

Inspection Plan 2026

Under Section 146 of the Policing,
Security and Community Safety Act 2024



PCSA

Údarás Póilneachta
& Sábháilteachta Pobail
Policing & Community
Safety Authority



Overview

This is the first inspection plan of the Policing and Community Safety Authority. It sets out the areas of policing we will inspect during 2026 and describes how we will carry out and report on our inspections.

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Who we are

Policing and Community Safety Authority

The Policing and Community Safety Authority (the Authority or PCSA) was established on 2 April 2025 as an independent statutory agency responsible for the oversight of An Garda Síochána.

It is made up of an Authority of nine members, supported by an Executive team under a Chief Executive Officer. It is the successor organisation to the Policing Authority and Garda Síochána Inspectorate.

The objective of the PCSA, as set out in section 122 (1) of the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024 (the Act), is to:

“...oversee and assess in an independent and transparent manner the performance of An Garda Síochána of its functions relating to policing services in order to support the effective provision and continuous improvement of such services to the benefit of the safety of the public.”

You can read more about the PCSA and our work [here](#).



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

Our strategic objectives for the period 2026-2028 are to:

Provide consistent oversight and independent assessment

Support and promote community safety

Be a credible, trusted, and expert voice on policing

Be a well-run and effective organisation

We 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 our oversight



Is transparent, open, and accountable about the way we go about our work and the evidence we use



Collaborates with partners and stakeholders to improve policing services and advance community safety for the benefit of our communities



Ensures we work efficiently and meet the highest standards as an oversight body, a public body, and an employer

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Context for conducting inspections

The oversight of the performance of An Garda Síochána is a broad term encompassing a variety of methods of monitoring and assessing garda performance. Inspection work of the Authority is a key element of our oversight.

The methods of oversight used by the PCSA include:



Authority meetings with the Garda Commissioner and his senior team



Seeking written reports and information from An Garda Síochána



Reviewing garda performance, including against An Garda Síochána's Strategic and Annual Service Plans and the Policing Priorities set by the PCSA



Engaging with garda divisions, national units and personnel



Engaging with stakeholders and communities across the country



Conducting inspections and monitoring and assessing the implementation of recommendations by An Garda Síochána



Observing garda governance meetings



Engaging with relevant material and reports produced by third parties



Conducting research

The PCSA considers and independently decides on the most appropriate method(s) of oversight for the areas of policing it examines.

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Powers to conduct inspections and appoint inspectors of policing services

Section 143 of the Act empowers the PCSA to carry out inspections in relation to aspects of the operation and administration of An Garda Síochána relating to policing services that it considers appropriate. In addition, the PCSA must carry out any inspection requested by the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration (the Minister).

While most inspections will be carried out solely by the PCSA, section 145 of the Act provides that inspections may also be carried out jointly with one or more prescribed inspection bodies. The PCSA does not currently intend to carry out any joint inspections during 2026.

In accordance with section 142 of the Act, the Authority has appointed and will continue to appoint suitably qualified members of its staff as inspectors of policing services for the purpose of conducting inspections.

Section 147 sets out the powers of an inspector of policing services authorised to carry out an inspection. In particular, where it is necessary or expedient for the purpose of carrying out an inspection, an inspector has the power to:

- (a) *enter a relevant location at any time to inspect any aspect of the administration or operation of An Garda Síochána in relation to the provision of policing services relevant to the inspection,*
- (b) *require any member of garda personnel to—*
 - (i) *provide any information that the inspector of policing services may reasonably require for the purposes of the inspection,*
 - (ii) *produce to him or her any documents in that person's power or control that the inspector of policing services may reasonably require for the purposes of the inspection, and*
 - (iii) *provide an explanation of any document made available pursuant to subparagraph (ii),*
- (c) *examine any document made available to him or her under paragraph (b) and take copies of, or extracts from, such document or have the document made available in a form to facilitate removal from the location at which the document is made available,*
- (d) *take possession of any document made available to him or her under paragraph (b) that, in the opinion of the inspector of policing services is relevant to the inspection, and, for those purposes, remove it and retain it in his or her possession for a reasonable period,*
- (e) *require the personal details of any person in a relevant location where, in the opinion of the inspector of policing services, such information is relevant to the inspection, and*
- (f) *be assisted, when exercising a power under this section by such and so many members of staff of the Authority or persons under contract with or engaged by the Authority pursuant to section 132(1) as he or she considers appropriate.*

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Requirement for an inspection plan

Under section 146 of the Act, the Authority is required to prepare and publish an inspection plan.

