

Policing Priorities

For An Garda Síochána 2026-28

Consultations Outcome Report





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Note to Readers

This report gives an overview of the consultation process for the Policing Priorities for An Garda Síochána 2026-2028. It also sets out how the responses received shaped the final priorities, as set by the Policing and Community Safety Authority (PCSA). The Priorities are [available here](#).

The PCSA is extremely grateful for the time and input of all of those who engaged with us online and in-person throughout the consultation process in 2025. The Priorities were heavily informed by the views and experiences of the members of the public, stakeholders, and garda personnel who generously gave their time.

The views and inputs outlined in this report are a summary of what we heard during the consultation. It would not be appropriate (in line with our anonymised survey and Chatham House style in-person events) to fully capture all views expressed. Therefore, contents should be treated as a thematic overview of the main points heard and may not reflect the shared view of all consultees or the views of the PCSA.



A publicity poster for the online consultation campaign



Introduction

The PCSA is an independent, statutory agency responsible for overseeing and assessing the policing performance of An Garda Síochána. One of the key functions of the PCSA is to set [Policing Priorities for An Garda Síochána](#). The Priorities are the services or issues that require focus or attention by An Garda Síochána in order to improve the policing services provided to communities. The garda strategic and annual plans are required to be consistent with these Priorities.

The legislation does not detail how the Priorities should be developed except to require consultation with the Garda Commissioner and the Director of Ireland’s National Office for Community Safety on the draft Priorities.

When setting Priorities for 2026–2028, the PCSA wanted to ensure that they reflected the issues, concerns, and challenges affecting the communities that An Garda Síochána serves, and the garda personnel delivering the service. Therefore, a primary focus was put on engagement with frontline personnel and with communities, to develop the Priorities.

To achieve this, the PCSA undertook:

 <p>An online public consultation that received 3,794 responses</p>	 <p>33 in-person consultations with approximately 400 garda personnel, covering every garda division in the country</p>	 <p>Four regional stakeholder consultations with over 100 representatives of key statutory and non-statutory organisations (including community groups, victims’ organisations, etc.)</p>	 <p>An online workshop with 35 academic experts in policing and community safety</p>
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In the consultations, we asked what An Garda Síochána should prioritise and what would success look like at the end of the three-year period.

This Consultation Outcomes Report provides an insight into:

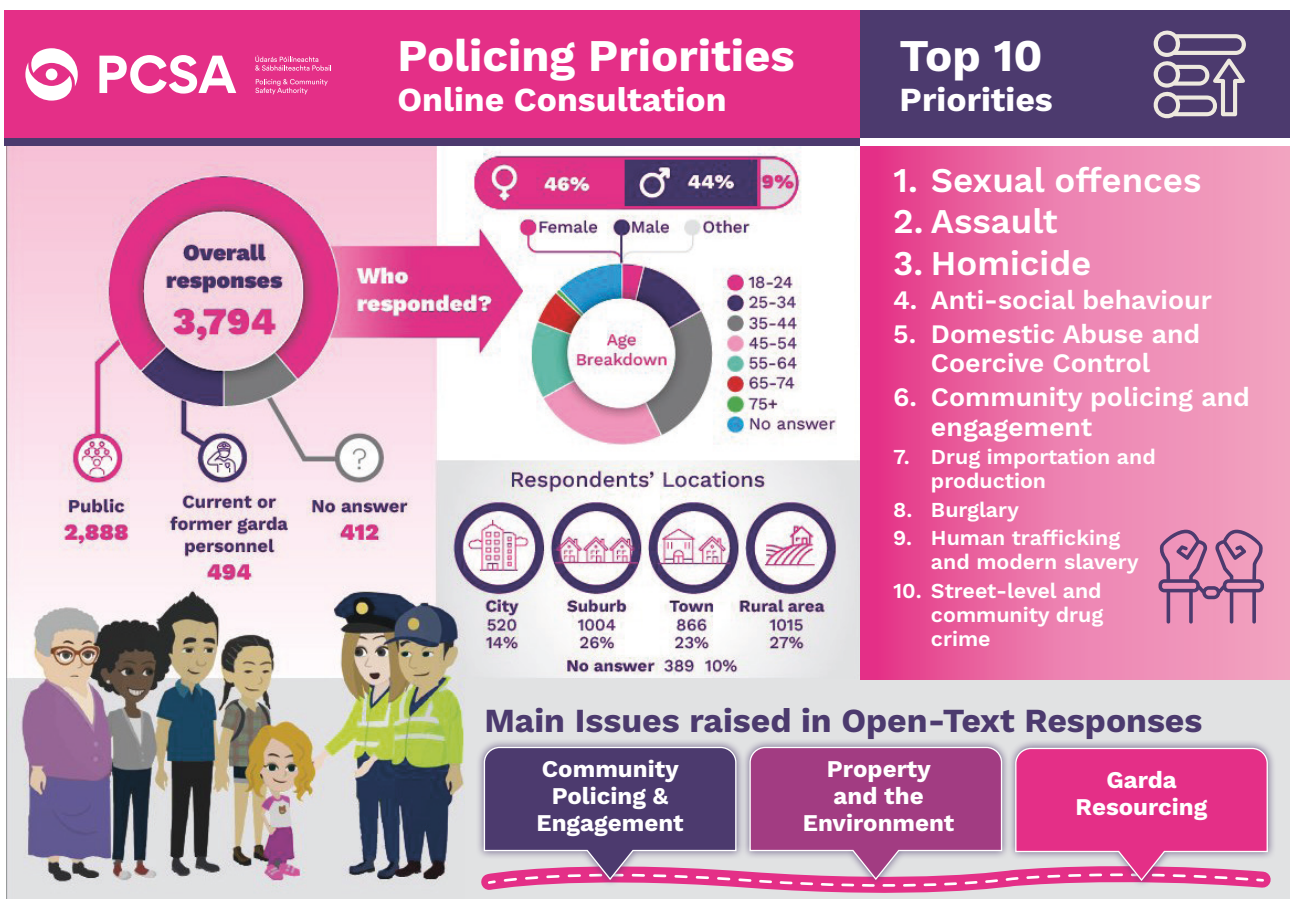
- how and why we undertook each activity;
- what we heard from consultees through this process; and,
- how this input shaped the Priorities and the supporting measures of success that underpin them.



