



2015 Calendar

including an Annual Review for 2013



Midlands Simon Community,

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**“It’s very simple.
If you are homeless
you need a home.”**

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**“I will forever be grateful to
Simon for the chance to rebuild
myself and my life.”**

Chairperson's Address

Tess Murphy



This is my first report as Chairperson of Midlands Simon Community. It has been a year of significant challenge in which the level of allocated funding fell far short of the minimum required to provide a basic service to the most vulnerable in our community, those without a home of their own. There were times when we literally didn't know if we could continue as a sustainable organisation.

Nevertheless, due in no small part to the courage and determination of the Midlands Simon Community Board, we are still supporting homeless people across the four counties, probably assisting four hundred people by the end of this year if current trends continue, a 30% increase on last year. We have managed to do this mainly through a massive increase in fundraising; through the opening of shops in Tullamore, Co Offaly, and Portlaoise, Co Laois, in addition to the existing shop in Athlone, Co Westmeath; and particularly through the Friends of Simon in Laois and Offaly. Midlands Simon Community's efforts to lobby politicians both locally and nationally on behalf of the organisation is to be commended.

Even though I have been a board member for many years, the past year has been a steep learning curve for me in terms of the work carried out by the organisation and the complexity of that work. I have also gained a deeper appreciation of the dedication and commitment of the staff to this work, which they have continued to do in the face of the many challenges presented to them over the past year. We cannot underestimate the uncertainty and upheaval the staff have gone through in the past year due to cutbacks and restructuring. Basically, they have been asked to do more with less: less funding, less staff, and more people presenting in need of our support. On behalf of the board, I wish to thank all of the staff for their work during the past year and assure them of our continued efforts to bridge the funding gap between what is needed and what is available.

Midlands Simon Community is very fortunate to have Tony O'Riordan, a CEO who believes passionately in the vision and approach of Midlands Simon Community to the issue of homelessness. He works tirelessly on all fronts, with staff, the board, our funders, the decision makers and with the service users. We appreciate his commitment to the work.

We cannot underestimate the challenges we face in the next year. We have managed to cut our operating deficit significantly, yet are by no means out of the woods. We may still face cash flow issues in the next year. For the first time we are faced with having to tender for the operation of the Regional Settlement Service, and have no sense of the possible outcome of that process. There continues to be a massive gap in what we get from the State to run the Emergency Accommodation Service, and the real cost of that service provision.

There is a little light at the end of the tunnel. Midlands Simon Community is about to embark on a partnership with *Pathways to Housing*, the premier international expert in *Housing First*, and Dr Sam Tsemberis, its Founder and CEO. A formal Memorandum of Agreement has been approved by both organisations. Midlands Simon Community will be the first organisation in Ireland to have such an agreement. The *Housing First* initiative illustrates Midlands Simon Community's commitment to following international best practice in the delivery of homeless services.

There was an announcement in Budget 2015 of an increase in funding for homeless services. We are hopeful that this will be used to address the lack of parity between the Midlands Region and other regions in the State. The Midlands Region currently only receives 1.5% of the State's spend on homelessness - this inequality needs to be addressed urgently.

Midlands Simon Community would like to thank the Board and staff of the Simon Communities of Ireland for their on-going support. We look forward to continuing to work with our colleagues in the other local Simon Communities.

I wish to express our appreciation to the staff in the four midland Local Authorities, the Health Service Executive (HSE), members of the Management Committee of the Midlands Regional Joint Consultative Homeless Forum, and our fellow service providers.

I am confident that with the quality and commitment of our Board and staff we can overcome our current challenges and will continue to contribute to the elimination of homelessness in the Midlands.

Foreword from CEO Tony O'Riordan



2013 has been a critical year for Midlands Simon Community, primarily because we ensured that Midlands Simon Community created viable pathways for people to exit from the instability of homelessness, to the security of a home of their own. There are now 12 emergency accommodation beds operated by Midlands Simon Community (6 in Tullamore and 6 in Athlone). These emergency beds are available to people in the four counties of Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath to access.

A review of the Regional Settlement Service (RSS) was conducted, the terms of reference for which was approved by the Management Committee of the Midlands Regional Joint Consultative Homeless Forum. This review concluded that Midlands Simon Community's RSS is one of the most cost-effective and service-efficient homeless services in the State.

