



Transforming An Garda Síochána 2018-2024





SECTIONS

Executive summary	1
Background to this report	2
The CoFPI report	3
Putting the CoFPI principles into practice	4
Conclusion: Continuing the journey of change	5
Index of policies, initiatives and developments	6





Executive summary

This report sets out the journey of transformation and growth taken by An Garda Síochána since the publication of the Report of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland (CoFPI) in 2018. Guided by the ten key reforming principles of the CoFPI report, An Garda Síochána embarked on a broad programme of reform that has encompassed our entire organisation, from operational structures and systems to governance and standards.

While recognising that the journey of change and transition is ongoing, this report will reflect on progress to date, offer context on the impact that these have had across the organisation, framed by the lived experience of our personnel. Since 2018, An Garda Síochána has worked to implement a number of reforming strategies, policies and initiatives, including the new Garda Operating Model; the provision of greater psychological and welfare supports for our personnel; investments in learning and development, particularly in the area of Human Rights; specialised crime investigation capabilities at every level, including Protective Services; an improved focus on internal communications; and strategic investments in data and mobile technology that enable front line personnel to spend more time in our communities.

Additional initiatives have also focused on supporting the health and wellbeing of personnel, fostering diversity and inclusivity, using new systems and technology to improve the experience of frontline personnel and enhance service to the public. This report will explore the impact of these programmes, and more, within the ten framing principles of the CoFPI report.

As with society as a whole, An Garda Síochána has navigated a period of post-pandemic adjustment. Despite the challenges of this time, the journey of organisational reform has continued, enabled by the continuing support and commitment of all our personnel. Across the entire service, An Garda Síochána understands that fulfilling our mission of Keeping People Safe in an evolving, challenging landscape cannot be achieved unless our organisation remains agile and adaptive. Through continuous, incremental and meaningful change, An Garda Síochána can become a stronger, more efficient and more motivated service, better adapted to serve the current and future needs of Irish society.





Background to this report

As of November 2024, An Garda Síochána comprises:

- 14,054 Garda Members
- 3,689 Garda Staff
- 319 Garda Reserves

The purpose of An Garda Síochána, as defined by the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act of 2024, is to:

- Preserve peace and public order
- Protect life and property
- Protect and vindicate the human rights of each individual
- Protect the security of the State
- Prevent crime
- Prevent harm to individuals, in particular individuals who are vulnerable or at risk
- Bring criminals to justice, including by detecting and investigating crime
- Protect and support victims of crime, and
- Regulate and control road traffic and improve road safety.

At the time of the publication of the report of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland (CoFPI) in 2018, An Garda Síochána was facing significant challenges to its reputation and credibility in the aftermath of a number of high-profile controversies. Several commissions of enquiry had shone a spotlight on wrongdoings within An Garda Síochána, while extensive media coverage highlighted unprofessional practices in the service. This had a serious impact on both public confidence and morale among members of the organisation. While the process of reform across An Garda Síochána had already commenced at this stage, the wider discourse on issues such as corruption and criminal behaviour by a minority of Garda personnel required a broader and more comprehensive organisational response.

An Garda Síochána was and remains determined to sustain its legitimacy and public confidence in a rapidly changing social landscape. This report sets out to outline the key challenges faced by An Garda Síochána relating to culture, structures, accountability mechanisms and management of processes across the organisation.



This report outlines the progress made by the organisation since 2018 against each of the ten CoFPI recommendations, and the efforts and improvements made through national and cross-collaborative initiatives, in order to provide a better service to the public and our communities. This publication offers a sense of the challenges, achievements and ongoing progress in change across the organisation. It intends to support the momentum built to date in strengthening An Garda Síochána, and to address the need for sustainable change, in order to preserve the trust of the public in our service.

Since the publication of the CoFPI report, the nature of crime, threats and harm have continued to evolve and diversify, raising an ever greater need to offer specialised, sophisticated and technologically-enabled responses. Societal changes have also impacted the design and delivery of policing services, including greater focus on diversity, an increased reliance on data, and stronger local and international partnership. Today, An Garda Síochána is responsible for policing a society that is more layered, diverse and complex than at any time in the history of the State.

More than a century after its foundation, An Garda Síochána is moving forward on path of transformation and innovation, to ensure that we can continue to protect the most vulnerable people in our society, prevent crime, maintain our tradition of community policing on consent, and keep people safe. Undertaking a programme of such radical change in an organisation of the scale of An Garda Síochána has not been without challenge. As this report will outline, many reforms introduced since 2018 have already delivered benefits for Garda personnel and society. Other long-term, structural initiatives will take longer for their benefits to be felt. Nonetheless, with the continued drive and commitment of our people, An Garda Síochána will continue to work towards becoming a more modern, professional service that is inclusive, effective and accountable.





The Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland

In September 2018 the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland (CoFPI) published a report containing a clear vision and roadmap for strengthening An Garda Síochána in its mission of delivering policing and security services, and ensuring community safety. Its aim was to ensure that the Irish people would get the police service they deserved, and that Garda personnel would continue to have rewarding and respected careers.

The CoFPI report reflected input and feedback from a transparent, extensive and robust consultation process. This involved reviewing hundreds of Garda documents concerning all aspects of operations and administration; benchmarking policing in Ireland against practices in other jurisdictions; surveys and meetings with members of the public; interviews with senior Government leaders and politicians from all parties; officials from numerous Government bodies; academics in Ireland and abroad; officials from other jurisdictions, and Garda personnel across all ranks and grades.

The Commission's vision for the future of policing in Ireland was arranged into ten key principles:

1. Human rights are the foundation and purpose of policing
2. Policing and national security are not the responsibility of the police alone
3. Accountability and oversight structures for policing should be clear and effective
4. Internal governance must be strong and efficient
5. Police duties should be clearly defined and resources deployed accordingly
6. An Garda Síochána should be structured and managed to support frontline policing
7. The people of An Garda Síochána are its greatest resource
8. Policing must be information-led
9. Policing should be seen as a profession
10. Policing must be adaptive, innovative and cost effective.





4

Putting the CoFPI Principles into Practice

This section of the report provides an overview of the main policies and initiatives put in place by An Garda Síochána in the period 2018-24 to enable and drive transformation across the organisation. The policies and initiatives are rooted specifically in the service's overarching Strategy Statement 2022-2024, and its Human Rights Strategy Statement.

Strategy Statement 2022-2024

"Keeping people safe and protecting the vulnerable and victims of crime remains our central mission."

The service's commitment to transformation and reform is clearly visible in its Strategy Statement 2022-2024, which emphasises sustaining change and innovation and strengthening capability across the organisation, of which people and purpose,; partnerships, engagement, empowerment and trust, and information-led policing are core enablers. This Strategy Statement had its practical application in interlinked initiatives that were established or ongoing in the period covered by this report.

Human Rights Strategy Statement

"Empowering our personnel by providing them with effective processes, appropriate tools and placing human rights and the Code of Ethics at the core of their decision making."

The service's Human Rights Strategy addresses the broader issues of equality as a Human Right that informs policing. It sets out a range of measures in its action plans to ensure the organisation is delivering a Human Rights-focused policing and security service that can be seen throughout a number of the initiatives detailed in this report.

Driving transformation across the organisation

Each section will outline policies and initiatives under each of the CoFPI recommendations that have driven transformational change across An Garda Síochána, and wider Government stakeholder groups. In tandem, a set of cultural shifts convey the informal, implicit adoption benefits to An Garda Síochána of the transformation strategies in this period.





Transforming An Garda Síochána 2018–2024

Turning principles into action

Policing and nation the responsibility of

- Deepening our connections and agencies, both locally and intern
- A new framework for community Local Community Safety Partner

Human rights are the foundation and purpose of policing

- The introduction of the Garda Decision-Making Model, with upholding Human Rights at its core
- Organisation-wide delivery of an accredited course on Policing and Human Rights in Ireland
- The establishment of the Garda Ethics and Culture Bureau

Policing must be adaptive, innovative and cost effective

- National deployment of Active Mobility devices, supported by a growing suite of apps enabling Gardaí to spend less time in stations, and more time in communities
- Commencement of a new Financial Management Governance Framework
- Supporting internal innovation, including the 'Your Ideas' initiative

Policing should be seen as a profession

- Enhanced specialisation and professionalisation of our service, supported by new recruitment pathways
- Investment in the continuous professional development of all personnel, including management development training and executive coaching

Policing must be information-led

- Enhanced data architecture and data governance, which supports information-led operational decision-making
- Introduction of the Rosters and Duty Management System
- Greater internal and external communication and messaging, including the development of new communication platforms



The people of An Garda its greatest re

- Prioritisation of the physical and psycho our Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Expanded investment in training and de personnel, including the GETS eLearning
- Fostering a more diverse and inclusive v Organisation' principle

al security are not f the police alone

partnership working with peer
ationally
safety, including the creation of
ships



3



Accountability and oversight structures for policing should be clear and effective

- Creation of dedicated Performance Assurance Functional Areas in each Division, as part of the new Operating Model
- Introduction of the Performance Accountability and Learning Framework (PALF) for all Garda Members
- An enhanced framework for Divisional Policing Plans, with a focus on accountable, measurable goals

4



Internal governance must be strong and efficient

- Establishment of the Garda Anti-Corruption Unit
- Adoption of the Garda Code of Ethics
- Reform of internal governance structures
- Preparation to transition to the enhanced oversight model of the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act

5



Police duties should be clearly defined and resources deployed accordingly

- Recruitment of specialist and professional staff, increasing the size, skillset and capabilities of our workforce
- New specialised resources, teams and management systems, supporting both front-line service delivery and enabling functions

6



An Garda Síochána should be structured and managed to support frontline policing

- Introduction of the Garda Operating Model across all Divisions, which is the most significant restructuring of policing services since the foundation of An Garda Síochána
- Introduction of a new working time agreement and rosters for Garda Members that balances health and wellbeing with the need to deliver effective, visible policing services in communities

on the
n on the
Policing in
2018

a Síochána are
source

logical health of workforce, as part of

development supports for all Garda
platform
workforce, under the 'One



CoFPI Principle 1: Human Rights are the Foundation and Purpose of Policing



The Garda Decision-Making Model (GDMM)

Developing a reasoned and consistent approach to day-to-day decisions across the organisation, grounded in ethical and Human Rights considerations



Towards a deeper understanding of Human Rights

Moving from “respect” for Human Rights to a deeper appreciation and understanding of how to act in a manner congruent with Human Rights.



The Garda Ethics and Culture Bureau

The Garda Ethics and Cultures Bureau has gained insights on the perspectives of personnel across An Garda Síochána on our ethics and culture, through the most recent Culture Audit of 2022. A number of short and long term programmes have been developed in response.

The Garda Decision-Making Model

Gardaí are regularly required to make significant operational decisions, often in pressured situations. The Garda Decision Making Model, developed by the Ethics and Culture Bureau and introduced in 2019, provides a structured approach to help personnel make decisions that are fair, proportionate and balanced and that will stand up to scrutiny by internal and external agencies. The model is Human Rights and ethics-based. Every action a Garda considers taking should be consistent with these values and with the principles and commitments of the Garda Síochána Code of Ethics.