Online Consultation

When designing the consultation, a key aspect for the PCSA was to maximise the opportunity to hear from members of the public. In order to provide as wide an opportunity as possible for the public to engage we ran an online consultation from 28 April to 08 June 2025. This was promoted online and through traditional media, including through national and local media interviews and advertisements. It was also circulated to our stakeholders, a number of whom promoted the survey through their own channels and membership.

Participants were invited to 'spend' 70 points across 24 areas of policing (ranging from 0-5 points per area). This was to indicate where they would prioritise garda time and attention. While the survey was anonymous, participants were also offered an optional survey to provide high-level demographic information including their age group, ethnicity, gender, and home county. This allowed us to get a sense of how Priorities might differ across demographics and to sense-check the extent to which our survey was representative of the Irish population.



Overview of the Online Consultation



What Did We Hear?

In total we received 3,794 responses, of which 496 identified through the demographic survey as being serving or retired garda personnel.

It is important to acknowledge that there are certain limitations with respect to demographic representation, as participants were both anonymous and self-selecting. Therefore, care must be taken not to draw wider conclusions or inferences based solely on the survey results. However, the PCSA is satisfied that the survey produced a sufficiently robust sample, including in respect of various demographics.

The overall order of the 24 policing areas/services provided as options within the consultation survey is shown below (the number shows the average points given to each area/service, out of 5). As can be seen, high-harm offences against the individual were the clear top priority areas, making up 4 of the top 5, and 5 of the top 10 (sexual offences, assault, homicide, domestic abuse & coercive control, and human trafficking/modern slavery). High-volume and visible crime issues made up the remainder of the top 10.

Policing Area/Service	Average Allocation	Policing Area/Service	Average Allocation
1 Sexual offences	3.91	11 Public order	3.00
2 Assault	3.70	12 Damage to Property and the Environment	2.95
3 Homicide	3.62	13 Theft	2.93
4 Anti-social behaviour	3.46	14 Crime prevention	2.86
5 Domestic Abuse and Coercive Control	3.43	15 Road safety	2.86
6 Community policing and engagement	3.21	16 Cyber-crime	2.83
7 Drug importation and production	3.20	17 Victim services	2.82
8 Burglary	3.15	18 Fraud and economic crime	2.81
9 Human trafficking and modern slavery	3.09	19 Mental health	2.59
10 Street-level and community drug crime	3.05	20 Immigration	2.45
		21 Anti-corruption	2.41
		22 Hate crime	2.32
		23 Garda Vetting	2.07
		24 Event management	1.27

Average Points Allocation in the Online Survey

Some policing services that could be considered as ‘non-core’,¹ and that have been flagged in wider consultation activity as having the potential to be delivered by other organisations, received lower scores. These included road safety, victim services, mental health, vetting, and event management.

