



Communities of Ireland

Coleraine House, Coleraine Street,  
Dublin 7, D07 E8XF, Ireland

Tel: +353 (01) 671 1606

info@simoncommunity.com  
www.simon.ie

Taoiseach Micheál Martin,  
Department of the Taoiseach,  
Merrion St Upper,  
Dublin 2,  
D02 R583

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Taoiseach Martin, a chara

My name is Ber Grogan, and I am the Executive Director of the Simon Communities of Ireland. As you know, the Simon Communities of Ireland are a network of independent communities across the country that provide homeless, housing and treatment services to people facing the trauma and stress of homelessness. With a proud history of over 50 years responding to local needs, the Simon Communities across Ireland work to end long-term homelessness in Ireland.

You will be very familiar with the work of Cork Simon Community and CEO, Dermot Kavanagh. I was fortunate enough to visit Anderson's Quay on Friday last. I was heartened to see the difference the service is making for those experiencing homelessness and are looking forward to entering the housing market, some into the private rental market.

As a network, we are committed to putting forward solutions for tackling homelessness, locally, nationally and within Europe. We are writing to you about the recent media reports surrounding Rent Pressure Zones (RPZs) and the potential alternative in a reference rent system.

As part of our General Election Manifesto, we called for specific measures to provide security in the private rental sector<sup>1</sup>. We do feel that the actions in Section 3.3 of our manifesto, as well as section 6 of the Housing Commission report, could be considered in the wider conversations about the Private Rental Sector (PRS) in Ireland.

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<sup>1</sup> [SCI-GE-Manifesto-FINAL.pdf](#)

On February 17th, I met with the Senior Research Manager in the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) and was struck by their recent papers showing that RPZs have made a difference in some areas, and that the overall number of landlords is actually increasing<sup>2,3</sup>. We also ask that these evidence-based pieces, along with other research both in Ireland and abroad, are taken into consideration before any final decisions around changes are made.

We strongly support Threshold's recommendation calling for RPZs to be extended until 'a fully planned and tested replacement is ready to be implemented.' This allows for greater certainty and security for both private interests and tenants alike<sup>4</sup>. The speculation around the ending of RPZs has caused, and is causing, distress to many in precarious housing situations.

We welcome that, on Thursday this week there will be Dáil Statements on the Housing Commission Report. Recommendations 31 and 33 of that report are of particular note on this issue.

We would very much appreciate the opportunity to meet with you, the Minister for Housing and your Officials to assist in any way possible. It is imperative that the voices of tenants and those at the centre of preventing homelessness are heard and heeded in this debate. We look forward to an open, robust and productive consultation process.

Warm regards,



Ber Grogan

Executive Director

Simon Communities of Ireland

cc. Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, James Browne TD

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<sup>2</sup> [TEP0624.pdf](#)

<sup>3</sup> [An Assessment of Property Level Rental Price Growth in Ireland.pdf](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Election-Manifesto-2024.pdf](#)