The decision-making process comprises five stages. In making a decision members are asked to:

1. Gather information and intelligence
2. Assess threat and risk
3. Consider the operational environment
4. Identify options and contingencies
5. Take action and review



The service is strongly committed to the implementation of the Garda Decision Making Model. Its usefulness has been proven as part of the judicial process, where senior Gardaí have relied upon their practical use of the model in the High Court and the Special Criminal Court to explain their rationale for various actions. All personnel in An Garda Síochána are required to complete training in the Garda Decision Making Model and to use it in their work. The adoption of the model has supported a reasoned and consistent approach to day-to-day decisions across the organisation, grounded in ethical and Human Rights considerations.

Fortunately, we are increasingly being guided towards making effective decisions through policies, procedures and codes of conduct. I recognise the Garda Decision Making Model and the Code of Ethics as two key tools in this respect.

Sergeant Jane Ryan, Kildare Garda Station

Towards a deeper understanding of Human Rights

A dedicated Garda Síochána Human Rights strategy, along with the Code of Ethics, sets the highest standards of values and behaviour for all Garda personnel. Our Human Rights Strategy Statement 2022-24 states that human rights and ethical behaviour are the foundations of the delivery of policing. The organisation has formalised the understanding and implementation of its human rights strategy through educational programmes, and has operationalised it through the Human Rights Screening Tool. The tool provides a structure for the development, implementation and monitoring of human rights compliance consistently across the three pillars of policy, training and operations. The tool comprises of a series of standard questions which are required to be completed by those developing and implementing policy, training materials, operational orders, inspections or processes.

As part of the Human Rights Strategy Statement, a Strategic Human Rights Advisory Committee (SHRAC) has been established, to inform decisions and initiatives across the organisation linked to human rights, and to incorporate and normalise human rights and equality protections in the policies and procedures of the organisation. The Garda Human Rights Section carries out a secretariat function for the SHRAC, which meets quarterly and is chaired by the Commissioner. The SHRAC advises on the general strategy for embedding and ensuring compliance with human rights standards in all aspects of the work of An Garda Síochána. It also evaluates compliance with human rights standards, making appropriate recommendations on ways to strengthen compliance.

The membership comprises of various members of the Garda Senior Leadership Team, the external human rights advisor, and a range of representatives from human rights and civil society organisations. The SHRAC terms of reference are publicly available and the work of the SHRAC is published each year in its annual report.



A bespoke accredited Policing and Human Rights Law in Ireland course has been developed by An Garda Síochána, accredited by the University of Limerick. As of November 2024, four thousand personnel have completed this programme, including staff from partner agencies across Europe and the United States. An organisation-wide network of Human Rights champions has also been established to advocate and provide a practical structure to embed a human rights focus across An Garda Síochána. This voluntary network is comprised of Garda Members and Staff who have completed the Policing and Human Rights Law programme.

It's something any organisation would be extremely proud of: that so many members and staff have put themselves through the University of Limerick's human rights course.

Assistant Commissioner Jonathan Roberts

In addition to this, An Garda Síochána has undertaken a pilot project, in conjunction with the National Office for Suicide Prevention, in order to introduce a suicide prevention gatekeeping training programme for Garda Personnel.

The Garda Ethics and Culture Bureau

The Garda Culture and Ethics Bureau (GECB) was established in 2017 with the specific mission of enhancing organisational culture and promoting ethical values and behaviour across the service.

GECB has piloted several staff engagement initiatives, such as the development of a staff engagement charter and the introduction of the 'Have Your Say' framework, that allows personnel to submit their views and suggestions to a dedicated email mailbox, or via the internal Garda Portal.

Following the 2022 Culture Audit, GECB conducted 15 focus groups with personnel across the organisation to reflect on findings, gather additional qualitative data and to seek suggestions for initiatives that could support personnel in their day-to-day. While the results of this process will be fed into a wider, long-term response plan, a number of short-term response measures identified are currently being explored for implementation, such as the creation of a 'Find, Fix, Improve and Innovate' button on the Garda Portal to help identify and rectify hindrance stressors.

The Garda Ethics and Culture Bureau continues to work to embed a culture of ethical behaviour, openness, respect, honesty and dignity in the workplace, whereby all personnel feel motivated and confident to engage, speak up and strive to be innovative.



CoFPI Principle 2: Policing and National Security are not the responsibility of the Police alone



Increased collaboration with other agencies

Actively seeking, building and exploiting opportunities to collaborate and work in operational partnerships with other agencies, in order to provide a more integrated and improved service to the community, while also enabling a greater focus on core policing duties by An Garda Síochána.



Community Policing

An evolution towards community policing focused on community engagement, crime prevention and law enforcement, in order to proactively address crime and policing quality of life issues affecting communities.

Increased collaboration with other agencies

An Garda Síochána is committed to managing resources to ensure that personnel are engaged in activities that will make the biggest contribution to keeping people safe. Traditionally Gardaí have acted as social workers, youth workers and community workers and provided services to people with mental health issues, the elderly and those at risk. However, realising the potential constraints and limitations of this approach, the service has begun to transition towards a partnership-based approach that leverages the strengths of other agencies and community groups. This has been enabled by the adoption of a community policing framework, where the role of each participant is clearly defined, allowing the organisation to focus on core police work and to separate it from other services in order to provide an improved level of policing to the public.

Building on the high satisfaction ratings of services provided to the community achieved in successive public attitudes surveys¹, the organisation has begun to establish agreements and to collaborate more closely with other statutory and non-statutory bodies, with the aim of providing an improved multi-agency service to the public. Examples of this include the establishment of Divisional Protective Services Units, and the ongoing work of the Garda National Protective Services Bureau, which are grounded in collaboration with external agencies to offer protective support programmes for high risk victims of domestic abuse.

In 2019, An Garda Síochána and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) established the first Joint Investigation Team to advance cross-border investigations, enhancing information sharing, collective competencies and reducing duplication of effort.

¹ Public Attitudes Survey 2022 – 73% of respondents perceive An Garda Síochána as community focused; 75% of respondent's report satisfaction with local Garda Service



More recently, An Garda Síochána has partnered with the Health Service Executive (HSE) in a pilot project to recalibrate mental health services that were formerly reliant on Gardaí alone. These and other initiatives, such as the Local Community Safety Partnership model, are building and enhancing a multi-agency approach that will enable An Garda Síochána to focus on its core mission of Keeping People Safe.

Increased collaboration facilitates greater cohesion between different State bodies, allows for greater understanding of different perspectives and viewpoints and provides opportunities for learning and development across skillsets. Examples of this include the SHRAC advisory body; the assistance of an external service provider in the development of policies and protocols for the Garda Anti-Corruption Unit; collaboration between the Garda College and third-level institutions to provide bespoke training and certification for personnel; and the Sex Offender Risk Assessment and Management (SORAM) programme, which is a multi-agency initiative that monitors and assesses convicted sex-offenders, to reduce the level of risk to the public.

In recent years, national security threats have become more complex and diverse. The CoFPI report outlined the need for a more permanent structure to bring together various departments to oversee national security. In response to this, the National Security Analysis Centre (NSAC) was established in 2019 to provide high-quality, strategic analysis of the key threats to Ireland's national security to the Taoiseach and Government. An Garda Síochána, in collaboration with Departments of Justice, Defence, Foreign Affairs, the Environment, Climate and Communications, the Defence Forces and the National Security Analysis, collectively provide strategic analysis and intelligence to the Taoiseach. Within the Garda National Crime and Security Intelligence Service, the establishment and resourcing of the National Digital Intelligence Unit (NDIU), has been an important developmental step in An Garda Síochána's development of open source intelligence capabilities.

The NSAC has been active in supporting aspects of the Government's response to the public health emergency caused by COVID-19, and more recently, in support and co-ordination for the Ministerial group overseeing the response to the cyber-attack on the HSE. The establishment of NSAC represents a Whole-Government approach and highlights the importance and reliance on all key players to work collaboratively in order to keep our people safe.

Community Policing

The trust of the public, endorsed by the findings of public attitudes surveys, is an indicator that the core community policing tradition of An Garda Síochána has remained a cultural cornerstone since its foundation a century ago.

As part of the overall process of change in the organisation, traditional community engagement has evolved to become a dedicated community policing function at National and Divisional levels. Community policing is the provision of a policing service to the whole community, both urban and rural, through a proactive, partnership-based, problem-solving approach. It focuses on community engagement, crime prevention and law enforcement and addresses crime and policing quality of life issues which are affecting communities.



The new Community Policing Framework, supported by a practical community policing toolkit, has been delivered organisation-wide to ensure consistent standards of engagement across the service. The toolkit, designed by the Garda National Community Engagement Bureau, features a variety of standardised materials, translated into several languages, to assist Gardaí in engaging with different communities.

Continued commitment to this community model is reflected in the fact that under the Community Policing Framework, every Garda Division in the country is mapped into Community Policing Areas (CPAs). Each CPA will have a dedicated Community Garda assigned to it as part of the Operating Model rollout. Community policing personnel are given the equipment, training and skills necessary to carry out their roles effectively, supported by resources such as active mobility devices and dedicated community policing vehicles.



CoFPI Principle 3: Accountability and oversight structures for policing must be clear and effective



National and Divisional planning

Maturing towards a collaborative engagement ethos across the organisation, National and Divisional planning processes are now built on stakeholder engagement both inside and outside our organisation, to ensure the needs of our communities carry forward into operational planning.



Performance Assurance

The delivery and integration of dedicated governance and standards functions at every layer of the organisation, to ensure robust monitoring of performance.



Performance Accountability and Learning Framework (PALF)

Increasing adoption of a structured, collaborative and transparent approach to performance management across all ranks and their line managers.



Enhanced oversight under the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024

Increasing adoption of a structured, collaborative and transparent approach to performance management across all ranks and their line managers.

National and Divisional planning

As an organisation, An Garda Síochána has worked consistently since 2018 to support and standardise approaches to organisational planning across our service. This has been guided by ensuring that the strategic objectives of our three-year Strategy Statements, which are to be replaced under the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act, can cascade and be effectively operationalised at Divisional and Bureau levels.

Our final Strategy Statement developed under the Garda Síochána Act of 2005 (as amended), was in effect from 2022 to 2024. This was developed by a working group comprised of Garda personnel from across ranks, grades and locations. Their work involved conducting engagements with diverse communities, Government, civil society, Garda personnel at every rank and grade and with our policing colleagues abroad, to collate feedback and input into the final Strategy Statement.



Input was gathered through a number of mediums, including focus groups, surveys, correspondence, research, analysis and follow up meetings, in order to maximise our reach. External consultations with Government departments and citizens groups were held, along with internal consultations with Garda Members and Staff. These consultations, along with an in-depth analysis of the latest research and trends in policing services in Ireland and abroad, were analysed and combined to deliver the Strategy Statement.