Demographic differences

Across all demographic cohorts there was consistently high prioritisation of high-harm offences against the individual. For example, sexual offences, assault, homicide, and domestic abuse and coercive control were given top five priority by all age-based cohorts between the ages of 16 and 64. There was comparatively low prioritisation of domestic abuse and coercive control by male respondents.

The priority given to community engagement, anti-social behaviour, and drug importation and production consistently increased with respondents’ age. Burglary, anti-social behaviour, damage to property and the environment, public order and theft were priorities identified by ethnic minority groups (i.e. those other than ‘white/white Irish’). Although representing a small sample, Asian/Asian Irish respondents returned a strong prioritisation for assault, anti-social behaviour, and hate crime.

There were several differences between the ‘current/former garda personnel’ and ‘members of the public’ cohorts. For example, road safety was a top priority for garda personnel but was not ranked within the top 10 priorities for members of the public. This represented the largest difference in prioritisation between the two cohorts. Large disparities in prioritisation were also present between garda personnel and the public in the following areas: anti-corruption, hate crime, human trafficking and modern slavery, and victim services, with the public giving higher priority than garda personnel respondents.

Immigration ranked consistently low, particularly for women, the over-65 cohort, and those living in cities.

Open-text responses

The final question of the online survey offered participants the opportunity to expand on their selection or provide commentary on what should be a priority for An Garda Síochána over the 2026-2028 period. 41% of respondents (1,574) gave a free-text response, giving us further insight into their prioritisation.

Three primary matters emerged in the analysis of this data:

-
- A strong consensus across cohorts that an increasingly visible police presence is needed, with particular reference to community policing and engagement;

 - Concern regarding garda resources and training – in particular among garda personnel; and,

 - A need for greater multi-agency and police response to wildlife and environmental crime.

1. Policing functions or duties undertaken by garda personnel that don’t require police powers and could be undertaken in other ways, for example by other partners or agencies, the use of technology, etc.

