicklow, we secured premises in Bray for the HSS team working in the north of the County. We were responsible for chairing the Homeless Action Team and initiated the Winter Clothing Drive. An outreach clinic was established in Arklow Community Addiction Centre to provide information sessions and advice. The Simon Community works closely with the elected officials and staff in Wicklow and at the end of the year was elected onto the Housing Strategic Policy Committee.

In Meath, we secured a new office space, sharing it with other organisations working in the area of addiction. This helped build a local network of organisations working for people experiencing homelessness. The service has met with officials in Meath County Council as well as some elected officials and received referrals from both groups in the year. Similar to other counties, there is a shortage in suitable private rented accommodation and some success has been achieved with individual landlords to secure and maintain tenancies.

## Kilmantin Hill – Supported Temporary Accommodation

Kilmantin Hill residents accessed a range of activities throughout the year. The artist Brian Maguire started an art project with the residents and volunteers. Residents also went on outings to the Red Cow, the Mermaid Theatre in Bray and the Grand Hotel in Wicklow. Some residents completed work experience with the WSPCA. This link with the WSPCA led to the staff and residents of Kilmantin collaborating with the animal charity in a project to provide a free veterinary clinic to the wider population of Wicklow. A significant highlight of the year the visit of President Michael D. Higgins to the service in September.





# 2014 Snapshot



**53 people** accessed our supported temporary accommodation on Kilmantin Hill in Wicklow Town.

## 45%

Of clients at Kilmantin Hill had been **homeless for longer than six months.**



**334 people** linked in with our homeless support teams across Kildare, Wicklow and Meath.

## 84%

Of clients accessing the Housing Support Service in Wicklow and Kildare were **registered for Local Authority Housing.**



**40% of cases** in the homeless support teams in Wicklow and Kildare involved families with children.

“ If not for the Simon Community my life would be lost...thanks to Simon I can sleep now at night. ”

- Kilmantin Hill Resident



# Participation and Development

*Dublin Simon Community's Participation and Development programmes provide meaningful activities through Client Involvement, Learning and Development and Health and Wellbeing which we continued to expand in 2014. These services are central to providing structure, purpose, intellectual stimulation, self-esteem, socialisation, independence, education and employability in the lives of people accessing our services.*

## Learning and Development

Our Learning and Development service encourages personal development, active participation and greater social interaction through providing classes and workshops. In 2014, clients received support through literacy classes, computer skills, creative writing, self motivation, drama, African drumming, art therapy, photography, arts, crafts and the Mentor 'Toe by Toe' Sessions. 'Scrappy but Happy 4', a book of creative writing and artwork, was launched in October with 69 clients receiving recognition certificates at the launch for participation in Learning and Development activities.

## Employability and Social Enterprise

We continued to expand our employability services in 2014. At the end of the year there was 10 clients in the Client Part-Time Volunteering Programme with a further seven current and former clients in Full-Time Volunteering or Community Employment within Dublin Simon Community. Roles varied from maintenance or kitchen assistant, to volunteering in our shops, Social Club or Fundraising Department. We aim to have further opportunities for employment and volunteering in 2015. A Pre-Employment course was implemented with 22 clients participating. We are also developing a business plan for a new Social Enterprise venture to generate more opportunities for clients in the future.

## Health and Wellbeing

The Health and Wellbeing service aims to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of Simon clients, staff and volunteers through a combination of exercise, healthy eating and relaxation options. In 2014, group sessions covered areas such as relaxation and nutrition with personal training sessions for one on one

fitness and nutrition advice. Events such as the Fun Run and Cycleathon attracted large numbers of both staff and clients in 2014, with attendance of 24 and 49 respectively.

## Client Involvement

Client Involvement gives people accessing Dublin Simon Community services the right to have their say, enjoy choice and control, and to share in decision making about the services they receive. In 2014, members of the Client Action Group helped organise and attended the first National Client Involvement Conference organised by the National Simon Involvement and Action Group. A guest speaker attended from St. Mungos Broadway, a homeless organisation in London, and joined representatives from Simon Communities around Ireland to discuss client involvement.

The first Speak Out in 2014 was facilitated entirely by the Client Action Group with the theme 'Rent: Opening Doors or Closing Doors'. The Group worked with the Communications team to organise a panel of Dublin City Councillors, with one member of the group compiling case studies to be discussed on the night. The second Speak Out in November had the theme of Mental Health and Homelessness. The Group worked with Full-Time Volunteers to create a drama piece around the theme with Dr. Shari McDaid, Director of Mental Health Reform, attending as a guest speaker.