An inspection plan must set out:

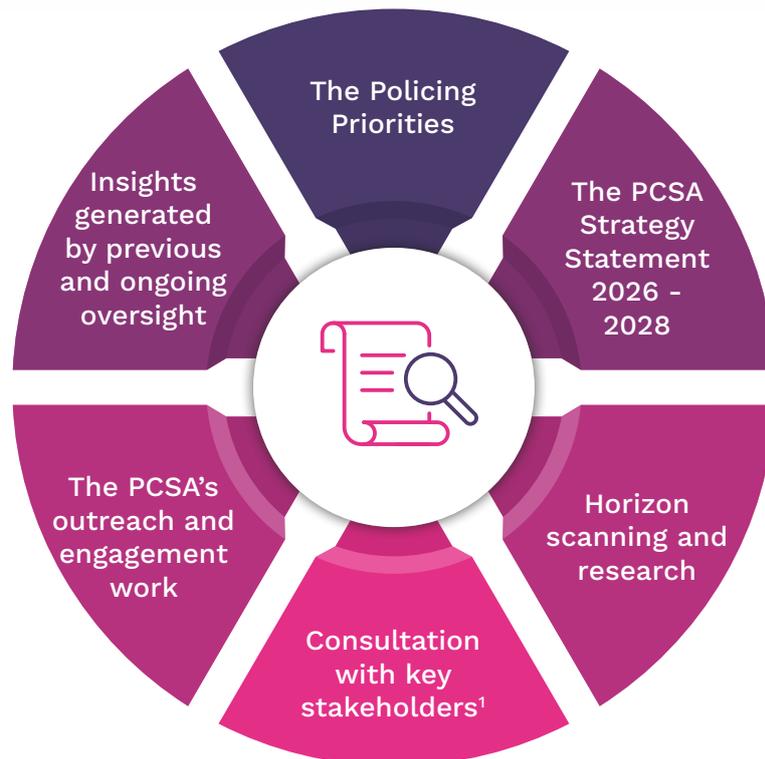
- *the priorities for inspections to be carried out, and*
- *information on how such inspections shall be carried out in a manner which-*
 - *is proportionate, accountable and transparent, and*
 - *ensures the integrity and objectivity of the findings of such inspections.*

Section 5 outlines how the Authority determined the priority areas for inspection in 2026 and Section 6 sets out information on how inspections shall be conducted.

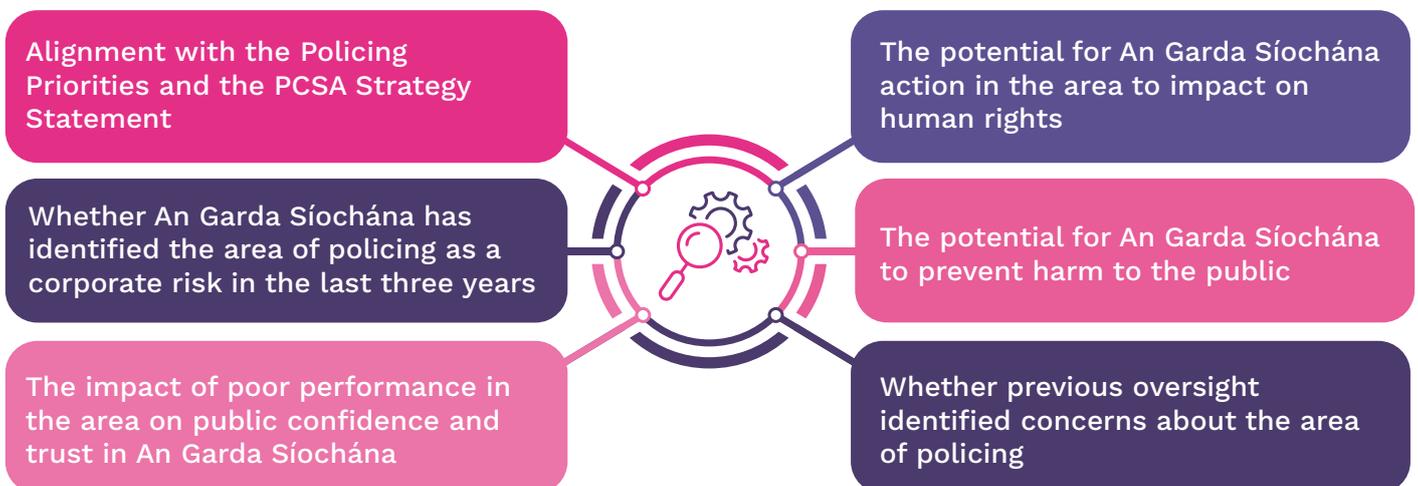
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Identifying priorities for inspection