Based on feedback arising from these engagements, the National Policing Plan has evolved to focus on outcomes over outputs, with fewer targets, intentionally designed so that they can translate to Divisional Policing Plans, thus creating a focus on key priorities and a connection from the strategy down to the delivery of services at a local level. The implementation of these Divisional Policing Plans is overseen at local management level through the organisation's Performance Assurance Framework (PAF).

These improvements provide clarity on the key priorities of An Garda Síochána at a National level, with well-defined structures in place for these to be brought forward into action throughout the organisation. Regular review of progress against each National Plan is completed quarterly and issued to the Policing Authority.

The work undertaken since 2018 to construct an effective and transparent planning process at National and Divisional levels will support the effective transition to a new oversight and planning model created under the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act of 2024.

In my opinion the culture of An Garda Síochána has changed for the better. Accountability and governance, policies and procedures are far better than when I first joined.

Janette Butler, Operational Sergeant, Eastern Region

Performance Assurance

The new Garda Operating Model is designed to include a dedicated Performance Assurance Functional Area (PAFA) in each Division. This instils a culture of accountability through local monitoring and inspection of specific areas, including performance and standards, discipline and complaints, and criminal justice. More in-depth detail on the Garda Operating Model, including the design and role of Performance Assurance Functional Areas, will be provided later in this report.



Performance Accountability and Learning Framework (PALF)

The Performance Accountability and Learning Framework (PALF), an initiative rolled out in 2017, has standardised performance management for Garda members. This IT-enabled platform allows for Garda Members and their managers to set and agree personal performance goals and monitor progress, on a transparent, consistent and collaborative basis. At end of December 2023, 85% of Garda Members were actively engaging on the PALF system to support their personal and professional development.

Enhanced oversight under the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024

The CoFPI report identified the need to ensure a clear distinction between accountability and oversight in policing. This principle is underpinned in the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024, which enhances the external accountability model for An Garda Síochána through the establishment of new bodies.

The Policing and Community Safety Authority, which will draw together the functions of the previous Policing Authority and Garda Inspectorate, will oversee and assess the performance of An Garda Síochána specifically in relation to the provision of policing services. The new Office of the Police Ombudsman, Fiosrú, will replace the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission, and be afforded an expanded remit to support timely and effective resolution of complaints against Garda personnel. This will ensure continued public trust, confidence and support in An Garda Síochána.

In preparation for commencement of the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act, An Garda Síochána established a cross-organisational framework to prepare our organisation for the new policies, procedures and ways of working that the legislation introduces. This was conducted in conjunction with our sectoral partners and oversight bodies, within a wider programme board chaired by the Department of Justice. Over a period of 18 months, an implementation sub-committee chaired at Deputy Commissioner level co-ordinated work across six thematic areas to support transition to the 2024 Act. This involved extensive engagement with Garda representative bodies and Garda Staff unions on new regulations and procedures introduced under the Act. It also involved a full review and updating of internal governance, planning and control frameworks, in preparation for engagement with the new oversight bodies established under the 2024 Act.



CoFPI Principle 4: Internal governance must be strong and effective



Reform of Internal Governance

Significant focus by Garda Executive and the Senior Leadership Team to improve and strengthen the internal governance of An Garda Síochána to ensure appropriate oversight and controls are in place, combined with established structures to support delegated decision making.



The Garda Code of Ethics

Since 2017 the expected values and behaviours for all An Garda Síochána personnel are encoded within the Garda Code of Ethics. Leaders across all ranks and levels understand the pivotal role they play in embedding the principles of listening, providing recognition and acting when concerns are raised.



The Garda Anti-Corruption Unit (GACU)

Strengthening professionalism and integrity within the organisation by proactively preventing, detecting and investigating allegations of internal corruption, in order to safeguard the reputation and integrity of An Garda Síochána.

Reform of internal governance

Some people might think that the level of accountability and governance and oversight we have is burdensome. But I certainly think it has helped us in having better systems and quality in what we do and more professionalism.

Superintendent Tim Burke, Donnybrook Garda Station

The Report of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland (CoFPI) identified the need for an improved internal governance environment within An Garda Síochána, both for implementing change and for taking ownership of the future direction of the police organisation; the introduction of a Statutory Board to strengthen the organisation's internal governance; and support for the enhanced role of the Garda Commissioner as that of Chief Executive Officer.



To commence the reform and strengthening of internal governance within An Garda Síochána, an in-depth review was conducted of the existing corporate governance structure, which included stakeholder workshops, engagement with senior leadership, and assessment of current structures against public service best practice.

The review resulted in the creation of a revised governance committee structure, supported by new governance processes and terms of reference. This structure was benchmarked against other comparable police organisations and aligns with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. The reformed internal governance structure was approved by the Garda Executive in 2022, with the inaugural committee meetings commencing in Q4 2022.

The reforms to date of the internal governance of An Garda Síochána have resulted in clearer structures, processes and roles to enable improved internal oversight and control, accountabilities and delegated decision making. This lays the foundation for the introduction of the new Garda Board upon the enactment of the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act. Under this Act, the Board will support the Garda Commissioner by providing independent non-executive oversight of internal governance, controls, and ensuring value for public money. The Board will offer external expertise and an independent perspective in its dual functions of supporting the Garda Commissioner, and holding the Commissioner accountable for the performance of his or her functions.

The Garda Code of Ethics

The Garda Code of Ethics, which was developed in conjunction with the Policing Authority, was launched for all personnel of An Garda Síochána in 2017. The code is a statement of the ethical requirements for everyone working within the service and provides a clear indication to the public of the behaviour they are entitled to expect from Garda personnel, so that they in turn can trust and support the service. As of 2024, 99.4% of the organisation have signed up to the code, which contains the following principles:

1. Duty to uphold the law
2. Honesty and integrity
3. Respect for diversity
4. Authority and responsibility
5. Police powers
6. Information and privacy
7. Transparency and communication
8. Speaking up and reporting wrongdoing
9. Leadership



Each of the nine elements of the code requires a corresponding commitment or set of commitments from all Garda Members and Garda Staff. For example, the principle of “authority and responsibility” requires personnel to take responsibility for their actions and be accountable for them, to ensure that instructions given or acted upon are lawful and that personal responsibility is exercised in relation to being fit for work and using social media.

Speaking up against wrongdoing or poor practice identifies or prevents harm, fraud, corruption and injustice. It reassures the public that the Garda Síochána holds itself to the highest standards in all its work. A culture that promotes speaking up also protects and reassures those within the Garda Síochána.

The Garda Síochána Code of Ethics

The traits of close cooperation, team morale and peer support in adversity have always been vital components of our organisation’s ways of working. While recognising these values, the Code of Ethics makes clear that the primary loyalty of the service should be to the public. Garda personnel have a duty to speak openly about things that could be done better or things that should not be done at all. An acceptance of the need to speak up, to put duty to the public and the organisation ahead of collegiality when required, is a major development within the organisation. To support this need, An Garda Síochána partnered with Transparency International Ireland, to launch the Speak Up Helpline in 2017, which offers a free advice and information service to personnel who wish to raise concerns about behaviours, to report concerns related to corruption or serious misconduct in confidence, or who wish to make a protected disclosure.

An Garda Síochána is continuing to promote recognition of openness and encouragement to those who speak up, along with a willingness to acknowledge, provide support and meaningfully address the concerns raised.



The Garda Anti-Corruption Unit

As members of An Garda Síochána we need to be constantly checking ourselves – always knowing what it means to be a public servant and what we're being paid for, recognising temptations that may come our way and being strong enough to stay on the right track

Former Deputy Commissioner Anne Marie McMahon

The Garda Anti-Corruption Unit (GACU) was established in 2020 with the aim of promoting integrity and professionalism among Garda personnel and proactively preventing, detecting and investigating allegations of internal corruption. With the assistance of an external service provider, GACU developed a blended learning programme aimed at strengthening professionalism and integrity across the organisation, which is currently being delivered to all Garda personnel.

In order to offer greater support to Garda members, GACU also provides a dedicated, user-friendly platform for personnel who are concerned about possible ethical breaches. All submissions are investigated, whether anonymous or owned, in the strictest confidence. This heightened focus on integrity is reflected in the greater number of personnel speaking up when they observe questionable behaviour, using either the confidential reporting phone line or other referral mechanisms.



CoFPI Principle 5: Internal police duties should be clearly defined and resources deployed accordingly



Recruitment of specialist and professional staff

Putting the internal systems and structures in place and building relationships with other agencies to increase professional and specialist capacity and capability within the organisation, allowing more Gardaí to be allocated to front line policing roles.



Specialised Units and new management systems

An increasingly effective workforce that combines general policing skills with a specialised focus on key contemporary areas, reflecting the changing needs of society and the novel ways in which crime continues to present.

We are collectively managing an ambitious strategic realignment of An Garda Síochána, in part based on the recommendations of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland (CoFPI) but also on modernisation and renewal proposals generated by the internal subject experts within the organisation.

Kate Mulkerrins, Executive Director, Legal

Recruitment of specialist and professional staff

In recent years, An Garda Síochána, in partnership with the Public Appointments Service, has placed significant effort in building the internal capacity, processes and support structures needed to attract and recruit the right staff for the right role. This has been further enhanced through partnership with our first ever direct recruitment partner, Staffline, who have been contracted to provide end-to-end recruitment services for critical specialist positions. By increasing the size and skillset of our Garda Staff workforce, An Garda Síochána has not only enhanced our capacity and capability in key specialist and business support functions, but has enabled Garda Members who had previously occupied administrative roles to be released to frontline policing.

Since the publication of the CoFPI report, An Garda Síochána has significantly invested in specialist recruitment areas such as data and technology, strategy and transformation, human resources, finance, legal and occupational health and wellbeing. While acknowledging the significant progress that has been made in this space, challenges posed by an increasingly competitive labour market and a changing workforce demographic remain.



In pursuit of our mission of 'Keeping People Safe', An Garda Síochána is continuing our efforts to explore and harness recruitment opportunities to ensure it has the right balance and blend of specialist skills required to maximise deployment of Garda Members to frontline policing duties.

Number of Personnel	2019	2021	2023	2024
Garda Members	14,307	14,235	13,998	14,125
Garda Staff	3,198	3,389	3,444	3,649
Garda Reserve	458	425	351	323

Figure 1: Breakdown of total Garda personnel by category, 2019-2024. Figures for 2019-2023 reflect year-end totals; figures for 2024 accurate as of September 2024

Specialised units and new management systems

Collaborating more closely with other agencies and community groups, along with agreeing the processes and roles that each partner plays on a day-to-day basis across policing and community safety, has enabled An Garda Síochána to focus more on our core policing role within society.

The creation of specialist units such as Divisional Protective Services Units, the Garda National Protective Services Bureau (GNPSB), the Garda National Diversity and Integration Unit (GNDIU), the Garda National Cyber Crime Bureau (GNCCB) and the expansion of Armed Support Unit (ASU) capacity within each Region, has enhanced the structures and services needed for An Garda Síochána to continue to evolve in how it delivers services to the public, with increased focus on specialised skills and defined policing roles.

To compliment this, new IT systems such as the Roster and Duty Management System (RDMS) and the Investigation Management System (IMS), which are being deployed organisation-wide, further supporting integrated, evidence-based decisions regarding resource allocation and service delivery.