The new Comments, Suggestions and Complaints procedure was put in place across all services to encourage feedback from clients. The Client's Eye newsletter went from strength to strength with four publications throughout the year.



# 2014 Snapshot



Nearly **1,300 Learning and Development sessions** were carried out over 2014.



**309 Personal Training sessions** were conducted by our Health and Wellbeing service.



**24 clients, volunteers and staff** took part in the Simon Fun Run and Community Day.



**49 clients, volunteers and staff** took part in the 12-hour Simon Cycleathon raising over €1,500.



**131 people** attended Speak Outs held in 2014.



**10 clients** took part in our Peer Volunteering Programme.

“*Learning to read and write has changed my life in more ways than I could ever have imagined.*”

- Learning and Development Client



# Volunteer-Led Services

*We have extensive Full-Time and Part-Time Volunteering programmes in Dublin Simon Community. They work alongside professional staff to deliver vital services to people who are homeless. Volunteers contribute to the running of our services through carrying out a diverse range of roles and utilising their varied skill sets. In recognition for their dedication, 2014 saw exciting social events and activities for our volunteers such as a table quiz and our Volunteer Recognition Awards.*

## Full-Time Volunteering

In 2014, Volunteers had placements in our Housing, Support and Specialist Services with two new roles with the Rough Sleeper Team and one as a School Speaker for the Fundraising Team. Our Full-Time Volunteers give 35 hours per week over a seven day period for a minimum of nine months. In return for this commitment, Dublin Simon Community offers in depth training, induction, regular support and supervision, mentoring and an opportunity to complete the accredited DIT, CPD in volunteering. Registration took place of 60 volunteers from Dublin, Cork and Galway Simon Communities to complete the CPD Level 6 in volunteering with the Graduation ceremony being held in May.

## Part-Time Volunteering

The Dublin Simon Community Soup Run service has been in existence since 1969 and is operated by our dedicated team of Part-Time Volunteers, 365 nights of the year. The Soup Run nightly contact records showed an increase in the numbers of individuals availing of the Soup Run Service, similar to the trend identified by the Dublin Region Homeless Executive's quarterly Rough Sleeper Count. 717 clients were met in the month of January and the nightly contact figures climbed steadily throughout the year to reach a peak of 991 clients met in November.

Our drop in Social Club, held on Capel Street every Monday and Wednesday, continues to expand. 23 Part-Time Volunteers ensure members are provided a safe, secure, non-judgmental environment to come and engage in meaningful social interaction. On Tuesday and Thursday evenings the Social Club works with clients in our Recovery and Treatment services. In 2014, staff, volunteers

and members of the club all met to review its values and policies. By working with Participation and Development, a calendar of activities was put in place including art classes, creative writing, health and wellbeing clinics, drama workshops, tribal drumming and trips to the cinema. Members also became more involved in the Client Action Group and Speak Outs along with writing creative pieces for the Clients Eye Newsletter.

Social Club Volunteers hosted parties and events for members for St. Patrick's Day, Easter, Halloween and Christmas. The Social Club Volunteers returned again to Dollymount strand for their annual barbecue in July, thanks to the assistance of the Irish Army Catering Corp who provided the outdoor cooking facilities.

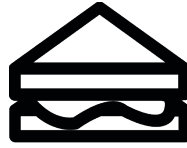
The Befriending Service was piloted in 2014 with five Befriending Volunteers recruited. The purpose of the service is to reduce social isolation of clients by assisting them to increase social contact, explore interests and hobbies and develop links with local community groups. Volunteer Befrienders provide supportive relationships that will empower clients to build up their confidence and self worth. Each volunteer was paired up with a client from the Support to Live Independently service. Due to the success of this pilot the service will be continued in 2015.



# 2014 Snapshot



**73 Full-Time and over 500 Part-Time volunteers** dedicated their time across our services and fundraising.



**Over 50,000 hot drinks, sandwiches and snacks** were given out by our Soup Run.



An average of **35 clients** accessed each evening of the Social Club.



Our **Befriending Service** was introduced to help clients develop interests and hobbies and link in with local community.



Dublin Simon Community were delighted to receive the **Investing in Volunteers Quality Standard** from Volunteer Ireland in 2014.