The Community Nursing Service, and the GP Pharmacy Liaison Nurse, continues to ensure that the health needs of people experiencing homelessness are addressed and there is a continuity of care as Service Users progress out of homelessness.

Midlands Simon Community gave a warm and enthusiastic welcome to the Minister for Housing's launch of the *Homelessness Policy Statement*. This policy statement calls for a radical reconfiguration of services towards supporting people, not just to access shelters where they will be provided with a bed for the night, but instead for resources and services to focus on supporting people to get a home for life.

This *Housing First* approach has always been endorsed by Midlands Simon Community. To successfully move towards this Model of service delivery will demand, not only a re-direction of resources, but also the attainment of the necessary skills and competencies to implement this way of providing services. To this end, Midlands Simon Community, in partnership with Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT), hosted the first ever *Housing First* Conference in Ireland in September. We were delighted that Dr Sam Tsemberis, founder and CEO of *Pathways to Housing*, spoke at the conference. We are extremely grateful that Minister for Housing and Planning, Ms Jan O'Sullivan TD, took the time to attend, and officially open the Conference. The contribution of Dr Eoin O'Sullivan, Professor of

Social Policy, TCD and Mr Frank Murtagh, Murtagh & Partners, provided a significant evidence-base as to why an over-reliance on shelters and hostels is not the way to end homelessness but that instead the sector needs to design and implement interventions focused on helping people exit homelessness forever. Our sincere thanks to Electric Aid and Joe Walsh Travel for sponsoring the Conference, and to AIT for providing the academic expertise to host such a successful Conference.

Our sincere thanks to the HSE, the Midlands Regional Joint Consultative Homeless Forum, and the four Local Authorities, in Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath, for their support and leadership, and essential funding for the operation of our services. Their participation with the Irish Prison Service, on the Management Committee of the Midlands Regional Joint Consultative Forum, has ensured that momentum and real progress is being attained towards ending homelessness. We also extend our appreciation to our partners within the community and voluntary sector who, like Midlands Simon Community, have developed considerable expertise in doing more with less.

Our strong volunteer base, who give their time, skills and expertise, continues to make Midlands Simon Community a community-owned intervention, and ensures that the response to the issue of homelessness is the responsibility of all of us. The work of the Friends of Simon groups has ensured Midlands Simon Community has the necessary resources to fund our frontline services. Our charity shops (long-established and new) continue to be a source of sustainable income and thanks to our staff and volunteers who make this possible.

Despite Midlands Simon Community being able to demonstrate, through external evaluations, that it is delivering value for money in the services it provides, and that it is to the fore-front in pioneering innovative approaches such as *Housing First*, the State has reduced Midlands Simon Community's state funding beyond what is sustainable. When Midlands Simon Community sought a rationale for such a funding reduction, the only indication received was that this is based on historical reasons. In an era when reform of the public sector and public service is at the fore of the public interest, one would

Foreword from CEO

continued

expect that the rationale for the allocation of public monies should be where a service can attain positive outcomes while attaining the best possible value for public money. We know that those in leadership in Government, State Departments and state agencies want to drive a reform agenda; Midlands Simon Community shares those objectives and we urgently call for funding systems that rewards performance and efficiency.

Prudently Midlands Simon Community, since its foundation in 2003, had built up a small cash reserve to deal with specific eventualities such as an increased demand on services while, at the same time, receiving a reduction in state funding. The gap that now exists between the incomes we generate and the cost of delivering homeless services means that Midlands Simon Community will continue to exercise extreme caution in how it manages its finances over the coming years. Stringent measures have been authorised by the Board to reduce costs, which aim to secure the organisation's future as a provider of services to people who often have no one else to turn to other than Midlands Simon Community.

The needs of Service Users have become more complex and with fewer resources than ever before. The commitment of our staff in the face of such challenges has been worthy of considerable praise. They reach out skilfully, with warmth and compassion. The vision and values of the organisation motivates them to continue to go the extra mile, and their commitment to continuous service improvement is extraordinary.

Finally, Midlands Simon Community continues to provide a relevant community-owned response to one of the cruellest forms of exclusion in our society and for this. I wish to sincerely acknowledge our Board of Directors who, in the face of all of these challenges, continues to guide and exercise the highest level of governance over the organisation, and whose determination and commitment ensures that Midlands Simon Community continues to play a pivotal role in tackling homelessness in the Midlands. Midlands Simon Community was founded by volunteers who cared deeply about the needs of people affected by homelessness. It continues to be supported by a large team of volunteers in services, shops and fundraising and on the Board.