The new Garda Operating Model, which is being deployed at Divisional, Regional and National levels, provides a clear distinction between operational support, business services and frontline policing. The Operating Model defines and codifies the respective roles of Garda Members and Staff, and has underpinned the development of civilianised roles that do not require police powers, enabled by the increased recruitment of Garda Staff. This has allowed Gardaí to be redeployed from administrative and operational support roles to frontline policing. With greater specialist services and enhanced capabilities embedded within the new Operating Model structure, An Garda Síochána is now better positioned to respond to changing communities and the changing nature of crime.



CoFPI Principle 6: An Garda Síochána should be structured and managed to support frontline policing



The Garda Operating Model

A restructured model of service, changing from geographic to functional ownership and towards codification of accountability, representing an acceptance of the importance of clear definition and standardisation of work, which is crucial to consistency and strong performance.



Flexible and balanced rosters to ensure delivery of effective services while supporting the well being of Garda Members

The introduction of the Midlands Working Time Agreement in 2024 provides a predictable roster pattern for Garda Members that complies with the European Working Time Directive and health and safety matters, while also enhancing the flexibility and community needs of policing in Ireland.

The Garda Operating Model

Since its foundation in 1922, the core operating structures of An Garda Síochána had largely remained static. The service was modelled around smaller policing Districts in which functions such as crime investigation and administration were duplicated across small, local jurisdictions.

The new Garda Operating Model – one of the landmark structural reforms implemented after the publication of the CoFPI report – marks a fundamental shift in how policing services are provided in modern Ireland. At operational level, the former District model is being replaced by a centralised Divisional model, with a Divisional Chief Superintendent responsible for management and delivery of local policing and new functional areas of Community Engagement, Crime, Business Services and Performance Assurance replacing Districts. Each of these functional areas will be led by a Superintendent, with the exception of Business Services, which will be led by an Assistant Principal Officer. The model emphasises the importance of local and responsive policing, and increased connectivity with local communities, that serves both current and emerging local needs.

Responding and adapting to demographic changes and other considerations, a review of the model saw re-alignment from 19 to 21 Divisions. As of Q3 2024 full implementation of the Operating Model has been achieved in 16 of 21 Divisions, with deployment in the remaining Divisions progressing. The Operating Model is also introducing new Regional and National operating structures, with a focus on synergy and standardisation of processes to ensure that communities receive consistent, specialised services reflective of their needs.



In the organisation as a whole, accountability has been codified by the development of specific policies, processes and procedures. These provide clarity to personnel and encourage strong performance through the implementation of consistent performance standards, established in collaboration with a less hierarchical, less authoritarian leadership. This is embodied in the significant increase in the numbers of personnel in the key supervisory ranks of Sergeant, Inspector, Executive Officer and Higher Executive Officer. Dedicated training and development programmes have been created for frontline supervisors in An Garda Síochána, in order to develop their capacity as managers and to support them in any challenges they may face.

The Garda Operating Model represents a significant avenue of change for the service, derived from its focus on streamlined functional structures, increased specialisation in both policing and business support services, increased levels of line management at both Garda and Garda Staff grades and further embedding of professional standards and conduct in each local area, under the remit of Performance Assurance functional areas.

The most powerful statement I've heard is it's not perfect, but we wouldn't go back to the way we were.

**Inspector Seán Cullen, Strategic Transformation Office,
speaking on the new Garda Operating Model**

Flexible and balanced rosters to ensure delivery of effective services while supporting the well being of Garda Members

In 2024, following extensive negotiations between the Garda Commissioner and the four Garda associations facilitated via an independent chair, the Midlands Working Time Agreement was introduced. This collective agreement, its associated rosters and review mechanisms, ensures stability and balance for both An Garda Síochána and its Garda Members in delivery of our shared commitment to Keeping People Safe. The agreement places the provision of agile, effective services to communities at its centre, while also ensuring the wellbeing and work-life balance of individual members.



Transforming An Garda Síochána 2018–2024

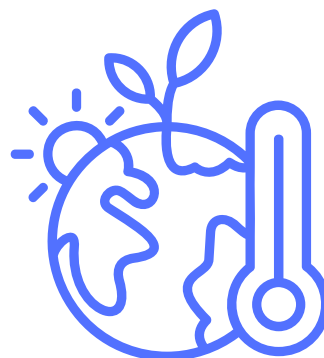


Climate Action Roadmap
reducing our energy
consumption and guiding
meaningful, strategic
investments in
sustainability

**Garda Anti-
Corruption Unit**
Working to eradicate
corruption and protect
reputation and integrity of
Garda Síochána



Deployment of the new
GardaSAFE dispatch system,
which provides live, real-time
information to frontline
Gardaí responding to
emergency calls



**Level 8 Policing and
programme** enabling
ensure Human Rights
provision of po



Establishment of **Divisional
Protective Services Units** and
the Garda National Protective
Services Bureau



**New eLearning
platform** Garda
Education and Training
System (GETS)
launched in 2023

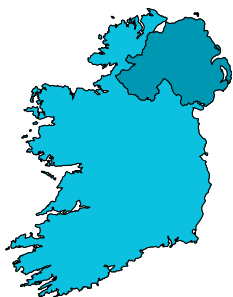
Garda Act
Mobile d
dedicated a
Gardaí to sp
in stations, a
on the

Garda Code of Ethics

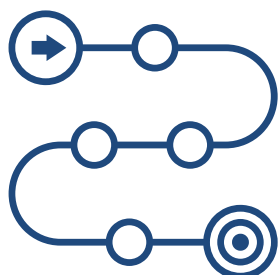
informing and guiding
the actions of all Garda
personnel at every level
of the organisation



An enhanced focus
on **Partnership**
at national and
international level,
including joint
agency service
delivery



**Enhanced
governance**
supporting
oversight,
accountability
and public
confidence



**National and
Divisional
policing plans**
providing direction as
to how we intend to
realise our mission of
Keeping People Safe

Community Policing

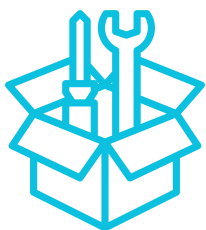
supported through new
structures, toolkits and dedicated
units, ensuring all communities
trust and have confidence in An
Garda Síochána



nit
e
the
of An

The **Garda Operating Model**

is ensuring the delivery of specialised, consistent and effective services in every Division



Roster and Duty Management System

a new resource planning system that allows local management to anticipate demands and allocate Garda resources

Garda Diversity Internship Programme

launched in 2021



PALF

Performance Accountability and Learning Framework

contributing to the effective management and development of Garda Members and teams

Human Rights

g our personnel to
ts is central to the
licensing services

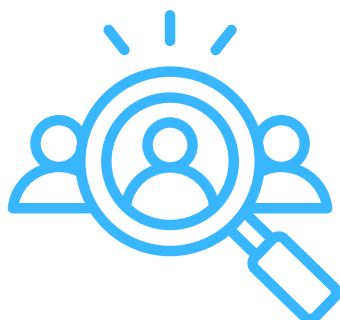


ive Mobility

devices and
apps allowing
pend less time
and more time
frontline



Recruitment of **specialist and professional staff** increasing the size, skillset and capabilities of our Garda workforce



Proof of concept for **Body Worn Cameras** rollout commenced in 2024



Data governance

Investments in data architecture are supporting information-led plans and actions



Internal



Video conferencing technology



allowing teams and personnel to remain connected



The **Garda Ethics and Culture Bureau**

promoting ethical values and positive behaviour within An Garda Síochána

More frequent, consistent and transparent
communication both internally and externally

Provision of free **professional counselling** for all Garda personnel as part of our Health and Wellbeing Strategy



Garda Decision Making Model

supporting and empowering personnel to make effective decisions



CoFPI Principle 7: The people of An Garda Síochána are its greatest resources



Recruitment and retention of Gardaí

Significant and ongoing focus on Garda recruitment, coupled with recruitment of professional and skilled staff to create a blended, diverse and optimal workforce to best serve the public.



Respecting and promoting diversity

Increased awareness of the need for diversity in the organisation, not just respect for diversity in society; ongoing efforts to attract members from 'non-traditional' backgrounds through the Garda access and recruitment programmes.



A more diverse workforce

A revised multi-faceted approach to outreach and recruitment to encourage a transition towards a more diverse organisation that reflects the communities we serve.



Safety and security of personnel

Numerous initiatives that have worked to prioritise increased safety and security of personnel, including new operating systems such as GardaSAFE; new uniform and personal protective equipment, including Public Order equipment; and legislative changes that have sought to provide further protection to front-line personnel through increased legal penalties for assaulting Gardaí.



Health and Wellbeing

Evolving our approach to health and wellbeing being by engaging with over 5,000 personnel across the organisation, to develop our Health and Wellbeing Strategy. One significant component of the strategy was the introduction of the Menopause Guidance Document in 2023



One Organisation

More positive appreciation of the role of Garda Staff in the work of the service has removed elements of a "them and us" outlook and facilitated the civilianisation process.



Recruitment and retention of Gardaí

An Garda Síochána has invested heavily in workforce planning in recent years, to ensure that personnel resources across the organisation are allocated on the basis of strategic priority, from frontline policing to operational support and specialist criminal investigation.

Building the operational strength of An Garda Síochána through continued investment in recruitment of Garda trainees is a core strategic priority. Like all public and private sector bodies, recruitment and training programmes were significantly disrupted during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the need to adapt to new ways of working during the pandemic has supported the advancement of learning and development pathways. Investment in ICT-enabled eLearning platforms has allowed a shift in how the organisation delivers training to both new and existing personnel. The new Garda Education and Training System (GETS), launched in 2023, enabled cross-organisational mixed media eLearning to be delivered at scale, while also creating a central skills and training database for our personnel.

An Garda Síochána is not immune to the wider challenges faced by recruitment and retention across sectors since the pandemic. In 2023, 488 Gardaí left the organisation through retirements (319) and resignations (169). While this attrition rate is comparably low by industry standards, the necessary lead-in time to recruit, train and allocate new Gardaí requires a continual, concerted effort to ensure that the service can maintain the resources it needs to protect local communities and to keep people safe.

Respecting and promoting diversity

Our role is to keep everyone safe, not just certain sections of the community.

Assistant Commissioner Paula Hilman

An Garda Síochána has embarked on a journey to become more informed and representative of the diverse communities it serves in a multicultural Ireland. The Garda National Diversity and Integration Unit (GNDIU), established under the Garda National Community Engagement Bureau (GNCEB), is responsible for the development and implementation of initiatives that seek to reflect and promote diversity, educate and raise cultural awareness among Garda personnel, and foster relationships between An Garda Síochána and members of ethnic and diverse communities. GNDIU also plays a key role in promoting Garda recruitment campaigns among these communities.



