

# The Simon Communities of Ireland

## Introduction

### We can work together to end homelessness!

The Simon Communities of Ireland represents eight locally based Simon Communities around the country. All communities support, work with, and campaign for people who are homeless in Ireland. The first Simon Community was established in Dublin in 1969, and since then we have learned a lot about homelessness. We want to share this experience with you through this information pack and DVD. By watching Close to Home and becoming more involved with your local Simon Community we hope that you will become more aware of the issues and the people with whom the Simon Communities work. Most of all we hope that you come to learn that you can make a difference; that you can become part of the solution to homelessness. The actions you take can make a big difference to the work of the Simon Communities and more importantly to the lives of people who are affected by homelessness around Ireland.

The Simon Communities of Ireland is an affiliation of local Communities in Cork, Dublin, Dundalk, Galway, the Midlands, the Mid West, the North West and the South East. Every year these Simon Communities deliver support and services to almost 5,000 individuals and families who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness. The National Office acts in a coordinating and support role to the Simon Communities around the country.

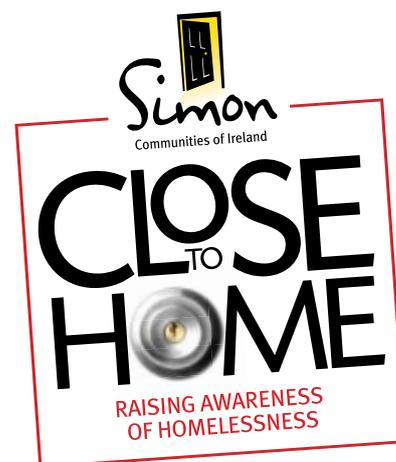
The work of the National Office focuses on the following areas:

1. Campaigning
2. Best Practice
3. Full Time Volunteering
4. National Fundraising on behalf of the **local** Simon Communities

Simon

### Did you know?

**You can make a difference  
...you can become part of the  
solution to homelessness.**



# The Simon Communities of Ireland

## Campaigning

The Simon Communities of Ireland campaign to make Ireland a more fair and equal society. We meet with the people who make decisions about homeless services and policies, such as politicians, civil servants and other public officials. We want to make sure that they are aware of the needs of people who are homeless and that this is reflected in the legislation and policy that they draw-up. Our campaigning activities involve making submissions to government highlighting the causes and consequences of homelessness, and working with policy/decision makers to create lasting solutions. We also create awareness amongst the general public and the media about homelessness and related issues. To this end, Simon Week – Seven Days of Action on Homelessness, takes place around the country on an annual basis and is coordinated by the National Office.

## Best Practice and Training

The work of the Best Practice and Training team at the National Office is to make sure that the people using Simon's services are getting the best possible support. One of the ways we try to do this is to make sure that people who are homeless and using Simon's services have a say in how the work of the Simon Communities is carried out.

Some of the people who use Simon services have set up their own group – The National Group For People Who Use Simon Services. This group meets monthly and is a place where people can come together to discuss issues that affect them, either within Simon or outside Simon services. Here they can plan and take action if they wish. One piece of their work is the production of a quarterly newsletter *Simon Voices*.

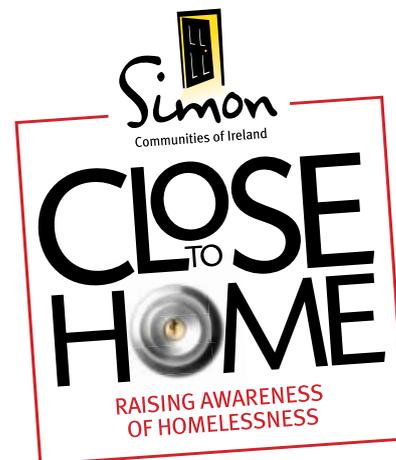
## Full Time Volunteers

Simon's Volunteer Co-ordinator recruits full time volunteers who each spend a minimum of 6 months living and working in the Simon Communities throughout Ireland.

Volunteers are extremely important to the work of the Simon Communities of Ireland. Without their skills, expertise and commitment we would not be able to provide the services and support which are so crucial for the vulnerable people we work with.

Our full time volunteers come from all walks of life and many different countries. Our volunteers tend to be young people who choose to do this work to gain experience in social work, to grow as individuals, or to take time out from work or study to gain new skills.

There are hundreds of part time volunteers who work with each of our Communities around the country every year assisting with service delivery, events and fundraising activities. Contact your local Simon Community to find out more.



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