

March 2021

**We are now facing a homelessness crisis in Northern Ireland.
A gift of just £10 can help someone who has no home.**

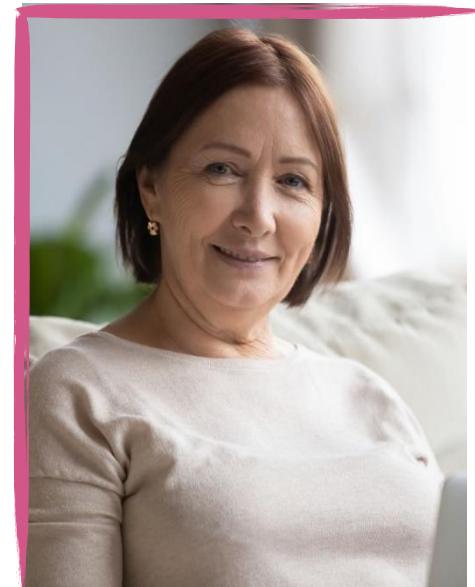
Can your Church help?

Dear Reverend

I do hope this letter finds you well and that you are enjoying seeing the lighter evenings come in as Spring begins to appear.

There is no doubt this has been a trying and challenging year for everyone, no matter where you live or your circumstances, coronavirus will have stopped some part of your normal day to day life.

The pandemic, however, did not stop homelessness. In fact, we are now facing another crisis – homelessness. Sadly, **between April and December 2020, 11,628 households were homeless in Northern Ireland.** This includes more than **3,000 families, 1,200 pensioners and 6,548 individuals.** And as the financial effects of coronavirus continue to develop, we know this will only get worse.



Here, at Simon Community, our front-line staff have worked tirelessly to maintain our services for those who find themselves homeless during this particularly difficult time. One such person is Christine.

Christine was 56 years old when she became homeless. She had been in a long-term relationship which broke down after she suffered a sustained period of domestic violence. Not having anywhere else to go, Christine turned to Simon Community for help and found a **warm, safe bed and support** at our Bond's Hill hostel in Derry/Londonderry.

At first, Christine was embarrassed, feeling like she was 'too old' to be homeless. But, our staff welcomed her warmly with no judgement, helped her settle in and meet others in the hostel to ease her sense of loneliness. Christine was able to benefit from **our 24-hour wrap around support**, with one of the team always on hand for encouragement or sometimes just a much-needed chat to improve her mental health.

By engaging with our **Wellbeing Team**, to help address some ongoing health issues, Christine was able to make the decision to reconnect with her daughter after a long period of not speaking.



Our team were able to mediate this and Christine can now enjoy contacting her daughter and grand-daughter twice a week and they were able to spend all of Christmas together safely in a bubble. **After 212 days in our hostel, Christine is now preparing to move into a flat and live independently again** and she is so thankful.

"I have received **support to the highest level** in my time at Simon Community and I am grateful. No task, question, problem is too much. The staff are always on hand to help and always wanting the best for you and to **keep you safe from harm and to fulfil your full potential**.

I'm glad I was placed here as to begin with I was nervous and had an image in my head of what I thought this place was. I, however, was wrong and **I will be forever grateful for what the staff at Simon Community have done for me.**"

The support of Simon Community staff has helped change the course of Christine's life. But none of this would be possible without the support of our local communities. Our fundraising, like other charities, has been hit hard by the pandemic. We can no longer raise money to help support our work through events or our shop, which has had to close. **It is because of people like you and your generosity that we have been able to sustain our vital, life changing, life-saving services.**

If you can, please help support our work by donating to our **Emergency Appeal**. A donation of any size can help someone facing homelessness.

Thank you for your consideration. If you require any further information please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Scott

Amanda Scott
Community Fundraising Manager



Can you help someone like Christine?



£10 could help provide those with no home emergency food or clothing when needed most in these challenging times.



£15 could help supply a move on pack of essential items to those who are ready to live independently again.



£20 could provide additional personal & domestic hygiene products to help prevent the spread of coronavirus.

All your donation is used here in Northern Ireland and for each £1 we receive, 95.1p goes directly to our front-line services.

You may contact us at anytime for further information. Please call us via 028 9023 2882, mobile 07935 850116, email us via amandascott@simoncommunity.org or write to us using the following address; 25 - 27 Franklin Street, Belfast, BT2 8DS. Thank you.