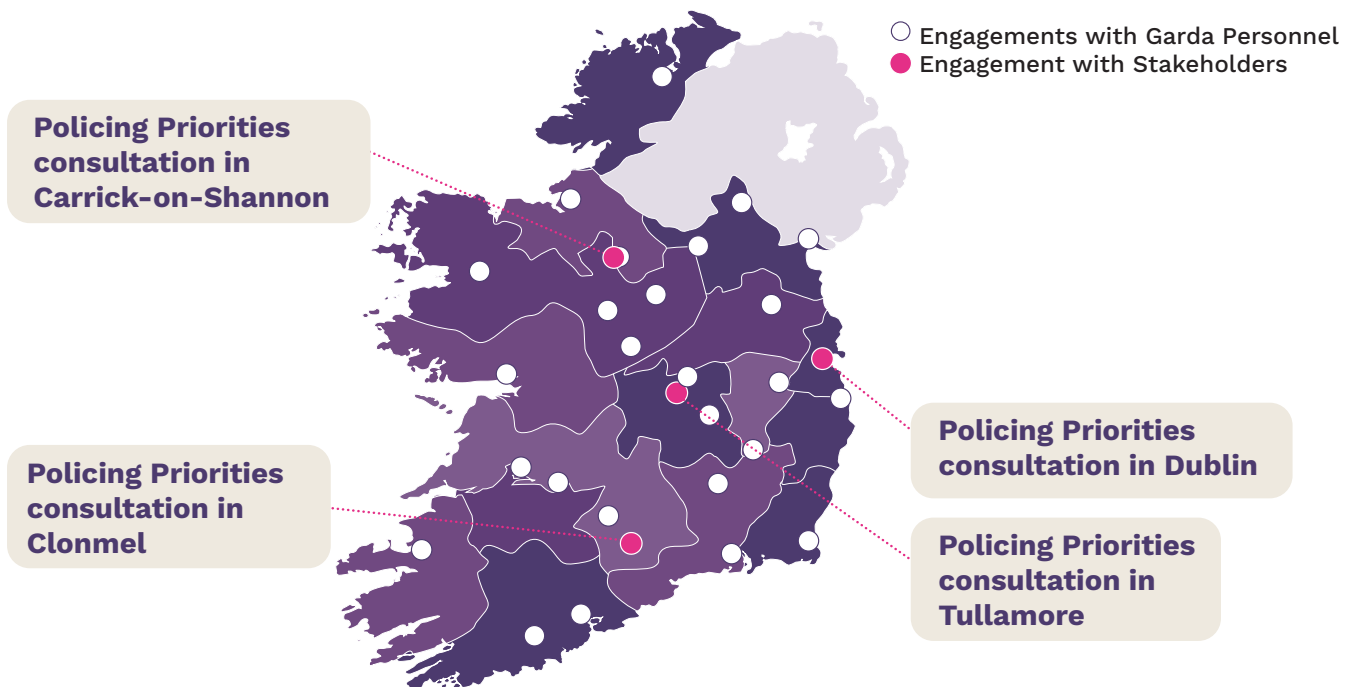


In-Person Garda Engagements

The online survey gave us a high-level insight into the areas and services that people thought should be prioritised. However, understanding what meaningful success would look like would require more in-depth engagement. As such we needed to sit down with those providing the service, and those receiving it (covered in the next section), to hear about the specific challenges that needed to be addressed, what changes could be made to improve services, and their views more broadly on priorities, given their lived experience.

Between 7 May and 4 June 2025, we held 33 engagements and met face-to-face with approximately 400 garda personnel. These engagements took place across all 26 counties² in garda stations or other venues. Attendees were predominantly at garda and sergeant rank but also included inspectors and various grades of garda staff.

33 Garda Engagements (7 May - 4 June 2025)



2. Cork had two consultations on the basis of the separate City and County Divisions and there were seven in Dublin Metropolitan Region: one per garda division and one for other personnel in the Region.



What Did We Hear?

Throughout the 33 engagements, there were clear national, consistent themes and issues raised. Depending on the location of the meeting, certain local challenges, issues, and priorities were also raised. For the purposes of this report this section focusses on the national issues, in line with the scope of the Priorities. However, the PCSA remains aware and conscious of the totality of local issues raised and, as appropriate, will utilise these insights to inform wider oversight activity.

Adequacy of resources

A universal issue cited at every meeting was that of garda resources (including number of personnel, training, and equipment) with virtually all areas of operation cited as being under resource pressure. Garda personnel provided clear and practical examples of the limiting effects of these resourcing issues, not only in terms of internal structures and processes, but also in respect of the impact on service delivery.

A perceived reluctance to cancel 999 calls within regional control rooms, even where it may be appropriate, was consistently cited as a driver of demand which consultees denoted as exacerbating resource issues. This is in line with the concept of 'over correction' in relation to the cancellation of calls in regional control rooms, which has been a consistent issue raised in garda engagements in recent years.

There was a consistent call for the prioritisation of the regular unit and of community policing units for resourcing. The suggested benefits to prioritising the regular units and community policing units strongly mirrored the articulated needs of the stakeholders, as outlined in the next section of this report. These included greater engagement and connection with local communities, intelligence gathering, crime prevention and community confidence.

Garda Operating Model and wider change

Frustrations were regularly expressed across the country in relation to the Operating Model – both a mix of shared national challenges and those relating to specific divisions. Many of these appeared to be linked to a range of factors including governance and resourcing challenges with consultees sharing:

- examples of shortages of personnel impacting the capacity and capability of hubs and units within the Model to undertake their intended roles;
- concerns regarding the size of certain divisions;
- inconsistencies in the allocation of roles and responsibilities within and across divisions;
- perceptions of a lack of autonomy at divisional and sub-divisional level, and a related need for an increase in local, consistent decision-making.

When some of these matters were explored further with personnel, it appeared that they related more to wider systems and resource related challenges, rather than inherent issues with the Model itself.

This closely aligned to, and overlapped with, issues raised by personnel concerning the management of change within An Garda Síochána. Garda personnel highlighted what they saw as issues with various ongoing change programmes. Common concerns were: the scale of change being undertaken at once; the long rollout periods of certain initiatives; how systems would work across different geographic areas; and, the way in which change is communicated. Programmes cited included the Operating Model, the rollout of the Investigation Management System, other major IT projects, and wider changes to policy and processes.

Training and support

Frustrations were also expressed with inadequate training structures, health and wellbeing supports, and training/retention of garda staff. A perceived disconnect between frontline members and staff and local/national management also emerged through the consultation process. This was most commonly expressed in terms of: a lack of clear insight into strategic decision-making; the extent to which management fully understands and appreciates the operational impacts of these decisions; and the wider internal and external effect that this can have on trust and confidence.

