Launch of Dublin Simon Community Annual Review – Minister Murphy announces green light for new 100 bed facility

Annual Review highlights that Dublin Simon Community supported over 1,560 households (3,404 people) from being in emergency accommodation in 2018.

At the launch of the Annual Review Minister Eoghan Murphy announced the development of a 100-bed Medical Treatment & Recovery Facility at Ushers Island for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The announcement was welcomed by Dublin Simon Community CEO, Sam McGuinness, who said:

“Today’s announcement by Minister Eoghan Murphy is very welcome. We must acknowledge the enormous effort and funding support from Minister Murphy, the Department of Housing officials and Department of Health, plus the extraordinary support of Dublin City Council Deputy Chief Executive, Brendan Kenny, and senior executives of the HSE.

“Without their continued vision and commitment this resource for people who are homeless could never happen. This new purpose-built facility at Ushers Island is not about just changing lives, it is saving the lives of those who are among the most vulnerable people in our society.

“Our clients experience multiple social barriers when trying to access healthcare. As a consequence, clients who are homeless tend not to access healthcare or addiction treatment in the first place, or when they do, lack sufficient supports after their treatment to recover; this leads to higher mortality and morbidity rates.

“Dublin Simon Community is responding to the overwhelming demand for healthcare, addiction treatment and recovery services for clients who are homeless and this expansion will make a marked difference to outcomes”.

The Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, Eoghan Murphy TD, commented

“The construction of a new facility will allow increased supports to homeless individuals who require addiction supports. It will see the expansion of the bed capacity from 36 to 100, allowing many more people who are experiencing homelessness to receive the supports that they need. This increased number of beds, together with the establishment of Rapid Access Stabilisation and a Step Up / Step Down facility will allow Dublin Simon Community to extend its services to a significantly larger number of clients. It will support many individuals currently rough sleeping to exit homelessness to a home”.

The Minister also commented that the funding of the facility was an important element of the Government’s response to resolving homelessness and followed close collaboration between his Department and the Department of Health.

The requirement for the increased availability of drug treatment for individuals experiencing homeless had been recommended by the Homelessness Inter-Agency Group, established by Minister Murphy in September 2017. The capital funding will be provided by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and the Department of Health and the HSE will meet the operational costs of the facility.

Development details

The new six-storey development will comprise 5,889 sq/m of floor area providing 100 beds. Planning permission is already in place and today’s confirmation of funding means that work on the site can commence before the end of 2019 with a completion date of Q4 2021.

A suite of core and complementary services will be delivered at the 100-bed treatment facility once constructed. A Rapid Access Stabilisation Service will be added to the existing core services, together with additional recovery beds.

Core services:

1. Alcohol and Benzodiazepine Detoxification Unit for people who are homeless.
2. Rapid Access Stabilisation service in partnership with Merchants Quay Ireland.
4. Step Up /Step Down (Intermediate care) unit for people with complex health needs, in collaboration with hospitals and in partnership with Safetynet Primary Care.
5. Blood Borne Virus Unit (BBV) to support stabilisation of clients on medication and reduce substance misuse in order
to address their addiction.

Complementary services:

6. Sure Steps’ Counselling services for individuals who are homeless
7. Aftercare services for those recovering from problematic drug or alcohol use.
8. Addiction specific In-reach Homeless Action Team involving the Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE) and the HSE.
9. Health and Wellbeing, Client Involvement, Literacy and Personal Development services on site.

At the announcement was in the context of the Dublin Simon Community Annual Review 2018 where the organisation revealed the impact of its intervention in the housing and homelessness crisis as it marks its 50th year in operation.

In 2018, Dublin Simon Community delivered housing, health and support services to 7,684 people and families – a 22% increase in overall service delivery since 2017.

Particular areas of impact in 2018 include:

- Resettled 1,050 adults and 1,081 children (928 households) out of homelessness and into homes, a 27% increase on the previous year.
- Our Homelessness Prevention teams worked with 674 adults and 599 children (632 households) to prevent them from losing their home. A 10% increase.
- 862 adults and children were housed in Dublin Simon Community independent and supported housing for singles, couples and families.
- 1,087 people were provided treatment, recovery, aftercare and counselling services.
- Accommodation stock increased to 672 units serving almost 2,200 people during the year.