The An Garda Síochána Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2024 embodies the organisation's wider commitment to building a more informed policing practice and to making the service more inclusive and representative of our diverse society, so that all of our personnel feel confident bringing their whole selves to work. G-Force, a Garda LGBTQ+ support network, continues to support LGBTQ+ employees within An Garda Síochána, both personally and professionally, through a confidential support structure. In September 2023, G-Force was shortlisted for the Galas LGBTQ+ Employee Resource Group award.

The shift towards fostering internal diversity has included changes to the Garda uniform policy, such as embracing the wearing of official headwear for religious and cultural reasons, including the turban, the kufi, the topi, the kippah and the hijab. Beards are also now permitted for everyone, a decision that is grounded in the respect of the individual's Human Rights. Depending on their geographical location, some personnel may have more experience than others of ethnic or gender diversity.

An Garda Síochána has delivered an eLearning training programme on hate crime to all personnel and a leadership course focusing on cultural awareness and unconscious bias. Investment has been made into leadership and in-service training, with the aim of building cultural competence and recognising that marginalised groups have historically been victims of crime, at the hands both of the public and of policing bodies. An Garda Síochána is actively pursuing improved relationship management with traditionally marginalised groups, such as members of the Traveller and Roma communities. The National Diversity Forum is a means for the service to engage with organisations that champion minority groups.

Ceann dár gcroíluachanna póilíneachta ná meas a léiriú i gcónaí ar éagsúlacht agus ar chomhionannas. Tá sé mar aidhm againn a chinntiú go mbraitheann úsáideoirí seirbhíse Gaeilge go bhfuil meas againn orthu, go bhfuil said curtha san áireamh agus go gcuirimid fáilte rompu a ngnó a dhéanamh linn ina rogha teanga.

**An Garda Síochána Straitéis Gaeilge an Gharda Síochána
2022-2025**

An Garda Síochána has not lost sight of its commitment to the Irish language and to serving Irish-speaking communities. Any Sergeant who wishes to serve in a Gaeltacht station must undergo an Irish language assessment, in line with the recognised European competency framework, while any member who wishes to work in a Gaeltacht area must be deemed a fluent speaker. An Garda Síochána has steadily increased the number of Irish-speaking members in Gaeltacht stations throughout the country.



Having a diverse and inclusive workforce that provides equal opportunities is key to ensuring a successful 21st-century police service, helping to reduce implicit bias and the perception of bias in our law enforcement and criminal justice systems. An Garda Síochána has worked to enhance diversity by rolling out internships, access programmes and carrying out fundamental reform in its recruitment procedures.

In 2021, the service launched the Garda Diversity Internship Programme with the objective of improving the accessibility of a career in An Garda Síochána for school leavers and graduates, particularly those from groups typically under-represented in the organisation. The programme employs interns at Clerical Officer (CO) level for a period of nine months and at Executive Officer (EO) level for 11 months. This programme saw 30 individuals from a broad spectrum of backgrounds come to work with the organisation in various stations, locations and sections throughout the country. On completion of the programme, the interns shared that they gained valuable hands-on experience and welcomed the opportunity to explore a career in policing.

The first internship programme was considered so successful that a second cohort of interns were recruited in 2023. The programme allowed the interns to share lived experiences of the challenges minority communities face when engaging with policing services, both in Ireland and internationally. The success of this programme was recognised externally when An Garda Síochána won the 'Highly Commended award for the Diversity and Inclusion Internship programme' in February 2023, as part of the CIPD Ireland HR Award presentations. Following on from the first year of the programme, the need to provide entry pathways for interns who would like to become Garda Staff was identified. Approval was sought to run a confined competition in An Garda Síochána, open to interns currently undertaking the programme – one competition for CO grade and one for EO grade. These competitions launched in January 2024 with a total of eight interns successfully placed on a panel.

A Garda Access Programme has also been created, offering young people from minority backgrounds the chance to work within the organisation for six to nine months, with graduates at Executive Officer level and school leavers at Clerical Officer level. This initiative was publicised across Garda official social media platforms, and was also judged to have been a considerable success. To support the recruitment of personnel from varied and minority communities, the service commissioned research to identify the key recruitment and retention challenges faced by individuals from minority backgrounds. This research underpinned the reform of the trainee recruitment process in 2022. Based on this research, a dedicated steering group, chaired at Deputy Commissioner level, created and delivered a comprehensive national recruitment programme.



Other changes reflected in the recruitment approach to encourage greater diversity amongst personnel include:

- A coordinated publicity campaign entitled “The Difference is You”, which was rolled out on television, radio and print media and was complemented by an active social media campaign across Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Total Facebook content views and impressions numbered more than 1.6 million
- Promotional material outlining the recruitment process, as well as frequently asked questions, was translated into multiple languages and made available to Garda personnel for dissemination
- Recruitment campaign material was uploaded to career portals across third-level institutions countrywide
- The Department of Social Protection advertised the recruitment campaign throughout their network of offices and directly mailed all of those on the unemployment register
- Initial applications were made via a simplified online form, permitting candidates to register their interest on hand-held devices before the deadline for the detailed application form
- Online psychometric testing (numerical and verbal reasoning) was made available in more than 20 languages.

In 2021 key changes were made in the recruitment process to encourage applications from individuals whose first language was other than English or who, for cultural/educational reasons, did not have the required competence in two languages. Legislation was passed to remove the requirement for proficiency in two languages, identified as a potential barrier to entry, particularly for Irish Travellers. The requirement for knowledge of Irish for entry to the service has changed to support newcomers who speak many different European languages. The requirement is now for proficiency in either Irish or English. An Garda Síochána have launched targeted recruitment for individuals fluent in Irish who are needed to provide a policing service in areas where Irish is still the language of the community.

These initiatives and reforms are an indication of the commitment of An Garda Síochána to have diversity and inclusion as a central pillar of its human rights strategy, both for personnel already employed by the service and for potential future personnel. The positive impact of the recent recruitment campaigns is evident in the comparative application rates for 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic.



Trainee Gardaí Applications	2019	2022	2023	Q1 - 2024
Number	5,197	10,500	4,973	6,300
Women as percentage	40% ²	39.5%	2023 & 2024 Competition ongoing ³	
Asian/Asian Irish	68	298		
Black/Black Irish	23	105		
Other/mixed background	37	111		

Figure 2: The gender and ethnic background of Garda Trainee applicants for 2019-2022

² Women currently comprise 28 per cent of Garda members.

³ Public Appointment Service announced that 36.6% of applicants for the 2024 Garda Trainee Competition were from people aged 35 years to 50.



Total Garda Staff	2021	2022	2023	2024*
Professional/ technical	65	57	60	56
Administrative**	2,974	2,932	3,067	3,291
Industrial/ non-industrial	350	343	317	302
Total	3,389	3,332	3,444	3,649
Female (as % of total Garda Staff)	72%	71.85%	71%	69.5%
Male (as a % of total Garda Staff)	28%	28.12%	29%	30.5%
Undisclosed gender (as a % of total Garda Staff)	0%	0.03%	0%	0%

Figure 43 Total number of Garda Staff per occupational category, and gender breakdown, 2021 to 2024

* Figures from 2024 accurate as of September. Figures for 2021-2023 reflect year-end total

** Administrative includes Civil Service grades and other administrative posts



It is not acceptable that a small minority in society – and it is only a small minority – feel that Gardaí can be attacked just because they are carrying out their duties.

Garda Commissioner Drew Harris

The acute risks of physical harm and psychological trauma that members of An Garda Síochána face in carrying out their duties remains a core concern for the organisation. The continuous need to protect, support and care for our personnel has been the basis for an extensive, cross-service investments in recent years.

A new operational uniform, which was designed based on the views and feedback of frontline personnel, has been introduced to support the needs of Gardaí in a modern policing environment. The design process of the new Garda uniform, which became operational in August 2022, was led by Garda personnel, reflecting the increased agency of frontline Gardaí in shaping their own working environment. It was only the third formal change of the Garda operational uniform since the foundation of the organisation in 1922.

In addition, significant investments have been made since 2023 in the procurement of personal protective equipment for Garda Members, including incapacitant spray with greater potency, and upgrades to body armour and defensive equipment available for Public Order Units. This includes new shields, helmets, torso protectors and limb guards designed to protect Gardaí involved in the policing of riots and significant public order incidents from blunt impacts, stabbing implements, flames and accelerants.

New tools, such as the GardaSAFE dispatch system, have been designed around the need to provide detailed, real-time information to frontline Gardaí in order to minimise risk and to support decision-making. The introduction of a policy and procedure on the safe use of anti-spit guards on violent persons in Garda custody was grounded in the need to ensure that Gardaí could feel safe in their workplace.

In November 2023, increased sentences came into effect aimed at further protecting Gardaí. The legislation resulted in the maximum sentence for assaulting or threatening to assault a Guard or any other on-duty emergency worker increasing from seven to twelve years. This was a welcomed amendment aimed at protecting Gardaí and other frontline workers from violent attacks. Additional measures such as stronger incapacitant spray, small round shields and the introduction of tasers for public order units have been introduced.



Health and wellbeing

An Garda Síochána recognises that the wellbeing of the people it serves depends on the wellbeing of its own personnel. The organisation's first Health and Wellbeing Strategy 'Keeping Our People Supported 2021-23' has been developed, following the participation of over 5,000 Garda personnel in a health needs assessment survey conducted in 2019. Led by Chief Medical Officer, Doctor Oghenovo Oghuvbu, and implemented by the Garda National Wellbeing Office, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy rests on three pillars:

- Health
- Wellbeing
- Healthy workplace.

These pillars are broken down further into the following key areas, in which professional services and supports are available to all personnel:

- Physical health
- Mental health
- Trauma
- Health and wellbeing at work
- Health and wellbeing supports.

An Garda Síochána is continuing to embed the importance of health and wellbeing into our internal policies and procedures. An example of this was the publication of a Menopause Guidance Document in 2023, which provides guidance and understanding to all personnel working in An Garda Síochána on menopause, regardless of their gender and highlights the supports and resources available to anyone who need them.

The organisation has similarly expanded the tools available to support the mental wellbeing of our personnel and provide professional help, both proactively and reactively. In the last few years, the number of dedicated welfare officers in An Garda Síochána has increased from seven to seventeen and supports such as a 24/7 employee assistance service and counselling to address work trauma have been introduced. Volunteer peer supporters who deal with everyday incidents receive professional training. The service has developed the KOPS app (Keeping Our People Supported), which is available on all mobility devices, offering instant health and wellbeing help and advice.

A further support programme being rolled out across the organisation is the provision of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training. Delivered as a two-day programme to a cross section of personnel from all grades and ranks, MHFA is an initial non-treatment support option for anyone who is developing a mental health problem, suffering from a reoccurrence of an existing mental health problem, or who is in a mental health crisis. MHFA is designed to be given until appropriate professional support is received, or until the crises resolves. Approximately 445 Garda personnel have received the two day MHFA training since January 2024, with an additional 360 personnel scheduled to attend before the end of 2024.



The first MHFA Training Facilitator graduation took place in March 2024, with 15 Gardaí graduating as accredited Mental Health First Aid Training Facilitators, demonstrating their commitment to promoting mental health awareness and providing health and wellbeing support across An Garda Síochána by delivering MHFA courses to the organisation over the next two years.