Services Provided by Midlands Simon Community

Midlands Simon Community offers many services to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, to help get them back on their feet as quickly as possible. Midlands Simon offers services and support to people in the Midlands region of Laois, Longford, Offaly, and Westmeath. The breakdown of Midlands Simon Community services accessed, within the four counties in which the charity operates, in 2013 is provided in the following table.

Table 1 Numbers accessing Midlands Simon Community services in 2013, breakdown by county

County	New referrals to Regional Settlement Service	People supported by Community Liaison Nurse	Admitted into Emergency Accommodation Service
Laois	19	53	-
Longford	15	51	-
Offaly	78	41	19
Westmeath	71	50	34

Staff take part in training on a regular basis to ensure skills remain up-to-date. Training includes:

- Risk Management;
- HACCP Food Safety Training;
- Sharps Training in relation to Health and Safety (URRUS);
- Keyworking skills;
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST).

Regional Settlement Service

Midlands Simon Community's keynote service is the Regional Settlement Service (RSS). The RSS was established in 2005 and is complemented by a residential Emergency Accommodation Service, currently located in Athlone and Tullamore.

In Midlands Simon Community, the role of the Regional Settlement Service is:

1. To develop a settlement plan with the Service User that would support the Service User to progress out of homelessness;
2. To support the Service User to source suitable accommodation;
3. To liaise with relevant service providers to ensure needs identified in the settlement plan are being met;
4. To provide pre-tenancy support and training;

5. To provide the necessary supports that would assist the Service User in maintaining their tenancy;
6. Support the Service User in integrating into their community and in building up a network of supports;
7. To assist the Service User in securing alternative accommodation in the event of any existing tenancy coming to an end.

The Regional Settlement Service is a unique and innovative service that Midlands Simon Community operates in the counties of Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath, in conjunction with Local Authorities, and in partnership with the HSE and the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DOECLG).

The RSS supports individuals, couples and families to move out of homelessness, and into a home of their own, by doing the following:

- Helping people to source accommodation;
- Assisting people to move into their new home;
- Supporting people to maintain their new home;
- Helping to address the causes of homelessness.

The Regional Settlement Service also supports those using the Service to enable them to overcome the many challenges often faced by people experiencing homelessness, as well as assisting them to return to employment and education, providing a voice for and advocating on their behalf.

External Review of Regional Settlement Service

In July 2013, an independent review of the Regional Settlement Service provided by Midlands Simon Community was completed by Murtagh & Partners, Social and Economic Consultants. The published report of this review (*Review of the Regional Settlement Service Midlands*) highlighted a number of positive aspects to the Regional Settlement Service provided by Midlands Simon Community, the most substantial of which being the sheer cost-effectiveness of the Service.

Some extracts from the *Review of the Regional Settlement Service Midlands* provided by Midlands Simon Community are provided here:

The Review has essentially addressed the role of the RSS within the configuration of services in the Region. It is the only region wide homelessness service in the Midlands and, as such, has a major impact on all other services.

Midlands Simon Community's approach since its inception was built on the Housing First model and is encapsulated in the RSS with Settlement Officers in all four Local Authorities. It is significant that the four Local Authorities in the Midlands Region launched the service in a true partnership with the providers and that the focus on returning service users to independent living has always been a priority - in line with Government homelessness policy.

The proportion of (Midlands Simon Community's) service users accessing independent living at 72% is at least ten times the national average while the proportion of referrals retaining and maintaining their tenancies at a minimum level of 65% is substantially above the national average.

The focus on settlement - both preventative and returning service users from emergency services to independent living with supports - reflects positively on cost and resources.



Emergency Accommodation Service

Midlands Simon Community provides 12 beds through the Emergency Accommodation Services (EAS) in Athlone and Tullamore. Unlike other emergency accommodation services provided in the Irish State, Midlands Simon Community's Emergency Accommodation Service focuses on settlement and attaining long-term housing solutions, working towards a return to independent living and self-sufficiency for Service Users.

The Service does not just provide a bed for the night for those who might otherwise be sleeping rough, but works with the clients to help them rebuild their lives and return to independent and stable living, through key working sessions and life-skills training.