The PCSA identified a number of possible areas for inspection in 2026 having regard to:



A number of criteria were considered to assist in the selection and prioritisation of these topics. These were:



1. Consultees were An Garda Síochána; the Garda Board; the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration; Fiosrú; the National Office for Community Safety; the Independent Examiner of Security Legislation; and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission.

As a result, the following areas of policing services have been approved by the Authority for inspection in 2026.

Garda Call Handling and Incident Response Procedures – the use of ‘Resolution without Deployment’



In certain circumstances, an incident reported to a garda Regional Control Centre may be resolved without deploying garda resources and it is categorised as ‘Resolution without Deployment’. If garda resources are inappropriately dispatched to incidents that could be resolved without deployment, this may result in reduced availability for higher priority calls or other policing tasks.

The purpose of this inspection is to examine the use of ‘Resolution without Deployment’ to ensure it is applied appropriately and consistently in accordance with garda policy.

Risk management in garda custody



The purpose of this inspection is to examine the garda approach to identifying, assessing and managing risks associated with persons in garda custody. This inspection will focus on those in custody who may be more vulnerable, including those in mental distress.

The policing of bail conditions by An Garda Síochána



The purpose of this inspection is to examine the extent to which bail conditions are proactively and effectively policed and how breaches are dealt with by An Garda Síochána.

The management and storage of biological samples by An Garda Síochána



The purpose of this inspection is to examine the arrangements for the management and storage of biological samples. It will assess whether samples are properly accounted for, appropriately stored and recorded on the Property and Exhibits Management System, and whether the processes are applied consistently.

In addition to conducting inspections in 2026, the PCSA will continue to monitor and assess garda performance in a range of areas of policing services using its other oversight methods.

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How inspections will be carried out

Where the Authority decides to carry out an inspection, section 143 of the Act requires the Authority to do the following:

- *specify in writing the scope and terms of the inspection, and*
- *authorise in writing one or more inspectors of policing services to carry out the inspection.*

As soon as practicable after specifying the scope and terms of an inspection, the Authority shall give the Garda Commissioner written notice of the inspection.

The notice must include:

- *a statement of the nature and particulars of the matters to be inspected,*
- *the scope and terms of the inspection,*
- *a copy of the authorisation in writing for one or more inspectors of policing services to carry out the inspection, and*
- *such other information as the Authority considers appropriate.*

The conduct of inspections will be informed by the function of An Garda Síochána, as set out in section 9 of the Act, which is to provide policing services and security services including with the objective of protecting and vindicating the human rights of each individual.

Inspections will be carried out in a manner which is proportionate, accountable and transparent, and ensures the integrity and objectivity of the findings of such inspections.

There are two important documents to guide the conduct of inspections. These are the memorandum of understanding (MOU) agreed by the Authority and the Garda Commissioner, and oversight principles developed by the PCSA.

Memorandum of understanding

In accordance with section 148 (1) of the Act, [an MOU](#) concerning the conduct of inspections has been agreed between the Authority and the Garda Commissioner. The MOU sets out the manner in which the powers of an inspector of policing services may be exercised, so that inspections:

- *are carried out in an efficient and effective manner;*
- *do not adversely affect the performance by An Garda Síochána of its functions;*
- *do not jeopardise criminal investigations or prosecutions; and*
- *do not prejudice the safekeeping of a person in legal custody.*

The MOU also seeks to provide a framework for co-operation and communication between the parties in relation to the conduct of inspections, including the notification of inspections, requests for information, unannounced visits, access to garda information systems and how information obtained in relation to an inspection will be safeguarded.