Speaking at the launch, Sam McGuinness, CEO of the Dublin Simon Community said:

"Looking back at the activity of Dublin Simon Community in 2018 we can see that the homeless and housing crisis continued to escalate. Our homelessness prevention, sustainment and resettlement teams continued to keep more people in homes and close the door on homelessness. This 14% increase means that 1,724 adults and 1,680 children would be otherwise reliant on emergency accommodation.

"In 2018 we began to see the impact of our increased focus on the provision of housing to enable more people to close the door on homelessness. These efforts are having a huge impact as our housing unit stock continues to grow.

“Today’s announcement regarding the new facility underlines the importance of the provision of additional medical and treatment services, such as counselling, suicide prevention programmes and medical intervention, which have been a key feature of our activity in 2018 and going forward in the new facility. Our innovative approach to recovery, healthcare and wellbeing is a key factor in successful outcomes for our clients attempting to rebuild their lives. The supports we deliver stretch far beyond the provision of a secure place to live.

“We are grateful to our supporters and all those who help Dublin Simon Community to provide support in tackling homelessness, housing issues and the myriad of other services that go into ensuring that the most vulnerable in society can work on rebuilding their lives.”

KEY DEVELOPMENTS FROM DUBLIN SIMON COMMUNITY’S ANNUAL REVIEW 2018:

Dublin Simon Community increased its service provision by 22% in 2018 and provided services to over 7,684 people and families across Dublin, Wicklow, Kildare, Meath, Louth, Cavan and Monaghan.

Housing and resettlement

- 1,560 Households or 3,404 men women and children were prevented or moved on from homelessness through our sustainment and resettlement services: a 14% increase since 2017.
- 862 Adults and Children were housed in our own independent units for singles and families, 649 in independent housing and 213 in supported housing.
- Increased Dublin Simon Community accommodation units to 672 units accommodating almost 2,200 people during the year.

Addiction Treatment, Recovery and Counselling

- 1,087 people were provided with Treatment services including detox, recovery and availing of Sure Steps Counselling: a 4% increase on the previous year.
- 2,438 Hours of 1:1 counselling and mental health support were received by clients accessing Sure Steps Counselling: an 8% increase since 2017.

Emergency Accommodation and Outreach Services

- 1,205 people accessed our emergency accommodation. 2,183 people were provided with housing assistance,
harm reduction and medical services by our Rough Sleeper Team.

**Participation and Development**

- **376 People** expanded and developed their skills and education, with 34 people coming through our employability initiatives where 14 secured employment.

**Nutrition**

- **362,155 Meals** were provided across our residential services with our kitchens providing nutritious food to improve wellbeing
- **12,336 Food Parcels** including Cereal, Tinned and Dried Food and Fruit and Veg were distributed by our Rough Sleeper Team, SLI and Food for Simon team. 99% increase since 2017 (6,192).

The full Report can be found online. Please visit [www.dubsimon.ie/annualreview2018](http://www.dubsimon.ie/annualreview2018) [3]

**About Dublin Simon Community**

Dublin Simon Community provide services to over 7,600 people and families in Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow, Meath, Louth, Cavan and Monaghan who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Services range from:

- Emergency accommodation & support providing people with a place of welcome, warmth & safety;
- Soup runs & outreach teams who are often the first point of contact for people sleeping rough.
- Housing provision, tenancy sustainment & settlement services, housing advice & information services helping people to make the move out of homelessness & working with households at risk
- Specialist health & treatment services addressing some of the issues which may have contributed to homeless occurring or may be a consequence of their homelessness.

**Background Information on the current Ushers Island Medical Treatment and Recovery Facility**

- Dublin Simon Community has been operating at this location at Ushers Island since 1989 where it was initially an emergency accommodation unit.
- In 2003 it was repurposed to provide a 21-bed Medical Residential Treatment & Recovery Facility with addiction treatment services for clients who are homeless.
- Services expanded again in 2012 to include a HIV Respite and Stabilisation unit (now BBV unit) and in 2018 a 12-bed Step Up/Step Down Intermediate Care unit was established.
- Alcohol and Benzodiazepine Detoxification Unit is the only one of its kind nationally and specifically caters to people who are homeless.
- Current facility is operating at capacity. It is served by visiting GPs, 38 professional nursing staff, clinical governance and additional wraparound services such as counselling, health and wellbeing and over 31 full and part time counsellors.

Clients are referred to the services by appointment from homeless service providers, GPs, hospitals, social workers, addiction treatment centres.

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