A dedicated Key Worker is allocated to each Service User to help him/her develop a personal action plan. The personal action plan is supported by the EAS team, through weekly meetings, to ensure that the Service User can maximise his/her potential while living in the EAS.

I found the weekly key working sessions very helpful and it highlighted many things which I needed to work on - life skills, maintaining a home, money management, personal hygiene

– Service User

EAS residents take part in regular life-skills training, with a high-level of participation always achieved. Life-skills training provided during the year included:

- Fire Safety Training;
- Money Management;
- Health and Well-Being;
- Cooking.

Since the opening of the Emergency Accommodation Service in Athlone, and Tullamore, Midlands Simon Community has received continued inter-agency support from a large number of agencies including Ana Liffey Project, local town councils, local county councils, the HSE, Merchant's Quay Ireland, Midlands Regional Drugs and Alcohol Task Force (MRDATF), Midlands Regional Joint Consultative Homeless Forum (MRJCHF), and St Vincent de Paul, to name but a few.

On a more human level, the Emergency Accommodation Service in Athlone and Tullamore provides the comforts many of us take for granted. Residents in this Service have spent nights sleeping rough in disused buildings, under ditches, and in wheelie bins. Home comforts provided in the Emergency Accommodation Service enables them to rebuild their lives one step at a time in a stable, secure and comfortable environment.

The Emergency Accommodation Service is manned by both full-time staff and volunteers who give their time to the Service and play a vital role in the development and self-improvement of Service Users.

Their encouragement and support has helped me build confidence and given me another chance

– Service User

Service User Testimonials

Statements gathered from thank you letters from former Emergency Accommodation Service residents, both Athlone and Tullamore, confirm the human benefits the Service has provided since its establishment in 2008. Some of these include:

The EAS is a positive environment. Long may it continue!

Volunteers and staff create an atmosphere of inclusiveness and warmth.

I will forever be grateful to Simon for the chance to rebuild myself and my life.

The meals I found were very good and there was always plenty to eat. I could always make myself a cup of tea.

I'd like to think more Emergency Accommodation Services would open.

Emergency Accommodation Service

Emergency Accommodation Service – Athlone, Co Westmeath

Midlands Simon Community opened its first Emergency Accommodation Service in Athlone, in December 2008. This provides a vital first point of contact for Midlands Simon Community and people experiencing homelessness.

The self-contained modern unit, located in Athlone, can house up to 6 residents: 4 male units and 2 female units.

Emergency Accommodation Service – Tullamore, Co Offaly

In June 2012, Midlands Simon Community opened its second Emergency Accommodation Service located in Tullamore, Co. Offaly. This EAS facility is a secure, self-contained 6-bed unit.

At its official opening in November 2013, the successes of and demand for the EAS in counties Laois and Offaly were identified to include:

- 34 admissions since its opening (25 male admissions and 9 female admissions);
- Average occupancy rate of 89%;
- 76% of residents attained a successful housing outcome, which highlights the benefits of the service to those who need emergency accommodation;
- Longest stay was 22 weeks; this is below the set by DOECLG Strategy objective of 'stays no longer than 6 months (24 weeks)'.



Housing with Support

Slí Nua

Midlands Simon Community “Housing with Support” Service opened in April 2012 and is based in Athlone town. This service was aptly named Slí Nua (Irish for New Way). It is designed to provide 7 single people with self-contained accommodation in individual 1-bed apartments. The Service also provides a range of dedicated supports to ensure residents are able to maintain and sustain their tenancies.

Residents of this facility require more intensive support than can be provided by either the Emergency Accommodation Service or the Regional Settlement Service. The Service provides the resident with the supports they need while also introducing them to independent living and ensuring they can retain their tenancy. There is a dedicated staff member who ensures that all residents have the supports they need, including assistance from a volunteer, where appropriate. Slí Nua gives each person his/her own home, privacy and dignity, and it is also more financially sustainable for them.

Residents of Slí Nua have regular and often daily contact with a professional Social Care Worker or Community Nurse, and/or a full-time volunteer. The Slí Nua supports Service Users to:

- Develop self-care skills such as cooking, laundry etc;
- Manage a budget, to pay rent, and pay utilities;
- Maintain his/her own accommodation in areas such as cleaning and waste disposal;
- Develop meaningful activities which helps build confidence and aid integration into the local community.