Policing service delivery challenges

In respect of outward-facing issues, concern was raised consistently in relation to the scale of challenge that **responding to mental health incidents** represents. Members described an overall system that leaves gardaí providing an isolated response to incidents involving extremely vulnerable individuals and a lack of capacity in the healthcare system to support the demand. We were told that this resulted in, among other things:

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- individuals being held in garda stations and/or not receiving timely medical attention;

 - healthcare providers refusing to take admissions on the basis of lack of capacity; and,

 - members being left to accompany, support and transport individuals for long periods where the individual is in a state of considerable distress and vulnerability, with no certainty of appropriate medical intervention.
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In addition to concern for the individuals in question, garda personnel also cited considerable concern for their own health and wellbeing. The potential for disciplinary proceedings or Fiosrú investigations where an individual is released from, or not admitted to, a healthcare setting and later dies was also raised.

The **scale of reported fraud** as a rising issue was also consistently raised by garda personnel through the in-person consultation process. Their lack of expertise or training in this area was noted, as well as the necessary local capacity to respond to cyber-enabled and cyber-dependent crime.



In-Person Stakeholder Consultations

We also benefitted from the frontline knowledge and experience of a wide range of stakeholders that work within and on behalf of the community. These included stakeholder organisations that work in areas where there is frequent engagement with An Garda Síochána such as youth work, family support, addiction services, migrant organisations, victims' services, and older people's groups. These stakeholders provided valuable insight into how policing services could be improved to meet their communities' needs.

Across four, day-long regional events³ in excess of 100 attendees engaged with PCSA facilitators across four thematic areas:



3. We held events in Carrick-on-Shannon (northwest and border regions), Tullamore (midlands and mid-west), Clonmel (south and southeast), and Dublin (greater Dublin area).



What Did We Hear?

Arising from these engagements, a clear sense emerged that the stakeholders see garda engagement and presence in the community as a key priority. This was consistently cited across the four thematic areas in all four events with benefits cited in respect of:

- feelings and perceptions of safety;
- crime prevention; and,
- enhanced community knowledge and engagement.

Engagement and relationships

Consultees noted that there are strong relationships across the country with key (often named) members of Community Policing Units. However, more broadly there appeared to be a waning of the connection between gardaí and communities locally. To a large extent, this was attributed to resourcing and availability of gardaí to engage in community activity. In this vein, the vast majority of stakeholders expressed an explicit preference for enhanced engagement and presence, even to the detriment of allocations to specialist units. This desire for a visible, frontline response was cited as crucial to responding to community level drug and drug-related crime, anti-social behaviour, and volume crime issues such as public order, thefts and assaults.

Policing service response-timeliness, first contact, consistency

Attendees across the four consultation events gave a consistent message of the lack of a timely response from gardaí when incidents are reported. Frustration was also expressed at the concept of the removal of a connection with the local garda station. A lack of effective communication from An Garda Síochána to communities on the changes and intended benefits of the GardaSAFE system⁴ became apparent throughout the consultation process. Similarly, there was a lack of wider knowledge of key garda initiatives such as the dedicated Drug Related Intimidation Inspectors in each division.

There was an emergent theme of the need to focus on consistency of service and response (in the context of inconsistency across stations and/or counties). Strong emphasis was placed on ensuring that victims receive an appropriate first contact from gardaí. While this was provided in respect of policing responses generally, there was a particular reference to the garda response to domestic, sexual and gender-based violence.

4. Introduced in 2023, the GardaSAFE system sees all calls requiring the dispatch of a garda resource (e.g. a garda car) handled through regional control centres (RCC) staffed by trained call takers and dispatchers. This means that when people call their local garda station and their call requires the dispatch of a garda resource the call will be transferred to the appropriate RCC, who will handle the call and allocate the most suitable garda response.

Consultees spoke of the significant improvement of garda response to, and support of, victims of these crimes, notably through the establishment and operation of the dedicated Divisional Protective Services Units (DPSUs). However, consultation participants point to the need to improve how non-DPSU personnel engage with victims, in particular at the time of initial reporting.

Defining vulnerability

Through consultation sessions on the theme ‘victims and the vulnerable’, there was consistent challenge from consultees on the concept of ‘the vulnerable’ as a cohort and a call for increased focus and attention on specific vulnerabilities and wider improvements to victim services.