“

*We offer compassion to people regardless of their situation, and accept them for who they are; people just like us who are going through a crisis in their lives.*

”

- Soup Run Volunteer





# Fundraising and Communications

*Dublin Simon Community would like to say a huge thank you to all our donors and supporters in 2014. From the smallest to the largest gift you gave, by organising an event or volunteering your time, every day you made a vital impact on the lives of the people who rely on our services.*

## Events

The Simon Bag Pack took place in April across Tesco stores in Dublin, Kildare and Wicklow. Thank you to our committed volunteers for giving up their time to make this fundraising activity a huge success.

The annual Dublin Simon Community Fun Run celebrated its 31st year on 4th October in the Phoenix Park. Over 3,000 people attended and took part in the 5 mile run and family festival. Our Simon Fun Run is made possible each year by the hundreds of committed volunteers who help organise traffic junctions, start and finish lines, kids' races and activities and the many companies that donate goods and supplies for the day supported by 2014's media sponsors Spin 103.8 and the Irish Daily Star.

Sing for Simon was a great success with groups performing for Simon in numerous shopping centres, Christmas markets and streets around Dublin, Kildare and Wicklow. Sing for Simon also included a special gig in Vicar Street by Glen Hansard. The seventh annual 24 Hour Carolathon took place on Grafton Street on 19th – 20th December with special guests the Maynooth Gospel Choir, the Gaiety Theatre's Peter Pan Panto cast, the Lucan Gospel Choir and Lisa Hannigan with Jacobs and Brooks Hotel providing support on the night. The Ryan Family were out again on Christmas Eve, followed by Glen Hansard and friends for the annual Busk.

## Corporate Fundraising

The 2014 Simon House of Cards Appeal was a huge success, raising over €500,000 for Simon Communities across the country. The appeal culminated in the spectacular Simon House of Light projection show with Vogue Williams, Brian Kennedy, The Swing Cats and the Lucan Gospel Choir joining us in celebration.

A special thank you goes to The Irish Times, Irish International, the Powerscourt Townhouse Centre, Hamleys Toystore and all of the local businesses on South William Street whose critical help, generous support and leadership make this appeal possible. The 2015 Simon House of Light will take place on 10th - 12th December from 5.30pm each evening. Log onto [www.simonhouseofcards.ie](http://www.simonhouseofcards.ie) for details on how to get involved.

The Business Journalists Association of Ireland (BJAI) raised over €50,000 for the Dublin Simon Community at their annual Corporate Challenge quiz. This was the 14th year that the Corporate Challenge quiz had taken place, raising over €400,000 since it began. Gordan MRM were the overall winners of the quiz, walking away with the Waterford Crystal Trophy.

Throughout 2014 our Workplace Fundraising, Share Your Skills, Room To Improve and Stock The Shops programmes went from strength to strength with volunteers from businesses taking time out to make a difference to our services. Last year we introduced further ways for teams to get involved with Stock Sorting Days and Treasure Hunt for Simon.

## Communications and Media

Our Communications and Media continued to develop in 2014. We would like to sincerely thank those media outlets who chose to highlight our work and the many clients, residents, volunteers and staff who have represented Simon throughout the year. These stories help us to demonstrate our success as we continue our work to move people out of homelessness into a home of their own.



# 2014 Snapshot



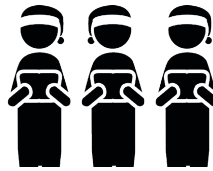
We celebrated **€1 million in cost saving** from our Food for Simon campaign.



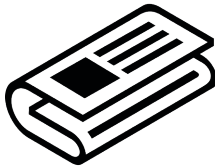
Thank You to over **3,000 people** who took part in our annual Simon Fun Run and Family Festival.

## 300+

Businesses took part in our annual **Simon House of Cards** campaign.



Over **100 groups** and over **300 volunteers** sang their hearts out and shook buckets during Sing for Simon.



Dublin Simon Community featuring in **526 print, television, radio and online media** throughout the year.



Our **social media presence** grew throughout 2014 engaging with our supporters on news, activities and events.

“

*I get great enjoyment and satisfaction out of giving my time. I enjoy meeting people from all walks of life when I am fundraising.*”

- Fundraising Volunteer



# Continuing to Open Our Doors

*“Simon seeks never to duplicate work which any other body would and could do more effectively. Simon comes in where others leave off, to meet the need where the need is greatest.”*

– Article 11 of the Basic Founding Principles of the Irish Simon Communities, 1969.