The Slí Nua project continues to be supported by a number of agencies, including the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DOECLG) and Athlone Town Council. The project is also run in partnership with the HSE.

Since I moved into Slí Nua apartments my life has turned around to the best as can be, thanks to Midlands Simon Community. Suffering with my health issues, I have never needed for nothing with thanks to all of the Simon staff for their medical support. Without the staff of Simon, I wouldn't be the changed man I am, I can't praise or thank them enough. Thanking all the staff including my Key Worker and Volunteer, and I also think the Slí Nua apartments are a great idea.

– Stephen, Slí Nua resident

My apartment is really beautiful, it's spacious and bright, easy to manage and keep it clean. The support I get is great, I have a Key Worker who calls in once a week and also a volunteer with Simon comes once a week. It's great to have people who know how you are doing. I love living in Slí Nua, it's been great. I have a mental health problem and ended up living in a mental health respite house, I was miserable there. So I am delighted to get my own living space where I could do as I please, cook for myself and have my own bathroom and privacy.

– Joan, Slí Nua resident

Community Liaison Nurse for Homeless

In partnership with the HSE, Midlands Simon Community provides a dedicated Nursing Service to the Service Users we work with. People who contact homeless services often present with several needs, and the vast majority present with multiple health needs. Through its dedicated Nursing Service, Midlands Simon Community is able to address these basic needs, and often ensures that the first step to recovery out of homelessness is in place.

The service has two staff Community Nurses operating in Laois/Offaly and Longford/Westmeath. The role of the Community Liaison Nurse for the Homeless in Midlands Simon Community is to:

- Focus on the health and social care needs of the person affected by homelessness;
- Act as a link between the person affected by homelessness and homeless services;
- Carry out a holistic health needs assessment;
- Identify any health related support needs, and co-ordinate a response to these needs;

- Complete a care plan and review regularly with the individual;
- Offer health education and promotion to meet the identified health needs;
- Refer the person affected by homelessness to services they may need.

The number of cases worked with by the Community Liaison Nurse for the Homeless in each county in 2013 are detailed in Table 1 (page 6).

Midlands Simon Community, in partnership with the HSE and the Midland Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force (MRDATF), provide a GP Liaison Pharmacy Nurse. This initiative allows for greater access for Service Users to methadone programme and enhances the partnership between Service Users, GPs, and Pharmacies and Service Providers. Considerable credit is given to Ms Fran Byrne, Manager, Community Alcohol & Drugs Service (CADS), Ms Antoinette Kinsella, Coordinator, MRDATF, and Ms Marion Mulvanny, GP Liaison Pharmacy Nurse, for pioneering this project.

Service User Forum

The Midlands Simon Community supports a Forum for current and former Service Users. This group provides a formal structure for the organisation to consult with Service Users, and provides a structured opportunity to receive feedback from Service User. The Forum also ensures that there are opportunities for Service Users to engage in meaningful activities.

In 2013 the Forum organised the following events for members:

- Boat trip on River Shannon;
- Christmas Party;
- Cultural Visit to Wicklow Gaol;
- Nature Walk;
- Remembrance Night for Service Users and/or family members who have died;
- Soccer Tournament;
- Visit to the Aviva Stadium, Dublin.

Athlone Institute of Technology and Midlands Simon Community

In October 2012, Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) and Midlands Simon Community signed a Memorandum of Agreement to promote student and academic research projects in areas related to homelessness. The agreement, which builds on the successful relationship between both organisations, also provides for a Graduate Intern Programme which will be open to social care degree holders from AIT.

The development of a joint research agenda, supports significant collaboration at undergraduate and postgraduate level between AIT and Midlands Simon Community, over a five year period. With the collaboration of Midlands Simon Community, AIT research supervisors and students have access and assistance to conduct research that will build an evidence base on homelessness and care provision. This research will also contribute to evaluating the unique approaches being developed on the ground by Midlands Simon Community, and add to the body of work on social policy implementation in Ireland.