Each of us has individual responsibility in relation to our wellbeing. But part of maintaining our wellbeing means we sometimes need to get help.

Dr Oghenovo Oghuvbu, An Garda Síochána Chief Medical Officer

As traumatic experiences are a common challenge in frontline policing, An Garda Síochána has continued to ensure that strong, accessible and tailored supports are available to all personnel, from trained peer supporters to professional counselling. The inclusion of mandatory psychological supports, from 2021, for personnel working in specific specialist roles, such as the Garda National Cyber Crime Bureau, Garda National Protective Services Bureau and Divisional Protective Services Units, is a recognition that policing, by its nature, is psychologically as well as physically challenging and that early intervention is key to maintaining optimum mental health. Indicators of the more positive and proactive attitude of personnel to health and wellbeing include:

- Increased use of the Employee Assistance Service, available to all personnel
- A shift in management response to provide quicker referrals
- Units independently organising wellness days, incorporating guest speakers, psychologists and the sharing of stories.



One Organisation

The transformation of An Garda Síochána to a one-organisation service with a one-organisation mind-set is well underway. This represents a major change as, in the past, Garda Staff may have been seen by some as providing a supporting role, rather than being central to the delivery of a strong and efficient policing service to the public.

The Garda College has responsibility for all education and training to both Garda Members and Staff. It now delivers the same management development courses to personnel at Superintendent/Assistant Principal and Chief Superintendent/Principal Officer levels. The Employee Assistance Service has become a combined service for all employees. A joint training programme is now provided to both Garda Members and Garda Staff working in Divisional Victim Services Offices, marking a shift from the traditional model where only Garda Members provided this crucial service.

As a result of ongoing implementation of Operating Model and other initiatives, such as the Performance Accountability Framework (PAF) system, a total of 903 Gardaí have now been redeployed to operational duties (as of October 2024), with Garda Staff taking up key administrative and management support roles. This wider shift has supported and enabled new, targeted approaches to specialisation, including the establishment of Divisional Protective Services Units, the creation of Regional Cyber Crime Units and the expansion of Regional Armed Support Units.



CoFPI Principle 8: Policing must be information-led



PULSE, Roster and Duty Management System (RDMS), GardaSAFE and Digital Innovation

Greater connectedness between data, technology and Garda personnel. Easier access to information, improved data analytics, more secure connected systems to provide timely accurate information to personnel, leading to more effective policing; a more connected workforce and greater collaboration with our communities.



Improved Community Engagement through social media and other available technology

Building wider public engagement whereby the public can access real-time information directly from An Garda Síochána, enhancing community engagement and allowing us to increase our accessibility.



Internal and external communications

More open and transparent external and internal communications, in order to enhance and build trust.

PULSE, Rosters and Duty Management System (RDMS), GardaSAFE and Digital Innovation

Spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic, the digital transformation of the organisation is well underway. There is growing confidence in and appreciation of metrics and data as factors of effective policing, which have accelerated the shift towards an information-led police organisation. Frontline Gardaí now have greater and speedier access to information, in particular by means of their mobile devices, enabling them to make decisions more quickly and do their job more effectively. The deployment of technology also facilitates equitable public access to Garda services and enhances service delivery. To enable the major journey of change undertaken across the service, An Garda Síochána prioritised the development of robust and up-to-date systems for the supply of information and analytics of operations, HR and the rollout of new technology.

Data and analytics innovations, building on the existing PULSE system have helped to highlight what was previously “invisible” work, such as community policing. This results in Garda Members feeling valued for their efforts, which in turn supports a greater sense of ownership and individual accountability, as well as informing resourcing decisions for particular areas of the service.



An Garda Síochána has successfully implemented the Roster and Duty Management System (RDMS) in each Division, Bureau, Unit and Section within An Garda Síochána. RDMS provides duty planning and time and attendance recording. At the end of 2022, it was announced that the existing CAD (computer-aided dispatch) system used by Gardaí would be replaced by GardaSAFE, a new state-of-the-art platform that enables the creation of contact records, incidents and the dispatch of units to incidents. 'GardaSAFE' integrates telephone, radio, RDMS and PULSE applications.

The benefits of GardaSAFE include richer data, better reporting, better measurement of response times, more consistent quality control and improved use of resources, especially in rural areas. The system prioritises calls so that more serious issues are dealt with first. As with all new systems, there is a learning curve and period of adjustment before the new ways of working are embedded in the organisation. However by the end of 2023, GardaSAFE had been successfully deployed in all four of the country's Regional Control Rooms.

The continued shift towards mobile-enabled frontline policing is being supported by the development of new apps, such as the Person Search App and FCPN (Fixed Charge Penalty Notice) App. Developed following extensive programmes of workshops, consultation and direct engagement with frontline personnel, these and other mobility apps are meeting the directly-expressed needs of Gardaí, enabling them to spend more time operating within the community, supported by having the right information at the right time. An Garda Síochána won the Digital Edge award for its integration of communication and collaborative tools to improve operational efficiency at the 2018 Tech Excellence Awards, and was shortlisted, with Eir evo, for Public Sector Project of the Year at the 2023 awards.

An Garda Síochána has always striven to be a learning organisation and recently established an evidence-based practice working group to identify existing research relevant to policing in Ireland and to commission research on other topics of interest. It continues to collaborate with academic institutions in Ireland for the accrediting of qualifications in areas such as Human Rights, cybercrime and forensics, as well as with other policing and law enforcement agencies internationally.

Improved public engagement through social media and other platforms

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, the role of An Garda Síochána goes beyond the traditional community policing. While face to face interactions with people in our communities remains invaluable, the integration of social media and digital technology has become increasingly essential in enhancing community engagement.

Social media has the ability to reach a massive audience instantaneously. Platforms like Facebook, X (Twitter), TikTok, linkedIn and Instagram provide An Garda Síochána with direct channels to disseminate public information campaigns, information updates and success in criminal convictions and seizure of drugs in communities.



The official social media platforms of An Garda Síochána serve as effective tools for community outreach and engagement initiatives. An Garda Síochána can utilise these platforms to organise community events, shares information on crime prevention and public safety tips.

By utilising these social media and technology as a complementary components of policing strategies, we can forge stronger connections with our communities, enhance trust and transparency and ultimately create safer communities. An Garda Síochána had a social media following of over 2 million by the end of 2023, an increase of 7% from 2022.

Internal Communications

Just as external communication strategies are essential to reach the public, effective internal communication strategies are critical components of the successful adoption and delivery of any project or operation. Personnel are less likely to feel anxiety about change and are more likely to modify their beliefs, values and behaviours if the desired changes and the rationale behind them are explained clearly and in a relatable manner.

Based on feedback from the first Garda Cultural Audit and focus groups with Garda personnel at all ranks and grades, it was clear that the organisation needed to do more to communicate with personnel in a less hierarchal manner, using means that suited a highly dispersed workforce and in an easy-to-understand language. An Garda Síochána appointed its first Head of Internal Communications in 2019 and subsequently developed the first Garda Síochána Internal Communications Strategy 2020-22, in order to strengthen messaging within the organisation and to support and improve levels of trust, involvement and cross-team collaboration.

The regular dissemination of communication by different channels means that people now have the benefit of regular, accurate and up-to-date information that is relevant to their role. The internal email newsletter 'Newsbeat' contains an emphasis on stories of excellent police work and highlighting role model behaviours.

The sharing of the minutes of senior management meetings with the entire organisation via the Garda Portal is another significant change, giving all personnel insight into agendas and decisions by leadership. When people know what is going on they feel included, which enhances communication and engagement with personnel at all levels. Greater access to and adoption of mobility devices and technology across the organisation has resulted in increased team engagement and collaboration through the use of hybrid and virtual meetings. Incorporating regular virtual interactions into day-to-day work has resulted in more consistent and timely communications, improved information exchange and greater responsiveness across teams. In addition, the adoption of virtual and hybrid meetings, where appropriate, has resulted in less time spent travelling for face-to-face meetings. Instead, this time saved can be re-directed towards more valuable activities that help improve the service we provide to the community.



The Garda Portal has continued to be developed into a central location for all personnel to locate information relevant to their day-to-day tasks. It contains a multitude of organisational information such as policy documents, competition notices, HR information and dedicated Team Pages. On average, there are 18,000 hits on the Garda Portal per day. Organisational noticeboard messages are highly visible on the Portal homepage and read by substantial numbers throughout the organisation. On average there are 70 HQ Directives published on the Portal per annum, allowing personnel to be informed at any time, day or night, of the operational and organisational procedures they are required to implement.

External Communications

In the face of crises that affect the entire nation, policing legitimacy becomes paramount when it comes to keeping people safe. It serves to reinforce that we are a community based police service that operates by consent.

The external communications approach of An Garda Síochána has been grounded in the principles of building public trust through transparency and messaging across media platforms. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the 'Here to Help' message was a prime example. The use of the 4Es (engage, educate, encourage, and only where provided for and as a last resort, enforcement) was an imperative message to the public of the operational policing environment. The message bolstered internal morale during COVID-19 during a challenging period.

An important method of communicating during the crisis that bolstered a positive culture in the organisation was the consistent highlighting of good work of Gardaí in all communications, especially via social media channels. An Garda Síochána operates over 20 national and local social media channels with a total audience of approximately 2 million. There was particular emphasis on images of Gardaí supporting the most vulnerable in our communities. These images were then curated and released strategically to include key messaging and served to foster greater trust amongst the public.

In February 2021, Garda personnel accepted the challenge of the Swiss police force and, with the help of some horses from the Mounted Unit, a former professional Riverdance performer, Garda Orla MacDonald and Garda units from all around Ireland, created their own award-winning 'Jerusalem' dance video in locations around the country. The video was shared across all the service's social media platforms, was viewed almost 20 million times on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, and became the 'most liked' Irish tweet of the year, according to Twitter. It offered levity in a time of adversity, boosting the nation's pride in An Garda Síochána and other frontline workers. The 'Jerusalem' video by An Garda Síochána won the Public Relations Institute of Ireland's Best Use of Digital PR award in 2021.



The 2023 Garda Trainee Recruitment campaign launched in March 2023 and received a total of 4,973 applicants. Of those, 4,664 eligible candidates were brought to interview.

The campaign was supported by an advertising campaign, with a renewed 'It's a Job Worth Doing' tagline. A number of channels were used to engage potential recruits, including television, radio, print, social media platforms, third level institution careers portal pages, the unemployment register and networks within the National Community Engagement Bureau.



Building on the success of 2023, the 2024 Garda Trainee Recruitment campaign launched in January 2024 and received a total of 6,381 applicants. Of those, 6,351 eligible candidates were invited to complete stage one online testing and as at 27th November 2024, 797 candidates were still in progress with An Garda Síochána.

Every Division promoted the Garda Trainee Recruitment campaign by engaging with local groups representing people from all sections of the community around the country. Local Garda personnel provided information on the role of Garda members on the training programme, as well as the career opportunities in An Garda Síochána. The campaign was supported for a second year by the 'It's a Job Worth Doing' recruitment campaign.

