



8th October 2009

Simon warns that time is running out for Government to meet commitment to end homelessness by 2020

Political briefing held as part of Simon Week 2009, supported by EBS Building Society

8th October 2009 - The Simon Communities of Ireland today warned that time is running out for the Government to meet its commitment to end rough sleeping and long-term homelessness in Ireland by 2010. The warning came at a political briefing held today as part of Simon Week 2009 which is supported by EBS Building Society.

Members of the Oireachtas met with representatives from the eight Simon Communities across Ireland throughout the day to hear about those experiencing homelessness and at risk of homelessness in their constituency areas. The Simon Community representatives also conveyed the potentially devastating impact of further cuts to funding for homeless services across the country.

Speaking at the event, **CEO of the Simon Patrick Burke** said "In 2008 this Government stated its commitment to end rough sleeping and long term homelessness in Ireland by 2010. We are now less than three months from the New Year and it would seem that this commitment could be in jeopardy. The Simon Communities of Ireland fully understand the difficult financial times we are currently living in but the Government has a responsibility to provide for the most vulnerable in society. We firmly believe that these commitments can still be realised and we are fully committed to working with all parties to make this happen. The countdown to 2010 has begun. Political will on all sides of the Houses of the Oireachtas is needed to finally end street and long-term homelessness in Ireland.

Marlene O'Connor, Galway Simon CEO said: "Simon services and other homeless services across the country have had their funding cut significantly over the past two years and it is simply not possible for these services to sustain further cuts to their funding. The recent economic downturn means that even more people than before are at risk of becoming homeless. In the months ahead the local Simon Communities around Ireland will have more people turning to their services for support, they will meet more people who are at risk of homelessness and more people who have actually become homeless. It defies logic that our services should suffer further cut backs at this time and we are calling on the Government to ensure that this does not happen in order to protect the needs of the most vulnerable in our society."

For further information on Simon Week 2009, supported by EBS Building Society, log onto www.simon.ie or call into your local EBS branch to see how you can support the week.