One of the outputs of the Agreement is a biennial seminar, on the theme of homelessness, which will be developed jointly by both parties, and held at AIT. The first conference organised under the Agreement, *Housing First: Ending Homelessness in Rural Ireland?*, was hosted in AIT on 30th September

2013. The Conference was opened by Minister for Housing and Planning, Ms Jan O'Sullivan TD, and speakers included Dr Sam Tsemberis, developer of the *Housing First Model* and CEO of *Pathways to Housing*, New York; Dr Eoin O'Sullivan, Associate Professor of Social Policy and Head of School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin; and Mr Frank Murtagh, Principal, Murtagh & Partners, Social and Economic Consultants. This conference was attended by 250 delegates with international, national and regional representatives from University of South Florida, Oireachtas, Simon Communities of Ireland, HSE, Local Authorities, service providers, former Service Users and volunteers. The event received great exposure with interviews on RTE's Morning Ireland and the Pat Kenny Show on Newstalk.

In addition, as part of the Memorandum of Agreement, Midlands Simon Community provides internships for a select number of students within the Emergency Accommodation Services in Athlone and Tullamore. These internships give students the opportunity to further develop their experience and expertise in a working environment. In 2013, two AIT students were engaged by Midlands Simon Community as interns within the EAS.



Fundraising and Communications

Midlands Simon Community receives significant support from government/state agencies (approximately 50% of overall income). The deficit required for the organisation to continue to provide essential services to those experiencing homelessness across the Midlands region, is made up through fundraising activities, donations and corporate giving, €515,295 (see Financial Accounts, page 15, for more detail). Therefore, Midlands Simon Community is dependent on fundraising – the organisation's own efforts, and the goodwill of all our supporters - in order to continue to provide these essential services.

Midlands Simon Community's Fundraising and Communications team co-ordinates a calendar of diverse fundraising events and activities throughout the year. These events are the organisation's main way of raising regular and sustainable funds for our Services. In house fundraising activities encapsulates a large number of activities, many on-going, which include:

- Annual Nollaig na mBan Ladies Luncheon;
- community based fundraising;
- collection boxes;
- direct mail campaign;
- St Patrick's Day Golf Classic;

- Sing for Simon;
- Sleep Out for Simon.

Laois Friends of Simon and Offaly Friends of Simon are our primary groups of volunteers who support our services in their local area, and the funds raised by these groups contribute hugely to maintaining our frontline services.

Communications campaigns also play a vital role in ensuring the public are aware of the issues impacting Midlands Simon Community and those at risk of and/or currently experiencing homelessness. Midlands Simon Community has run a number of communication pieces to advocate for those in our Services and be the voice of the homeless in the Midlands region who might not otherwise be heard, through numerous radio interviews on local and national radio stations and political briefings with locally elected Oireachtas members.

The Fundraising and Communications team have worked tirelessly to highlight the plight of those in need of Midlands Simon Community services. The new interactive website, **www.midlandssimon.com** was launched on World Homeless Day, 10th October 2013. This platform, alongside active social media accounts, educates the public on the plight of homelessness in the Midlands of Ireland.

Midlands Simon Shops

Midlands Simon Shops provide a vital source of income for Midlands Simon Community, while also helping to build awareness of Midlands Simon Community, and homelessness in the Midlands region. Midlands Simon shops are in:

- Athlone, Co Westmeath, opened January 2007;
- Tullamore, Co Offaly, opened November 2013;
- Portlaoise, Co Laois, due to open in January 2014.

Midlands Simon Shops take pride in the fantastic selection of high quality clothes, accessories and shoes they carry, while also stocking a wide range of homewares, DVDs, books and toys.

Midlands Simon Shops stand by the testament that ethical shopping and excellent quality can go hand in hand. Support of these shops, through donations and purchases, provides another way for local people to show solidarity with those experiencing homelessness throughout the year.

Midlands Simon Shops also provide an opportunity for people to volunteer by either working in the shops, or by assisting to source stock and goods to sell in the shops. The shops have been very successful and provide a very valuable source of funds, with an income of €137,370 in 2013.

Governance, Quality Standards and Compliance

The Board of Directors of Midlands Simon Community is committed to maintaining the highest standards of governance in the management and operation of the organisation. The Board's composition reflects a broad range of relevant skills and experience which is essential for the effective oversight and governance of the organisation.

Board members

Molly Buckley (Treasurer),
Mark Cooney,
Brian Cowen (appointed January 2014),
Mary Doyle,
Tom Keady,
P.O. Keenan,
Cormac Lally (Vice-Chairperson),
George Lambden,
Peter Melinn,
Tess Murphy (Chairperson),
Bernadette O'Mahony,
Linda Reidy,
and Leo Wright.