In the past three years Dublin Simon Community have concentrated on increasing our accommodation units and broadening our housing models so that we can provide housing with supports to adults and families to respond to the changing nature of homelessness and the ever growing crisis. We provide accommodation to clients most in need, with services ranging from prevention, high support accommodation, housing, treatment and support services.

**Our focus remains on the progression of clients, supporting them to move to the most independent form of living.** Our emphasis now is on significantly increasing the provision of permanent independent options for clients and creating strong move on channels from our temporary services. It is essential to continue to provide all streams of accommodation from temporary to long-term. Our permanent housing focuses on providing assistance to clients with medium to high support needs. We provide both housing and support to ensure long sustainability and want to continue to offer this dual service to help to end long-term homelessness.

In line with this approach, over the last two years we have sourced suitable properties so we can provide these supported housing options for people and families. Between 2012 and 2014 we acquired or redeveloped 178 additional units.

As well as the services that we operated and developed in the last year, we also introduced new supports such as our Housing Management Service (HMS), created to manage accommodation acquired by Dublin Simon Community. The HMS team are responsible for the allocations, lettings and estate management of both our independent and supported accommodation. They act as the point of contact if there are any concerns with the accommodation, as well as ensuring

that a support service is in place for our tenants and residents. This two pronged approach ensures that our client base, while often being discriminated against in the external rental market, are given the opportunity and support to move out of homelessness for good. Our Support to Live Independently (SLI) Service links in for six to nine months so that the client is comfortable living completely independently. Following this the Housing Management Service team provide continued support to our clients and families, as and when is needed; including advocacy, advice, referral and sign posting.

While we are continuing to expand our permanent housing options, we also needed to address the current housing crisis, and the competition our clients are facing in the rental market. At the end of 2014, dedicated teams were introduced in our temporary accommodation, such as our Recovery programme, to help clients that are nearing completion to secure new tenancies. If they are successful, the client would then also link in with SLI to ensure they are supported in their new accommodation and they don't return to homelessness.

The profile of Dublin Simon Community clients since we began in 1969 was traditionally single adults, with medium to high support needs. **The profile of homelessness has significantly changed over the past 18 months, with increasing numbers of couples and families becoming homeless.**

Dublin Simon Community have responded by continuing our ethos to support those who are most vulnerable. The main need is still for accommodation for homeless adults however there is now a worryingly rapid growth in the numbers of homeless children. Therefore, the focus of our approach for acquiring properties in the future will be on accommodation suitable for adults and families. The profile of need is slightly different across the counties we operate and we will respond to the presenting needs in partnership with the relevant Local Authority.



# Simon Housing Supports

People who are experiencing homelessness often first enter Simon's residential services through our Supported Temporary Accommodation or Treatment and Recovery Services where they stay three to six months.

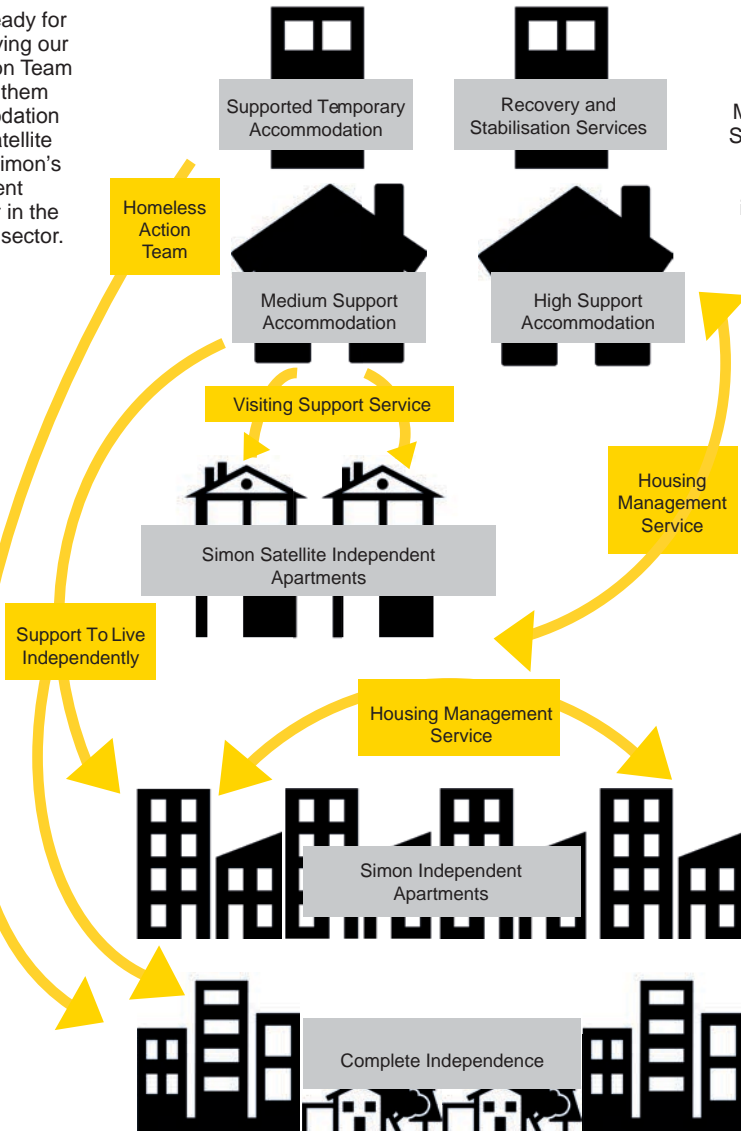
If clients are ready for independent living our Homeless Action Team work to help them find accommodation in Simon's satellite apartments, Simon's independent apartments or in the private rented sector.

