

## **Simon Community NI Highlights Mental Health Fears on World Homeless Day**

**On World Homeless Day, which coincides with World Mental Health Day, Simon Community NI is highlighting the growing mental health problem in the homeless population.**

Simon Community NI is increasingly concerned about the high prevalence of mental health issues, self-harm and suicide attempts within those experiencing homelessness, and believes that this is something not widely discussed or understood.

With mental health issues affecting 1 in 5 people in Northern Ireland, the homelessness charity wants to draw attention to the commonality of mental health issues as both a cause and effect of homelessness.

People with mental health problems are far more likely to live in unstable environments but there is a lack of general awareness that mental ill health is a common cause of homelessness, and that homelessness often exacerbates mental health problems.

Jim Dennison, Simon Community NI Chief Executive said, “The correlation between mental ill health and homelessness is nothing new. Numerous studies have found a strong link between homelessness and an array of mental health conditions, with a higher prevalence of mental ill health in the homeless population.

“The recent tragic death of another person experiencing homelessness is a further indicator of a desperate need that is not being discussed in Northern Ireland.

It is unfortunately appropriate that World Homeless Day and World Mental Health Day should fall on the same day, as the two issues are often and sadly inextricably linked. We want to draw attention to this, in the hope that people will discuss their problems, ask for help, and understand that homelessness is a much more complex issue than just not having a roof over your head.”

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*If you have any concerns about mental health issues, contact Simon Community NI or Lifeline for advice and support.*

*For more information on Simon Community NI and the services they provide, contact Claire Andrews [claireandrews@simoncommunity.org](mailto:claireandrews@simoncommunity.org) / 028 9023 2882*