

Coronavirus – Simon Community appeal for funds

Simon Community Scotland, a Scottish charity seeking to ensure that homeless people are kept safe from coronavirus by finding them accommodation in dedicated hotel space, has issued an urgent appeal for funds.

The charity has secured the use of two hotels, one in Glasgow, and the other in Edinburgh, to provide homeless people with the isolation and care that they require to stay away from the virus.

The charity has secured £300,000 from The Scottish Government, to acquire the hotel space.

But the charity now finds that it has higher than expected costs to meet. They are running the two hotels with new recruits and trained staff all with access to personal protective equipment (PPE).

A crowdfunding appeal has been set up to raise additional funds.

Any money raised will provide essentials such as toiletries, pyjamas and underwear and so-called 'kettle food parcels' that allow for the cooking of dehydrated food.

Until Monday evening, a Simon Community Scotland resources warehouse in Glasgow's Reidvale Street was accepting donations of these 'essentials'. But that has since had to be locked down, placing a further burden on them. They now have to raise money to enable their safe purchase.

The fundraising campaign with the hashtag #GiveHope is here – [SCSCOV1D19](#)

Simon Community Scotland is headquartered in Glasgow and operates the Streetwork service in Edinburgh. The charity recognises that it is appealing for support at a time when many families are facing uncertain financial times.

Neither of the hotels is being identified. On Monday evening, the first of the Glasgow hotel being in operation, some 11 people who were rough sleeping in the city were safely accommodated. The charity expects to be at capacity within the week. They have space in each hotel for 40 people.

The charity is gearing itself up to provide longer-term housing for those requiring emergency hotel space.

People are being identified for the hotel accommodation by the Simon Community Scotland Street Team, which operates 365 days a year and is highly experienced in finding possible solutions for homeless people in urgent need of support.

Simon Community Scotland's chief executive, Lorraine McGrath, said: "We are all facing the most extreme challenges, but perhaps none more so than people who have nowhere to sleep, never mind keep themselves at a safe distance.

"Everyone at Simon Community Scotland is working tirelessly to ensure there is access to safe places with support and care onsite.

"We need your help to make that possible for everyone. We are working closely with our partner providers and local authorities with the support of the Scottish Government to get accommodation and access to health care in place.

"We now need to make that accommodation somewhere where people feel safe and comfortable with everything they need so they can socially distance themselves from risk."

McGrath continued: “That’s where every one of you and our local business community can help. We need funds to react to the changing pressures and needs, we need basic mobile phones and top-ups to ensure people can call for help and keep in contact, we need new and unused underwear, pyjamas and toiletries and we need foods that can be easily consumed with no more than a kettle.

“We are grateful to every single person who has contacted with support so far – together we can #GiveHope to people who are experiencing homeless.”