Depending on their support needs, clients move on to Medium or High Support Housing if they are unable to live independently.

Our Support To Live Independently service visit clients in their new home for six to nine months helping them to settle in.

Clients who live in our Satellite Apartments receive visiting support and link in with the nearby Supported Accommodation for keyworking and social activities.

Clients who live in our Supported Housing and independent apartments link in with the Housing Management Service indefinitely.



Clients and Residents are all encouraged to link in with Simon's Counselling, Learning and Development, Health and Wellbeing, Employability and Peer Volunteering services to support them as they get back on their feet.

# Quality Standards

## Standards of Fundraising Practice

Dublin Simon Community is signed up to The Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising. The statement exists to improve fundraising practice, promote high levels of accountability and transparency by organisations fundraising from the public and provide clarity and assurances to donors and prospective donors about the organisations they support.

## Investing in Volunteers and Excellence Through People

In July 2014 the Volunteer Office received the Investing in Volunteer Quality Standard, awarded by Volunteer Ireland. This is the national quality standard for good practice in volunteer management. Dublin Simon Community also received the Excellence Through People certification again in 2014. Since 2012, we have worked with the National Standards Authority of Ireland to continuously strive to improve our employee services by taking part.

## Charity Registration

Dublin Simon Community is a registered charity, CHY5963, in accordance with the Charities Section of the Office of the Revenue Commissioners and is registered with the Charities Regulatory Authority.

## Refurbishment and Construction

Dublin Simon Community aims to comply with the Building Control Regulations 2007-2015 as determined by the Building Control Act 2007. This encompasses all aspects of the built environment including accessibility, fire safety, structure and environment. The SEAI energy retrofit works are installed to comply with the building control regulations and in compliance with the SEAI codes of practice for workmanship and materials. All works, either development, construction, refurbishment, repair and maintenance, carried out in Dublin Simon Community are in compliance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2013 (S.I. No. 291 of 2013). Our facilities all have cyclical maintenance and monitoring contracts covering life support systems such as fire and security alarm systems as well as mechanical and electrical installations.

## Nursing Practice

Nurses employed in Simon's Residential Alcohol Detox, HIV Stabilisation/Respite Services and in Primary Care Nursing Services are required to be registered to practice with their professional body, the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland. This registration is renewed annually to ensure that all nurses who work with Simon have the qualifications needed to practice, have not had their name removed from the Register for misconduct and to assure the public that nurses are working in a regulated profession. To support mandatory registration, nurses are required to be in compliance with the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics (2014) and the Guidance to Nurses on Medication Management (2007).

## Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH)

As a housing provider, Dublin Simon Community is a member of the Irish Council for Social Housing. The ICSH seeks to encourage and assist the development of a range of social housing services which complements the role of the Local Housing Authorities and meets the different and changing needs of various groups of the population such as the elderly, homeless people, people with disabilities or families on low incomes.

