



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt,
Gnóthai Baile agus Imirce
Department of Justice,
Home Affairs and Migration



PCSA

Údarás Póilíneachta
& Sábháilteachta Pobail
Policing & Community
Safety Authority

Oversight Agreement 2025-27

**Department of Justice, Home Affairs and
Migration**

Policing and Community Safety Authority

1. Introduction

1.1. Scope of this Agreement

This Agreement has been drawn up by the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration (“the Department”) in consultation with *An tÚdarás Póilíneachta agus Sábháilteachta Pobail* (the Authority), having due regard to the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (“the Code of Practice”). The Authority was established in April 2025 as a successor organisation to the Policing Authority and the Garda Síochána Inspectorate. This Oversight Agreement will be reviewed approximately midway through its operation.

This Agreement sets out the broad governance and accountability framework within which the Authority operates, and defines the key roles, responsibilities and interactions that underpin its relationship with the Department.

A separate Performance Delivery Agreement (“PDA”) is agreed annually under the governance architecture provided by this Oversight Agreement.

1.2. Background and context

1.2.1. Role of the Authority

The Authority will oversee and assess the performance of An Garda Síochána in relation to policing services in an independent and transparent manner. The Authority’s statutory functions are set out in section 122 of the Policing, Security and Community Safety (PSCS) Act 2024 and include:

- Keeping under review the performance of An Garda Síochána, including the delivery of the objectives set out in the annual service plan and the national strategy in so far as these relate to policing services;
- Holding regular meetings with the Commissioner, at least four of which must be held in public each year and be broadcast;
- Carrying out inspections and preparing reports with recommendations to the Minister, or the Garda Commissioner for any action the Authority considers necessary arising from inspections;

- Keeping under review the arrangements and strategies in place to support and enhance the performance of An Garda Síochána of its function in relation to policing services;
- Promoting policing principles, professional policing standards (having regard to best international practice) and promoting public awareness of matters relating to policing services;
- Promoting inter-agency collaboration and community engagement to improve community safety;
- Undertaking research projects with regard to policing services to promote improvements in policing standards, inter-agency collaboration, community safety and those that will contribute to a reduction in complaints against garda personnel or An Garda Síochána; and
- Provide views to the Garda Commissioner in relation to relevant content of the strategic plan and the annual service plan.

1.2.2. The Authority's Vision, Objective and Ways of Working

The Authority's Vision, Objective and Ways of Working are set out below:

Its Vision is of an engaged, effective and rights-based policing service that ensures the safety of all communities.

Its Objective is to independently oversee and assess An Garda Síochána to ensure the policing services provided to all communities are effective, consistent, and fair.

It will work in a way that:

- Provides fair, honest, and independent assessments and advice that supports and promotes improvements in policing;
- Places the experiences of communities, particularly the most vulnerable, and of garda personnel at the heart of its oversight;
- Is transparent, open, and accountable about the way it goes about its work and the evidence it uses;
- Collaborates with partners and stakeholders to improve policing services and advance community safety for the benefit of its communities; and

- Ensures it works efficiently and meets the highest standards as an oversight body, a public body, and an employer.

1.2.3. Strategic fit within the Justice sector

The role of the Authority is consistent with goals two and three of the Department's Statement of Strategy 2025-2028: "Safe Communities" and "An effective and accessible justice system"¹. The Authority supports this goal by keeping under review the performance of An Garda Síochána, including the delivery of the objectives set out in the annual service plan and the national strategy in so far as these relate to policing services.

1.2.4. Key interactions with the Department

The primary relationship between the Authority and the Department is through the Criminal Justice Governance function, which has primary Departmental responsibility for the governance of all criminal justice bodies/agencies under the aegis of the Department. Other functional areas (e.g. Corporate, Transparency, Policy, Legislation etc) engage with the Authority as required.

2. Corporate Governance Arrangements and Obligations

2.1. Key Roles and Responsibilities

2.1.1. Members of the Authority

The Authority comprises nine members: a chairperson and eight ordinary members. The members were appointed by the Government following selection processes run by publicjobs.

The Act requires that Authority members should have appropriate experience, qualifications, training or expertise and knowledge in areas connected with:

- Policing services;
- The criminal justice system;
- Human rights, equality and diversity;
- Services for victims of crime;

¹ Department of Justice Strategy Statement 2025-2028.

- Healthcare, child and social services;
- Improving the safety of communities including through inter-agency collaboration and community engagement to promote the prevention of crime and the prevention of harm to individuals, in particular those who are vulnerable or at risk;
- Public sector administration;
- Business and innovation;
- Board management and corporate governance;
- Data protection; and
- Financial management and, in particular, the allocation, management of and accountability for the effective use of financial resources.