Based upon the scope and terms of the inspection, the parties will agree and document suitable and specific safeguards regarding planned or potential access to garda systems, personal data and/or sensitive information, in line with the provisions in the MOU. Such safeguards will be agreed prior to commencement of inspection activity. These safeguards may be reviewed by the parties based on the evolving requirements of that inspection.

Where an inspection involves unannounced visits to an operational business area or business areas, the intention to do so will be identified in the scope and terms of the inspection, along with the anticipated time period within which the inspection fieldwork is to be conducted. The need for unannounced visits will be considered at the planning stage of each inspection.

Oversight principles

In carrying out its oversight activities, the PCSA is guided by a number of core principles, drawn from the Act and from the PCSA Strategy Statement.

These principles are given meaning by having a clear description of how they inform oversight activities in practice. The next two pages set out the four principles and how the PCSA implement them in their day-to-day work.

Oversight Principle	Our approach/how we do this
Oversight is carried out with integrity and objectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ We engage with and listen to An Garda Síochána personnel at all levels in the organisation, but we make our own judgements based on our professional assessment of the evidence; ■ We take a structured approach to evidence collection and analysis, carefully weighing up different sources of information in reaching judgements; ■ We take care to communicate impartially and objectively, and to avoid bias in use of language or presentation; ■ Reports are provided to An Garda Síochána prior to publication for fact checking purposes only; ■ We provide impartial and objective advice to the Minister, where appropriate; and ■ We learn from experience, assessing the impact of our work, and reviewing internal quality assurance procedures to enhance our effectiveness.
Oversight is proportionate, accountable and transparent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ We undertake a balanced assessment process to identify priority areas for oversight, cognisant of the work of other bodies; ■ We ensure that we request only the information deemed necessary for effective oversight, and that we use PCSA and Garda Síochána time efficiently; ■ Our activities are carried out with due consideration so as not to adversely affect the performance by An Garda Síochána of its functions; ■ We are open with stakeholders and An Garda Síochána about our processes and findings; ■ Our publications are informed by evidence and provide a clear rationale for the conclusions we reach; ■ We treat carefully the information that we gather to support our oversight work. When necessary, we protect its confidentiality, as required by law; and ■ We hold at least four meetings in public each year with the Garda Commissioner. These meetings are also live-streamed to maximise public accessibility.

Oversight Principle	Our approach/how we do this
<p>Oversight is Human Rights and Equality Focused</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Human rights and equality considerations are central to the development of the PCSA's Oversight Framework and Inspection Plan; ■ All oversight, where relevant, assesses the extent to which An Garda Síochána upholds and vindicates human rights and equality; ■ We ensure that we listen to and hear a diverse range of voices and viewpoints in our outreach and engagement; and ■ All staff involved in oversight have received appropriate and relevant human rights and equality training and can demonstrate the application of human rights and equality to their work in the context of policing and community safety.
<p>Oversight supports confidence and trust in policing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ We engage with a range of communities to ensure that we include in our oversight those areas of policing which most impact on confidence and trust; ■ We use insights from outreach work with communities and stakeholders to inform our engagement with and assessment of An Garda Síochána; ■ Our assessments are evidence based, robust and impartial, and they aim to provide the public with assurance that An Garda Síochána is being overseen effectively in an independent and transparent manner; and ■ We keep the public informed about our work and share the outcomes of our oversight in an accessible manner, using clear, concise language.

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Reports of inspections

Once an inspection has been completed, an inspection report will be prepared which may contain recommendations for any action that the Authority considers necessary.

Section 149 of the Act requires the Authority to submit an inspection report to the Garda Commissioner and to the Minister and then publish it on the PCSA's website. If appropriate, a published report may exclude any matter that might facilitate the commission of an offence, prejudice a criminal investigation or jeopardise the safety of any person.

In accordance with section 149, once an inspection report has been submitted to the Commissioner, the Authority will ask the Commissioner to provide a written response setting out his consideration of the report and what actions (if any) he proposes to take in relation to it.



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Review of the Inspection Plan 2026

The Authority will keep this inspection plan under review and may vary it in light of significant new or emerging information, or as a result of a request from the Minister.



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