## Voluntary Regulation Code

Dublin Simon Community is an Approved Housing Body, registered as Tier Two, and is signed up to the Voluntary Regulation Code with the Housing Agency. This provides a regulatory framework for Approved Housing Bodies.

## Irish Charity Shops Association (ICSA)

Dublin Simon Community is a member of the Irish Charity Shops Association whose aim is to pool expertise and join forces to promote common interests and to help members run their shops more effectively and efficiently.

## Quality and Practice

Throughout the year our Quality and Practice Department focused on research and advocacy such as our annual Health Snapshot Survey and research on services for Habitual Residence Condition affected individuals. The team are also responsible for quality and practice development, worked on updating policies and procedures and improving operation systems such as PASS.





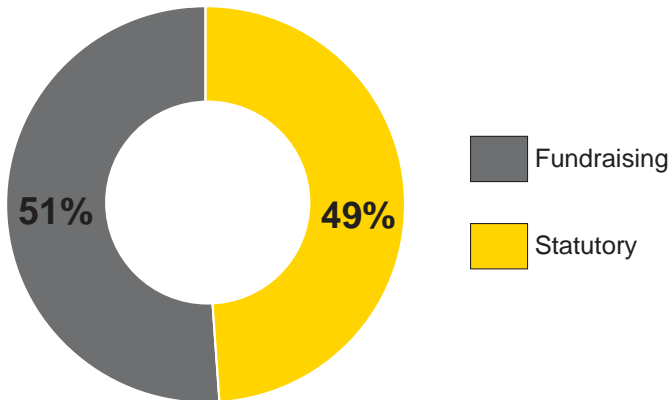
# Our Finances 2014

## Income and Expenditure

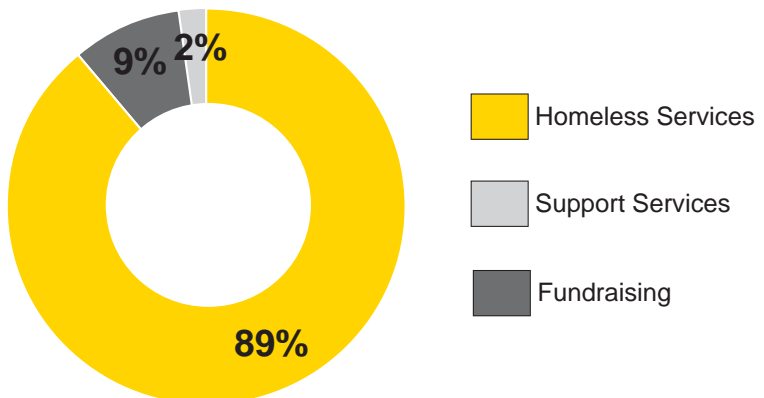
We are continuously grateful for the generosity from our community of supporters. Through donations, fundraising events and campaigns, combined with the support of businesses we are able to meet the increasing demand for services across Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow and Meath. 89% of our expenditure in 2014 went directly towards our homeless and housing services with the remaining going on raising funds and support services.

Through a series of measures, including Food for Simon, making our buildings more energy efficient to save on energy bills, managing our staff mix plus other savings, we have reduced our overheads. Since 2008 we have seen our HSE grants reduced, yet we continue to increase the quality and number of services we provide, in response to increased demand, to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. **For more information please see our independently audited annual accounts by JPA Brenson Lawlor available on our website [www.dubsimon.ie](http://www.dubsimon.ie).**

## Where the money came from in 2014



## Where the money went in 2014



# Thank You to Our Community

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Each and every day you make a difference to the people who rely on our services.

For people who are facing the heartache of homelessness, the generosity you have shown them by making a donation, raising funds, volunteering or offering your partnership and support, gives them back the life they deserve with the courage and strength to move forward.

If you imagine what it feels like to be without a roof over your head or whether you will be able to stay in your home with your children, to know that there is someone out there in the community investing in your life means the entire world.

This kindness from people like you has sustained our services since we began, and it will continue to do so in the challenges ahead. So many of our clients are now in control of their future, and no matter where life takes them, because of you they will always have a place to call home.









Dublin Simon Community  
1-2 Cope Street, Dublin 2

Tel: 01 671 5551  
Fax: 01 671 5524

[www.dubsimon.ie](http://www.dubsimon.ie)  
[inforequest@dubsimon.ie](mailto:inforequest@dubsimon.ie)



Cover Artwork by Bernard,  
A client of our Learning and Development services