2.1.2. Chairperson of the Authority

The Chairperson of the Authority is responsible for:

- Setting the Authority's agenda and ensuring its focus on strategic issues;
- Having an effective relationship with the Minister and keeping the Minister advised of matters arising in respect of the Authority;
- Promoting a culture of openness and debate by facilitating the effective contribution of Members and ensuring constructive relations between Members and the Executive;
- Agreeing and overseeing the Chief Executive's short and long-term performance objectives and facilitating his/her professional development;
- Ensuring that the Members receive accurate, timely and clear information; and
- Ensuring effective communication with stakeholders.

2.1.3. Chief Executive Officer

The Authority is supported by an Executive which comprises a core team of staff led by a Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO is appointed by the Authority with the consent of the Minister and has the following functions:

- to implement the policies and decisions of the Authority;

- to carry on and manage, and control generally, the staff, administration and business of the Authority;
- to perform such other functions (if any) as may be determined by the Authority or as may be authorised under this Act or any other enactment.

2.1.4. Accounting Officer

The Authority has its own Vote (Vote 41) within the Justice Group of Votes, and its own Accounting Officer. The CEO is the Accounting Officer in relation to the appropriation accounts of the Authority for the purposes of the Comptroller and Auditor General Acts 1866 to 1998.

2.1.5 Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration

The Minister and the Government are accountable to the Oireachtas for the performance of the Authority as it is a Government body under the aegis of the Department. The Act provides that the Authority shall, *inter alia*:

- Keep the Minister informed of developments in respect of matters relating to policing services and to make recommendations to assist the Minister in coordinating and developing policy in that regard;
- Make recommendations to the Minister for any actions the Authority considers necessary arising from inspections or its research activities;
- Provide advice to the Minister with regard to best policing practice;
- Keep the Minister informed of matters relevant to the accountability of the Government to the Houses of the Oireachtas;
- Prepare and submit to the Minister a governance framework;
- Prepare and submit to the Minister a strategy statement;
- Prepare and submit to the Minister a report on its activities during the preceding year; and
- Furnish to the Minister such information regarding the performance of the Authority's functions as the Minister may from time to time require.

2.2. Adherence to relevant Governance Codes and Standards

2.2.1. Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies

As an agency operating under the aegis of the Department, the Authority is subject to a range of statutory and corporate governance obligations including the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (the “Code”). The Authority will ensure that it complies with all the necessary obligations of the Code, and the Department will ensure, through the reporting and monitoring arrangements set out in this agreement, that all the requirements of the Code are properly implemented and observed.

2.2.2. Corporate Governance Standard for the Civil Service

As the Authority has its own Vote and Accounting Officer, it is required to prepare a Governance Framework in accordance with the Corporate Governance Standard for the Civil Service. This Framework has been prepared and sets out the relevant arrangements in detail.

2.2.3. Statement of Strategy

A statement of strategy for the period 2026-2028 has been developed and approved by the Authority in line with the statutory requirement.

2.2.4. Audit and Risk Management

The CEO has appointed a Chief Risk Officer. An Audit and Risk Committee has been established. The Committee is responsible for providing independent advice to the Authority and the Accounting Officer regarding (inter alia) the suitability and robustness of the organisation’s internal control, internal audit, risk management and governance systems and procedures.

Risk management is a standing item on the Authority’s monthly meeting agenda. Risk, and associated mitigation measures, are addressed in the context of all significant Authority discussions and decisions. Procedures to manage risk are in place throughout the organisation and are a standing agenda item at management, team, staff and project meetings.

A summary of key risks identified and managed by the Authority as part of its risk management system will be provided to the Department in advance of each governance meeting.

An internal audit function for the Authority is in place and is outsourced to an external service provider following a procurement process.

2.2.5. Environmental and Energy Conservation

The Policing and Community Safety Authority will fulfil its statutory and other obligations in relation to environmental and energy conservation, including the following:

- In accordance with requirements set out under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 and the Climate Action Plan 2025, the Authority has a designated Energy Performance Officer and a Climate and Sustainability Champion at senior management level who has primary responsibility for (inter alia) ensuring that the PCSA meets the applicable statutory/Government-mandated targets on reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions, and for accurately reporting energy use to the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) on an annual basis.
- Preparing a Climate Action Roadmap in accordance with the joint SEAI/Environmental Protection Agency guidelines.
- Outlining progress on energy reduction in the Authority's annual report.
- Participating in Justice sector and wider public sector initiatives on energy and environmental issues.
- Adhering to its reporting obligations under the Public Sector Climate Action Strategy 2023-2025 (www.gov.ie) in compliance with the Public Sector Climate Action Mandate.
- Having full regard to D/PENDR Circular 17/2025: Updated Green Public Procurement Instructions for Public Sector Bodies.