A number of channels were used to engage potential recruits, including television, radio, print, social media platforms, third level institution careers portal pages, the unemployment register and networks within the National Community Engagement Bureau. The 2024 Garda Trainee campaign saw a cumulative online and social media reach of 4.4 million, with over 366,000 views of recruitment videos.



CoFPI Principle 9: Policing should be seen as a profession



Enhancing the professionalism of the service

Recognition that the blend of Garda Members and Garda Staff, working together with pride in their profession, is the most effective means of meeting current policing challenges and providing optimum service to our communities.



Recognising professional and unprofessional behaviour

Awareness that all personnel have a role to play in protecting the professionalism of the service and a growing confidence in challenging inappropriate behaviour.



Supporting continuous professional development

Provision of a broad range of continuous professional development opportunities for personnel to avail of in order to grow their learning and knowledge and to support them in furthering their careers.



Promotion processes

Realisation that effective alignment of legal, tactical and operational focus, as well as people management skills are the key requirements for promotion to supervisory ranks, something that is now reflected in promotion criteria.

Enhancing the professionalism of the service

The evolution and modernisation of An Garda Síochána as a professional service has seen increased investment in specialised fields such as audit, risk management and professional standards. Following a public procurement process, an external recruitment partner was contracted to offer end-to-end recruitment solutions across a number of Garda staff grades within the organisation. This new approach will play a crucial role in helping the Garda Síochána recruit top talent across diverse fields, including finance and services, occupational health and wellbeing, data and technology, human resources and people development, strategy & transformation, legal, communications, administration and management. This work will supplement the work of the Public Appointments Service, who remain the primary recruiter of Garda Staff and the sole recruiter of Garda Members. The recruitment of Garda Staff with specialised skillsets has accelerated, including forensic accountants, legal professionals, crime analysts and data scientists.



Garda Members, who are professionals in their own field, have greater opportunities for continuing professional development in policing, in partnership with third level education institutions. The University of Limerick offers a year-long programme in serious crime investigation at both certificate and master's degree level. University College Dublin offers members a master's degree in Forensic Computing and Cybercrime Investigation. Dublin City University provides courses at certificate and master's degree level for dealing with fraud and cybercrime. Opportunities such as these contribute to positive morale, giving personnel the opportunity to experience international best practice and to engage with colleagues outside of their own units or Divisions.

Recognising professional and unprofessional behaviour

The Group of States Against Corruption [GRECO], are an independent international monitoring and compliance group, with a focus on improving the capacity of its members to fight corruption, benchmarked against International Best Practice. In February 2023, GRECO published its Fifth Round Evaluation of Ireland, which focused on 'Preventing Corruption and promoting integrity in central government (top executive functions) and Law Enforcement agencies. GRECO's Report contains nine recommendations for An Garda Síochána and refers to improvements in areas such as modernisation of Garda Information Technology systems, the Garda Síochána Code of Ethics, gender balance and enhancement of integrity related training.

The Garda Anti-Corruption Unit, which was established in 2020, defined corruption and placed markers around unacceptable and unprofessional behaviour, through a series of initiatives, including comprehensive training of all Garda personnel. A shared understanding around acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, underpinned by two-way engagement, has been key to embedding of these principles, and is supported by the appointment of a number of Anti-Corruption Unit Liaison Officers. The establishment of an Integrity Network throughout the organisation is also currently underway.

Clear expectations have been set that personnel of all ranks and grades should always behave in an ethical manner, acting with empathy and honesty, rejecting fraud, corruption and dishonest behaviour. Policy documents such as those on Abuse of Power for Sexual Gain and Substance Misuse signal to all personnel the commitment of the organisation to tackling inappropriate behaviours. Individuals are encouraged to speak out and speak up against inappropriate behaviour and poor standards, utilising the multiple reporting channels and confidential mechanisms now available to them, as outlined under Principle 4 within An Garda Síochána Code of Ethics.

Awards are also a significant motivator for members. A recent review of the framework for the provision of awards in An Garda Síochána led to an increase in the number of Scott Medals for bravery, an acknowledgement of the unique professional challenges faced by Garda members in today's society, while visibly reinforcing our commitment to recognising and fostering exemplary behaviour.



Supporting continuous professional development

An Garda Síochána is committed to the professional development, safety and wellbeing of its people. This commitment involves providing continuous professional development to all Garda personnel and facilitating pro-active organisation-wide communication on a regular basis.

The service has continued to invest in accredited training programmes, delivered in partnership between the Garda College and third level education institutions, including the University of Limerick and Dublin City University. An Education Funding Board, along with the defined approval process and funding, is in place to provide, on an annual basis, the opportunity for personnel to avail of funding in support of further education. Funding was provided as follows:

- 2022/2023 – 71 partial funding and 28 full funding
- 2021/2022 – 118 partial funding and 16 full funding

Additional opportunities such as the McCabe Fellowship Exchange Programme, which provides the opportunity to complete a master's degree programme at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York, are also available to Garda members.

Promotion processes

In An Garda Síochána, promotion to supervisory and management levels is a powerful means of rewarding personnel and for recognising the contribution an individual has made to the organisation. The promotion process for Garda members to the ranks of Superintendent and above is currently carried out under the auspices of the Policing Authority.

Supportive leadership has replaced the 'command and control' methods of the past. Supportive leadership involves supervisors and line managers engaging in ethical, prosocial and people-centric behaviours. Through supporting their people's wellbeing, enabling their growth and development, and satisfying their psychological needs of feeling competent, autonomous and related at work, people are motivated to engage in behaviours directed towards the achievement of organisational objectives.⁴

The importance of leading in areas such as ethics, inclusivity and diversity is emphasised and individuals competing for promotion are required to demonstrate qualities and competencies throughout the promotion process, including integrity and respect for others in keeping with the Human Rights model; supporting psychological safety of personnel; having the ability to make and implement difficult or unpopular decisions; and modelling the positive behaviours that are expected in others. The changes in selection criteria for candidates for promotion, as well as changes in the processes themselves, have resulted in significant progress ensuring that promotion is recognised as a fair, open and transparent process, based on merit.

⁴ Durham University Business School, Culture Audit: Your Voice, Our Future. June 2022, p. 16.



CoFPI Principle 10: Policing must be adaptive, innovative and cost effective



Increased adoption of mobile devices and digital evidence

Leveraging opportunities provided by evolving technologies to provide real time information wherever members are operational, in order to provide a better service to victims and the wider community. Also recognising that technology can provide other benefits such as reduced travel time, opportunities for more frequent collaboration, offering a more sustainable and environmental approach to engaging with each other.



Cost-effectiveness measures

Increasing emphasis on incorporating new structures to improve focus on cost-effectiveness, value for money and greater accountability with regard to budget and finance management for key roles in the organisation. In addition, we are evolving towards being more environmentally sustainable through increased use of electric vehicles and adapting our estate management practices.



Adoption of new ways of working and innovative management practices

A spotlight on innovation and a more collaborative management style that actively seeks and welcomes ideas for innovation and improvement across the organisation.



An aptitude for change

Change is a constant for An Garda Síochána. Our ability to adapt and respond to new environments and unexpected events is a core strength of the organisation.



A victim-centred police service

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated our protective, victim-focused service in relation to incidents of domestic abuse. There has been an innovative approach to service provision in partnership with other agencies and Garda members and staff have been trained to provide greater support and be more proactive when dealing with victims.

Increased adoption of mobile devices and digital evidence

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the rollout of Garda Mobility Devices became essential to maintaining prompt and effective communication among personnel, while minimising person-to-person contact. In the first year of the pandemic, the number of mobile phones distributed went from 2,000 to 5,000. As of the first quarter of 2024 this number stood at 15,000. Each mobile device costs €1,450, further underlining the organisation's commitment to investment in new and innovative ways of supporting the day-to-day needs of frontline personnel. Mobile devices allow Gardaí to access real-time information wherever members are operational and have brought improved detection rates and outcomes.

In 2024, An Garda Síochána began 'proof of concept' testing for Body Worn Cameras and a supporting Digital Evidence Management System (DEMS). The proof of concept stage was devised to test, understand and learn how the real-life experience of using Body Worn Cameras, and the gathering of digital evidence, could assist our Gardaí in terms of safety, detection of crime and court outcomes. The proof of concept saw the phased deployment of 600 cameras in Dublin North Central, Dublin South Central, Limerick and Waterford. Following completion and review of the proof of concept phase in 2025, it is anticipated that tendering processes for provision of a DEMS system and Body Worn Cameras will take place, ahead of national rollout to all Garda Members. The significant investment in Body Worn Cameras is a central plank of our Data and Technology Vision, and our commitment to support Gardaí in delivering effective, transparent and data-enabled policing services in communities.

The approach of Digital Services to technical service provision has been driven by the need to deliver pragmatic, practical solutions to specific needs, while remaining agile and responsive. The perception of Garda presence in the community is also at times a beneficiary of technology. For example, Gardaí can now attend their pre-tour parade remotely via their Mobility devices, and can detect and process roads policing offences at the roadside, providing greater opportunity to be present and visible in the community. The increased use of Microsoft Teams for video calls and conferencing has resulted in more consistent and timely communications and engagement with supervisors and colleagues and has further reduced the need for Gardaí to be present in Garda Stations. Among other innovations in the data and technology sphere includes the installation of dashboard cameras in all Garda vehicles, and the rollout of automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) capability to all vehicles.



Cost-effectiveness measures

Reform of governance and oversight of the Garda Síochána finance function is recognised as being essential to the implementation of the CoFPI principles. Following the CoFPI report, a review of the finance function was carried out by Mazars, who undertook a current state assessment, and highlighted challenges in service delivery. Among the areas where challenges were identified were capability and capacity; the adequacy of existing technology systems and financial processes, the need for improved governance functions and the availability of improved management information to assist in decision-making.

Led by the findings of this review and framed within the broader principles of CoFPI, the Garda Finance function is leading a multi-year programme to build a new Financial Management Governance Framework (FMGF), which provides the leadership, authority, responsibility, accountability of financial management within An Garda Síochána. The vision of this programme is to establish a new corporate framework for financial management, driven by strong leadership and effective governance and structures, supported by efficient systems and processes. This will embed financial resource considerations into policy and operational decision-making across the organisation. This will be achieved through:

- Provision of enhanced financial reporting
- Enhanced costing and forecasting capability
- Provision of more timely and accurate data to improve decision-making.

Designing and delivering an environmentally sustainable approach is one of the core priorities of the An Garda Síochána 2022-2024 Strategy Statement. Aligned with a wider policy landscape, ranging from the UN Sustainable Goals to the Government's 2023 Climate Action Plan, An Garda Síochána is committed to an organisation wide approach to sustainability. A Garda Climate Action Roadmap 2023-2030 has been developed and will encompass fleet, procurement, facilities management and other elements. Led by a 'Green Team' established to support sustainability organisation-wide, implementation of the roadmap will be framed by an investment in facilities management personnel as well as infrastructure. The organisation's ISO50001 accreditation was re-certified in June 2023 and under the Climate Action Roadmap this will be extended to key facilities on a phased basis. This will help to embed a bottom-up approach to energy management in our workplace, building on strong progress that has seen a reduction of 29.4% in the overall energy consumption of An Garda Síochána between 2009 and 2021, with a further 7% reduction from 2021-2022⁵.