The CEO, Tony O'Riordan, acts as secretary to the Board.

The Board met 10 times during the year, and the AGM was held on 16th October 2013 in accordance with statutory requirements as defined in the Companies Acts. Under Midlands Simon Community's revised Governance Procedures, a yearly meeting is to be held which is a forum for Volunteers, Service Users, Staff and Board Members to meet and review the year. This meeting will be held in October 2014.

The Board has approved a revised Governance Manual which is available on line at www.midlandssimon.com. This document outlines the role and responsibilities, the standing orders, and the terms of reference for the Board and its sub committees. The Board has appointed four sub committees to assist it in its duties, namely:

- Executive;
- Finance;
- Human Resources;
- Internal Audit Sub Committee.

Midlands Simon Community is also signed up to external codes of practice to further support best practice in the performance of its activities, including:

- Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising;
- Code of Governance for Approved Housing Bodies.

Midlands Simon Community is also registered with the Charities Regulatory Authority and welcomes the establishment of the Authority which should serve to bring greater transparency and accountability, and ensure public confidence in the charity sector.

In 2011, the Local Authorities and the HSE commissioned a review of homeless services in the Midlands, this report - the Murtagh Report - was extremely complimentary of the work of the Midlands Simon Community in terms of generated outcomes, quality of services and value for money. The report was followed by a subsequent positive Review of the Regional Settlement Service in 2013. This review, as detailed in the RSS section on page 5, confirmed the unique achievements of Midlands Simon Community in creating services that are attaining lasting outcomes for people and permanently supporting them to move out of homelessness.

Financial Accounts

In 2013, Midlands Simon Community generated just over €1.2 million of income. The vast majority of our funding (54%) came from state funding which is provided by Local Authorities and the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government. 30% of income is sourced from donations or contributions from our supporters and the general public, whether through our Fundraising efforts, through our three shops, or events organised by the public.

The cost of the work done by Midlands Simon Community in 2013 was just under €1.4 million. A deficit of €123,156. This deficit has challenged our frontline services with increasing demand for homeless services.

We would like to thank everyone – corporate, statutory and individual supporters – who have contributed to the work of Midlands Simon Community. We continue to strive to give the best possible value for money and make a lasting difference to those in need of our services, for as long as they require our help and support.

Full audited accounts are available on request from the Midlands Simon Community office and on our website at www.midlandssimon.com

Breakdown of Finances

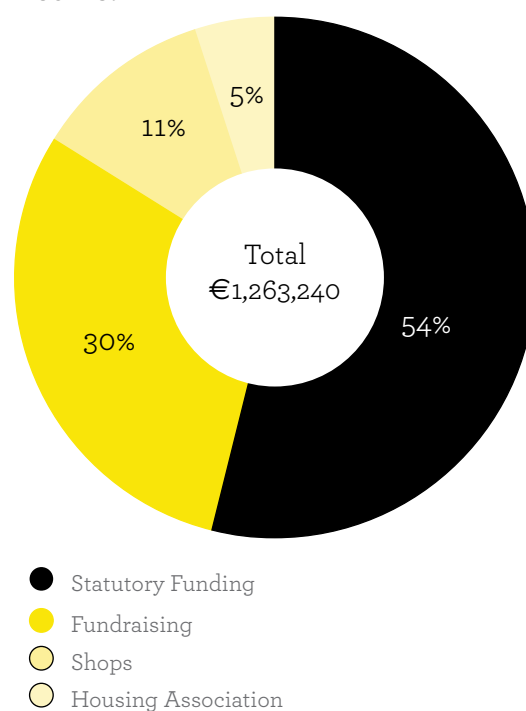
INCOME

ITEM	AMOUNT	%
Statutory Funding	€ 687,969	54%
Fundraising	€ 377,925	30%
Shops	€ 137,370	11%
Housing Association	€ 59,976	5%
Total	€ 1,263,240	100%

EXPENDITURE

ITEM	AMOUNT	%
Services	€ 1,064,695	77%
Fundraising (including Shops) & Admin	€ 314,400	22%
Governance	€7,301	1%
Total	€ 1,386,396	100%

Income:



Expenditure:

