

Policing Priorities

For An Garda Síochána

2026-28





Introduction

The Policing and Community Safety Authority (PCSA) is responsible for overseeing and assessing the performance of An Garda Síochána. We also have a role¹ to determine priorities for An Garda Síochána in delivering policing services to the communities it serves.

These Policing Priorities establish what An Garda Síochána should give the most attention to, to improve the policing services offered to communities and ensure their safety.

The PCSA has set three Priorities for 2026-2028:



Work in Partnership to meet Community Needs



Provide a Consistent, Supportive, Quality Service



Enable the Frontline

Seven key areas under these Priorities are set out in this document, along with the outcomes that would indicate successful delivery against the Priorities. The PCSA, in our role to oversee and assess performance, will focus on these Priorities, key areas and outcomes in the coming years. We will also review them annually to make sure they remain relevant and fit-for-purpose.

How we decided on these Priorities

An Garda Síochána provide a wide range of services to the public and there are huge demands on the organisation. However, not everything can be a priority and these Priorities have been set in a context of:

- ➔ The current resources available to An Garda Síochána – including members and staff, finance, technology, etc.;
- ➔ The huge policing demand of Ireland holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2026; and,
- ➔ The current uncertain economic environment.

¹ Under the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024

As such, the PCSA was aware in developing the Priorities that there would be tough choices to be made. So, we wanted to hear directly from communities and from personnel working in An Garda Síochána to see what they would most like to see included. To do this we:

- ➔ Ran an online public consultation that received 3,794 responses;
- ➔ Met with over 400 serving garda personnel across every county;
- ➔ Engaged with experts and academics working in the policing and community safety field; and,
- ➔ Held four regional events to hear directly from approximately 100 community stakeholder groups.

We considered the extensive feedback from these engagements, along with information gathered from: considering similar priorities from other countries; reviewing the performance of An Garda Síochána in recent years; and, a range of other activities.

All of this information was considered in full to decide on draft Priorities, which were then consulted on with the Garda Commissioner and the Director of the National Office for Community Safety.

Following this process, the PCSA is confident that these Priorities identify the key areas for improvement to ensure that:

- ➔ The service offered to communities is improved where improvements are most needed;
- ➔ Garda personnel are enabled to provide this service to the best of their abilities; and
- ➔ They are also realistic and achievable with the resources available to An Garda Síochána.

For more information on the PCSA and to keep track of our work visit www.pcsaireland.ie or contact us by email at info@pcsaireland.ie.



Work in Partnership to meet Community Needs

This Priority focusses on the broad range of services provided by An Garda Síochána to all communities, the way in which it engages with and understands them and responds to their needs. A key focus is to make sure that there is consistency in the policing services and responses given to all communities and counties.

Work in Partnership to Meet Community Needs

Key Area:

Effective and Visible Response

What Will Success Look Like?

An improved process for receiving, triaging, responding to, and resolving calls for service, through:

- Consideration of approach to calls to local stations
- Ensuring appropriate triage and/or resolution occurs in regional call centres
- The expansion of online reporting/engagement, where appropriate.

Establishing and maintaining a minimum strength for Regular Units that is demand-led and allows An Garda Síochána to meet community needs. This aligns with the key role that Regular Units play in providing all policing services, including:

- Responding to domestic, sexual and gender-based violence (DSGBV);
- Contributing to road safety;
- Preventing, investigating and detecting crime; and,
- Ensuring relationships with, and a visible presence in, communities.

Enhancing frontline resources through the growth of the Garda Reserve. This includes consideration of using Reserve Members' skills to support specialist functions.

Supporting frontline policing responses by ensuring sufficient capacity for all Divisions to:

- Examine phones, laptops, and other seized technology; and,
- Use social media for investigations and crime prevention.

Key Area:**Partnership*****What Will Success Look Like?***

A focus on community policing to maintain and strengthen community relationships. This includes:

- ➔ A clear garda definition of, and strategy for, community policing, and
- ➔ The introduction of a system for effectively measuring the range of interactions with communities and the issues they raise.

A consistent approach is taken to working with the new Local Community Safety Partnerships; working with partners to improve crime prevention and the response to local issues.

Working with partners to improve the response to drug-related crime, with a focus on drug-related intimidation and the exploitation of children and young people by criminal groups.

Working with partners to identify and divest non-core duties, to reduce demand on An Garda Síochána for services that do not require policing powers or responses.



Provide a Consistent, Supportive, Quality Service

Further to the first Priority's focus on the community as a whole, this Priority has a concentrated focus on the service to the individual. It is informed by the fact that every interaction with the gardaí matters and is important in making sure all individuals receive fair and proper treatment. In particular, this Priority focuses on those with heightened vulnerability whether they are victims, suspects, or offenders.

Provide a Consistent, Supportive, Quality Service

Key Area:

First Contact

What Will Success Look Like?

All individuals who come in contact with An Garda Síochána (in all stations, counties, or via phone) receive a consistent response and service that is focussed on quality of engagement, fairness and appropriate treatment. This includes the early identification of additional needs or supports.

A national approach is agreed with partners for a mental health response that sets appropriate boundaries for policing and ensures adequate health interventions, and rollout of the approach is commenced.

Gaps are identified, and work with partners is undertaken, to ensure the right infrastructure is in place to safeguard those who come in contact with An Garda Síochána, including:

- Fit-for-purpose custody and interview suites;
- The national rollout of the Barnahus model; and
- Availability of appropriate and timely medical assessment of victims, suspects, and offenders.

Key Area:**Protect and Safeguard*****What Will Success Look Like?***

An effective Victims' Policy is put in place, with necessary services resourced to improve the experience of victims.

The Children's Plan is fully implemented to ensure all children, whether victims, offenders, suspects, or as members of the community receive appropriate service.

An Garda Síochána recognises and meaningfully addresses the lack of confidence that the Traveller, Roma, and communities living in very disadvantaged areas have in policing services.

Enhanced capacity and capability of the Anti-Corruption Unit so that garda personnel who inappropriately use their position and/or powers are identified and responded to quickly and appropriately.



Enable the Frontline

In the context of the first two Priorities, the third Priority considers the internal enablers and service improvements that require to be addressed in order to facilitate the delivery of policing services.

Enable the Frontline

Key Area:

Systems

What Will Success Look Like?

The planned 2026 review of the Operating Model:

- Is independent,
- Incorporates frontline and community feedback,
- Is focussed on consistency and effective service delivery, and
- Ensures alignment with the Community Safety model.

Policy design processes are updated, with comprehensive human rights input in all new policies. Policy reviews are inbuilt and there is improved internal communication for personnel on policy updates.

A set of commitments are published that set out the safeguards that An Garda Síochána will use when introducing and using new and evolving technology, to ensure policing is supported and protects individuals, communities and their rights.

Key Area:

People

What Will Success Look Like?

A strategic workforce plan, which identifies areas for priority allocation of garda personnel, is agreed and implemented.

Enhanced organisational capacity at local and national level in key areas such as finance, fraud investigation, cyber analysis, and legal/human rights, through the recruitment of specialist staff.

The introduction of aligned, modern, and fit-for-purpose human resource and financial information systems to allow the organisation to see what resources it has and where best to use them to deliver services.

Key Area:**Supporting the Workforce*****What Will Success Look Like?***

There is a prioritised strategy in place for the delivery of training and continuous professional development to all garda personnel. This strategy has a focus on effective training delivery methods to personnel and addressing gaps in: training for garda staff (including induction); driver training; and, responding to mental health.

Increased Garda Occupational Health and Wellbeing Directorate capacity provides a risk-based, appropriate health and wellbeing infrastructure and service that supports the garda workforce and addresses high rates of absence.

Internal disciplinary procedures are completed in a fair and timely manner.

Performance management and development structures in place for every member of the workforce, to enable supportive supervision in the areas of member/staff development, training, and welfare.



Key Terms

Some key terms included in this document are set out below with brief explanations. Where possible, links are provided for further information or to key agencies.

Anti-Corruption Unit: An internal garda unit responsible for preventing, identifying and investigating corruption and/wrongdoing by garda personnel.

Barnahus model: A child-centred and child-friendly response for cases where children and young people may have experienced sexual abuse. The model brings health, medical, child protection, therapeutic, and policing services together to make sure there is a timely and appropriate responses in such cases.

Calls for service: The seeking of police support by individuals or communities.

Children's Plan: A dedicated strategic approach to how An Garda Síochána engage with and respond to cases involving children and young people.

Community Safety: Ireland's new model of community safety means An Garda Síochána, Government Departments, State agencies, community organisations and the public working together with the common aim of making communities safer.

Community Safety – Local Community Safety Partnerships (LCSP): A body established in each local authority area responsible for identifying and addressing community safety issues. Membership includes local councillors, An Garda Síochána, community representatives, business and education representatives, and a range of statutory agencies including the HSE, Tusla, and each local authority.

Community Safety – Steering Group and National Office for Community Safety: The Steering Group is a body of senior representatives of key Government departments, An Garda Síochána, and other agencies responsible for setting the strategic approach to community safety and monitoring its implementation. They are supported by the full-time National Office, which will prepare the national strategy, coordinate and support the LCSPs, and promote community safety.

Drug-related intimidation: Where criminals allege that an individual owes them money due to a drug debt, and uses threats, violence, damage to property, etc. to intimidate them into paying this money.

DSGBV: A range of crimes including domestic violence (which can include physical, psychological, emotional, and financial abuse and sexual violence), rape and sexual assault, prostitution and trafficking, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, sexual harassment, stalking and related acts, forced abortion and forced sterilisation together with new and emerging forms of DSGBV e.g. cyber violence.

Enablers: The key internal functions of human resources, finance, training, technology, etc. that are needed to make sure An Garda Síochána places its resources where needed and ensure they are managed well.

Garda Occupational Health and Wellbeing Directorate: The internal service within An Garda Síochána that provides medical and wellbeing support to personnel.

Garda personnel: Individuals that work in An Garda Síochána as garda members, garda staff, or Garda Reserve members.

Garda Reserve: Trained volunteer members of An Garda Síochána who are currently assigned to community engagement, public events, and similar duties.

Garda staff: Administrative or specialist staff that offer skills, knowledge and expertise in areas such as legal, data analysis, cyber security/investigation, finance, human resources, etc.

Non-core duties: Activities undertaken by An Garda Síochána and its personnel which do not require sworn policing powers and therefore may be appropriately undertaken by other agencies.

Operating Model: The organisational structure of An Garda Síochána which sets out the four Garda Regions, 21 Garda Divisions, and the specialist functions within them and at a national level.

Regular Units: The base garda unit, which sees units of members undertake duties including patrols, responding to calls, road traffic duties, crime investigation, etc.

Specialist functions: Units or bureaus within An Garda Síochána that have specific functions and responsibilities, and are often supported by enhanced technology, specifically trained staff, or similar. E.g. drugs units, Divisional Protective Services Units (DPSUs, who deal with serious DSGBV cases) the Garda National Cyber Crime Bureau, etc.

Strategic workforce plan: A strategy that sets out the human resource need of An Garda Síochána for the coming years, including the skills and expertise required to respond to changing crime and technological environments, and sets out a plan for making sure they can recruit, train and retain members and staff to meet these needs.