Alongside the development of an overall Climate Action Roadmap, An Garda Síochána has pressed ahead with its investment in electric vehicles. As of April 2024 the Garda fleet comprised a total of 145 electric vehicles, with a further 58 due for allocation before the end of the year. As the wider transition to electric vehicles continues, parallel work is taking place with the OPW to ensure investment in our vehicle charging infrastructure keeps pace. Coupled with a broader move towards mobile and digitally-enabled systems, such as the retirement of paper-based payroll under the Rosters and Duty

⁵ Change from 2022 - 2023 not yet confirmed by the SEAI at the time of publishing



Management System (RDMS), An Garda Síochána is continuing to make meaningful, strategic investments in sustainability.

Adoption of new ways of working and innovative management practices

The Garda Síochána Culture Audit of 2022 commented:

Well-functioning organisations need people who are not only reliable in the way they carry out their specific roles and job requirements but who also engage in Innovative and spontaneous activity that goes beyond their role requirements: going the extra-mile. A high average level of voice behaviour (raising suggestions for improvements and reduction of work-related issues) was reported by the total sample of survey respondents⁶.

Garda personnel, while willing to be guided by supervisors, are eager for their own voices to be heard and many have innovative ideas. In challenging situations, it can often be thinking outside the box that determines success. The organisation has sought to leverage this capacity for fresh thinking through an innovation strategy, including:

- An innovation mailbox where personnel can submit ideas to improve the organisation
- A 'Your Ideas' campaign in which personnel were invited to submit ideas and the best were selected and delivered on across the organisation.
- Innovation training through an innovation lab at an internationally renowned university
- 'Leading for Innovation' workshops
- Organisation-wide recognition of individual and local innovations.

The strategic approach to fostering innovation continue to evolves, not only to improve agility in the organisation but with the aim of changing management practice by making it more bottom-up and operationally responsive. Innovation is not just good for delivering outcomes, it is critical to ensuring that personnel are heard and that the value of their perspective is leveraged on an ongoing basis.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, agility and innovation were essential. There were constant changes in restrictions, public health messaging and legislation, increasing the importance of providing clear and accurate messages to frontline members. The praise and recognition An Garda Síochána received at this time for its flexible approach to building relationships with the community and protecting the vulnerable served to reconnect personnel with the core mission of the service.

⁶ Durham University Business School, Culture Audit: Your Voice, Our Future. June 2022, page 13.



In the same period, the service demonstrated innovation and resourcefulness in the area of training, making a pivot to e-learning. The result was the Garda Learning Management System (LMS), an online platform administered by the Garda College. There continues to be a focus on online training, which is both convenient and cost-effective and the service now has the opportunity to balance online courses with in-person training to ensure active and enjoyable learning opportunities for participating personnel.

An aptitude for change

We reached out to the vulnerable and isolated and did so in ways we had never imagined we would do as Gardaí. The experience furthered our understanding of what policing means and will stand to us as the organisation continues to evolve in our modern society

Inspector Ailish Myles, Nenagh Garda Station

During the COVID-19 pandemic, agility and innovation were essential as never before. There were constant changes in restrictions, public health messaging and legislation so it was necessary to ensure that clear and accurate messages be communicated to frontline members, for instance by daily 'Newsbeat' bulletins. The praise and recognition An Garda Síochána received at this time for its flexible approach to building relationships with the community and protecting the vulnerable served to reconnect personnel with the core mission of the service – keeping people safe.

In the same period, the service demonstrated innovation and resourcefulness in the area of training, making a pivot to e-learning. The result was the Garda Learning Management System (LMS), an online platform administered by the Garda College. There continues to be a focus on online training, which is both convenient and cost-effective, and the service now has the opportunity to balance online courses with in-person training to ensure active and enjoyable learning opportunities for participating personnel.

The accelerated rollout of tools to support online collaboration and new ways of working, including the emergence of hybrid working, have also opened new avenues and increased awareness of the uses of technology. As with the provision of digital services, a process of change that was already underway was accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. An Garda Síochána has ingrained an aptitude within the organisation to deal with the unexpected. It is a testament to the capacity of An Garda Síochána that a number of critical reform initiatives were developed outside of the original scope and planning of the reform programme.



Towards a victim-centred police service

Over the past three decades, the policies and perspectives of An Garda Síochána towards domestic abuse have evolved. The introduction of the Garda Domestic Abuse Intervention Policy in 2017 was the culmination of a shift over a number of years towards a preventative, protective and victim-focused approach, mirroring international best practice, including the Istanbul Convention of 2011.

The policing of domestic abuse in Ireland has always presented challenges for An Garda Síochána. With the awareness that domestic abuse holds the potential to escalate into harm and homicide, the role played by An Garda Síochána in tackling domestic abuse has increased with the strengthening of legislation, powers afforded to Gardaí and the development of specialist protective service across the country. Engagement with, listening to and supporting victims is an organisational priority for An Garda Síochána.

It is accepted that COVID-19 brought unique risks to victims of domestic abuse, who were often confined to their homes with their abusers as a result of restrictions on movement. Operation Faoiseamh – meaning ‘relief’ – was a landmark component of the Garda Síochána community engagement response at the outset of the pandemic. Launched in April 2020, the aim of Operation Faoiseamh was to prevent loss of life, and to ensure that victims of domestic abuse were supported and protected during the challenging and unprecedented conditions of lockdown. During the operation, An Garda Síochána collaborated with advocacy and support agencies to provide enhanced, uniform and consistent services to victims of domestic abuse, responding to situations of coercive control and using a more dynamic risk assessment to recognise vulnerabilities at an early stage. A proactive intervention policy has been developed to include call backs and monitoring of vulnerable victims, and discussion of particular incidents at daily operational briefings in Garda stations.

An Garda Síochána has also rolled out a domestic abuse risk evaluation tool and established Protective Services Units in all Divisions. At national level, the Garda National Protective Services Bureau (GNPSB) ensures that vulnerable victims receive a consistently high standard of specialist service by Gardaí and are provided with professional and expert assistance.





5

Conclusion: Continuing the journey of change

An Garda Síochána is undergoing the most substantive and transformational change process in its one-hundred-year history. As this report has outlined, this change has impacted almost every component part of our service, from new operational and governance structures to the uniform our members wear, the vehicles they drive and the technology they use every day. This incremental, all-of-service approach is rooted in the principles of valuing and enabling our people to deliver an effective service to communities that trust and respect us.

Reform is an ongoing process. Delivery of the current An Garda Síochána reform programme, which has incorporated the recommendations of the 2018 CoFPI report, will continue in the months and years ahead and will be further augmented through the provisions of the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act. As the service moves past the final stages of CoFPI implementation, a post-CoFPI landscape grounded in the principles of innovation and continuous improvement is being cultivated. In the immediate future, this will be framed by initiatives such as the development of An Garda Síochána's first dedicated Innovation Strategy; the implementation of our next Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, and continued investments in systems, services and supports for our people.

The need for comprehensive, fundamental change continues, as does the importance of a whole Government approach to change, in order to meeting the ambitions of policing reform. An Garda Síochána recognises the need to look beyond the current landscape, towards a future where innovation and ideas are cultivated, recognised and acted on. The lived experiences of Garda Members and Staff working to keep people safe in our communities must continue to be one of the core components of all our strategic decisions. Our aim is to strengthen the sense of pride among our personnel in who we are and what we do. We want to build and validate their sense of career fulfilment, their belief that they are listened to, and that what they have to say matters.

The safety and security of our personnel will continue to be major focus of the organisation. Through the embedding of the Code of Ethics, the Garda Decision Making Model and the increasing awareness and understanding of Human Rights, we are solidifying the foundational values of our service. Through IT-enabled reform projects, such as the Rosters and Duty Management System (RDMS), GardaSAFE and the enhanced use of Mobility devices, we are supporting our personnel by providing digitised, agile and intuitive systems, while ensuring efficient and effective use of resources.



Under the Garda Operating Model, we are carrying out a once-in-a-generation re-calibration of our local structures, to deliver devolved and specialised services that reflect the needs of each local community.

With a new, fit-for-purpose operational uniform and the expanded capability of mobility devices, we are working to ensure that frontline personnel can feel the benefits of organisational change in tactile, tangible ways. Through greater gender balance across ranks, and increased recruitment of Garda Members and Staff from ethnic, minority and diverse communities, we are becoming more reflective of the society we serve. Through confidential access to free professional counselling supports, the holding of two organisational Culture Audits, and continued investment in wellbeing and employee assistance, we are reinforcing an organisational culture where our people know that they will be supported and cared for.

While substantial progress has been made in delivering reform across An Garda Síochána, risks and roadblocks remain. A competitive employment market continues to impact recruitment of both Garda Members and Staff. New, evolving and competing service demands require us to be agile and robust in our decisions about where finite resources can achieve the best outcomes.

This report has shown that the recent experience in An Garda Síochána of supporting reform through change programmes has found a willingness to modernise, embrace new systems and to adapt. This has been enabled by robust engagement with our people; a consistent and connected approach to programme delivery; clear planning and communication of key messages and a recognition that for change to be truly transformational, it must be rooted in and relevant to the core service we provide to our communities.





Index of Policies, Initiatives and Developments

An Garda Síochána Code of Ethics
 Garda Ethics and Culture Bureau
 Garda Anti-Corruption Unit/training
 Anti-corruption policies: Anti-Corruption, Professional Boundaries and Abuse of Power for Sexual Gain, and Substance Misuse (Controlled Drugs Drug Testing)
 Scott Medal awards for bravery
 Garda Decision-making Model
 New Operating Model
 Greater psychological and welfare support for personnel
 Human Rights Strategy
 Human Rights Law in Ireland course
 Human Rights Champions
 Victim support
 Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-4
 Improved internal communications
 Active mobility devices and bespoke mobile apps
 Better resourcing for community policing
 Culture Audits (2018 & 2022)
 Public Attitudes Surveys
 Operation Faoiseamh
 Hate crime training
 New uniform and uniform policy
 Garda Diversity Internship Programme
 Garda Access Programme
 Garda vehicles for community Gardaí
 New community policing framework
 PALF (Performance, Accountability and Learning Framework)
 Innovation strategy
 'Have your say' mailbox
 Innovation Week
 Publishing agendas/ key actions from senior leadership meetings
 Protective services units
 Cyber Crime Hubs



Index of Policies, Initiatives and Developments

Armed support units
Roster and Duty Management System (RDMS)
PULSE improvements
Divisional duty planning units
Health & Wellbeing Strategy
Range of mental health supports and services
Victim services training for all personnel
Appointment of Head of Internal Communications (2019)
Internal Communications Strategy
GardaSAFE
KOPS App
Education opportunities
Improved competitions/promotions
Reducing the environmental impact of the organisation
Garda LMS
International professional network





www.garda.ie