2.2.6. Other key obligations and arrangements

The Authority will comply with the applicable statutory governance obligations and with other requirements as set out in the Code, the Corporate Governance Standard for the Civil Service and relevant Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation Circulars and Guidance. The Authority will set out in its Governance Framework the arrangements in place to meet these obligations and will report on their implementation to the relevant authorities as required, including through the Authority's Annual Report. Relevant matters in this regard include but are not limited to:

- Procurement and financial management obligations;
- Internal control and risk management;
- Obligations under the Ethics in Public Office legislation;
- Protected disclosures;
- Human rights and equality obligations and initiatives;
- Quality customer service;
- Provision of information to members of the Oireachtas; and
- Environmental and energy management issues.

2.3. Annual Report

In accordance with section 138 of the PSCS Act, the Authority shall submit to the Minister, not later than three months after the end of the relevant year, an Annual Report on its activities in the immediately preceding year. The Minister shall lay the Report before both Houses of the Oireachtas as soon as practicable thereafter.

3. Monitoring arrangements and key interactions

3.1. Formal governance meetings

In accordance with the Department's policy on the monitoring of governance arrangements in relation to the organisations under its aegis, Criminal Justice Governance will hold two formal governance meetings with the Authority per year (or more if requested by either party to the agreement). These meetings will consider, as required, the matters listed in section 2.2 above and also:

- Delivery of the Authority's Strategy Statement and its annual business plan(s);
- Progress on achieving the targets set out in the annual PDA;
- Budgetary matters;
- Human resource issues including staffing, training and industrial relations matters;
- Data protection and cybersecurity;

- Significant findings/recommendations in Internal Audit or C&AG reports, and plans on how these are being addressed;
- Any internal governance-related issue of particular note or concern;
- Any matter that might impact on the reputation of the Authority; and
- Any other matter comprehended in, or arising from, this Agreement.

3.2. Meeting with An Garda Síochána and the Chair of Bord an Gharda Síochána

A formal governance meeting between the Secretary General of the Department (or the Deputy Secretary General, Criminal Justice), the Chairperson of the Authority, the Garda Commissioner and the Chair of Bord An Gharda Síochana shall be convened if requested by any of these parties to address specified and significant issues that impact upon relevant responsibilities of the four parties and the relationship between them.

3.3. Other Interactions

Outside of the governance meetings there will be regular, less formal interactions between the Authority and the Department in accordance with the business needs and commitments of each party. In this context, informal and unscheduled contact (whether face-to-face or by email or telephone) will form an integral part of the relationship between the parties.

4. Commitments

4.1. Mutual Commitments

Each party will:

- Proactively consider the other's role and responsibilities in relation to An Garda Síochána, keep each other apprised of key issues and developments, and consult/ include each other in relevant matters as appropriate. This may from time to time involve including each other in mutually relevant meetings/engagements with An Garda Síochána, while maintaining the independence of each party.
- Be proactive and timely in communicating on (a) relevant matters including significant public announcements, media engagements and publications and

(b) specific information requests and responses to meet the Minister's obligations to the Oireachtas or to inform Ministerial responses to representations, media queries etc. This will be underpinned by a 'no surprises' approach to matters of mutual interest or concern.

- Support adherence to corporate governance obligations under this Oversight Agreement and the achievement of targets under the annual PDA.

4.2. Departmental commitments

The Department will:

- Seek, via the annual Estimates campaign, to secure sufficient resources for the activities of the Authority;
- Support the Authority, as appropriate and necessary, in relation to sanction requests to the Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation D/PER in line with public financial procedures and policies on public service numbers;
- Respect the Authority's independence and take due account of the Authority's role and statutory functions;
- Ensure that the Authority is included/consulted as appropriate in all matters relevant to its functions;
- Inform and involve the Authority in any Departmental activities that relate to the functions that they undertake or may be required to undertake.
- Support the Authority through access to media monitoring and other information services and the appropriate provision of administrative shared services under Service Level Agreements as applicable, consistent with maintaining the independence of the Authority;
- More generally, in keeping with the 'no surprises' principle and in the interests of partnership with the Authority, the Department will ensure that significant issues or concerns related to the Authority's functions are brought formally to the attention of the Chief Executive at the earliest possible opportunity.

4.3. Authority commitments

The Authority will:

- Provide timely, relevant and appropriately detailed information to facilitate the monitoring of this Oversight Agreement and the annual PDA, including in the context of the formal governance meetings;
- Return relevant and appropriately detailed performance information for inclusion in the Revised Estimates for Public Services volume; and
- More generally, in keeping with the 'no surprises' principle and in the interests of partnership with the Department, the Authority will ensure that significant governance-related issues or concerns are brought formally to the attention of Criminal Justice Governance at the earliest possible opportunity.

5. Duration and signatories to the Agreement

Deirdre McDonnell, Assistant Secretary, Department of Justice, and Helen Hall, Chief Executive, Policing and Community Safety Authority, affirm that this Oversight Agreement shall be in effect from the date hereunder until 31 December 2027.



Deirdre McDonnell
Assistant Secretary
Department of Justice,
Home Affairs & Migration



Helen Hall
Chief Executive, PCSA

Date: 11th December 2025