Multi-agency working

A strong desire for increased, multi-agency working was a consistent theme across all four thematic areas. This was particularly evident in the areas of online safety (incorporating the response to fraud/cyber-crime) and victim support. There was also a call for the appropriate reallocation of non-core policing services away from An Garda Síochána to the agencies that should, more appropriately be primarily responsible, in the view of the consultees.

Resourcing challenges

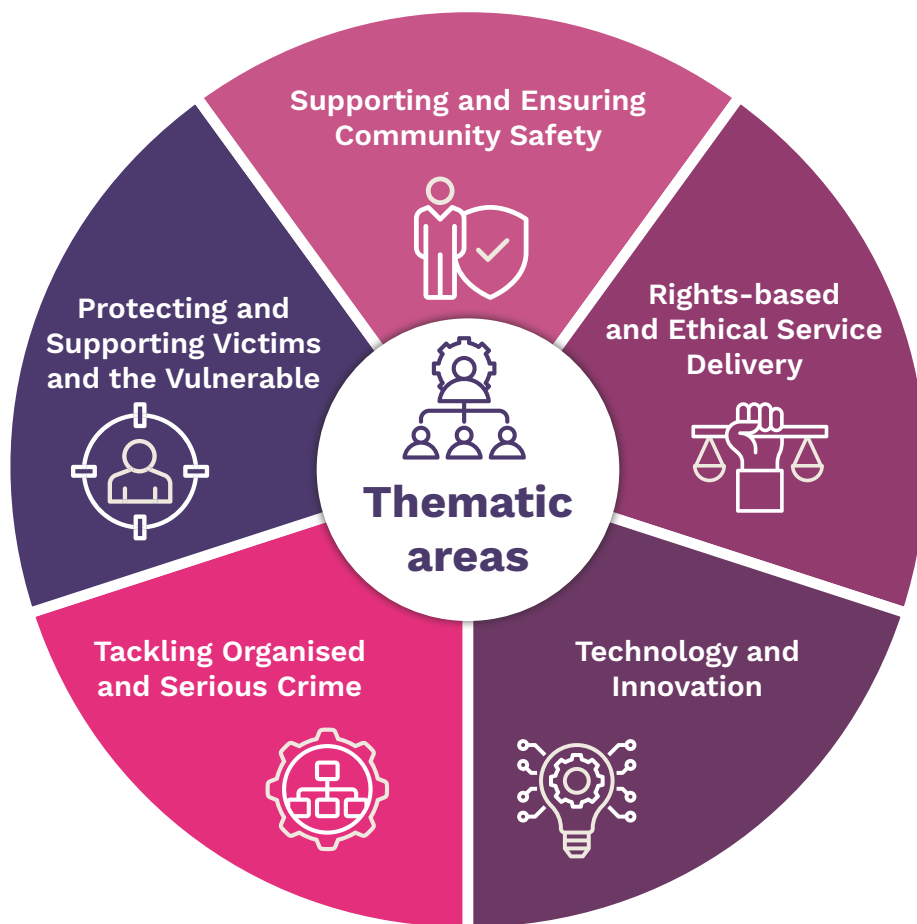
There was also wide recognition on the part of stakeholders of the current resourcing challenges affecting An Garda Síochána and an appreciation for the work of the organisation and its personnel.





Academic Consultation

The PCSA held an online consultation event on 22 May 2025 with approximately 30 members of the academic community specialising in matters related to policing. This was seen as an important opportunity to benefit from the knowledge and experience of academics who have a detailed knowledge of policing in Ireland and internationally. Five thematic sessions were held on:





What Did We Hear?

Across the session the need for **enhanced multi-agency working** was a clear area of priority for consultees. It was outlined that the new national model for community safety provided an opportunity for An Garda Síochána and partners to work more effectively together in areas such as:

- **youth offending** – to provide a more holistic, victim-centred, and trauma-informed approach;
- **youth engagement** – allowing for a wider focus on engaging with young people through increased education and prevention, greater use of diversion, and a multi-agency approach to safeguarding all vulnerable individuals when it comes to organised crime;
- **joint response to mental health incidents** – ensuring garda members are supported by health professionals;
- **cyber and economic crime** – allowing for greater input and expertise not only internally from specialist garda staff but also through police/private partnerships to tackle these crime types; and,
- **drug and substance abuse** – further enabling a health-led approach.

It was put forward that An Garda Síochána often carries the burden and risk for other organisations, driven by both legislation and operational reality. As a result, it was suggested that An Garda Síochána is inappropriately left as an isolated service provider in many cases, but that the new community safety structures offer an opportunity to improve this.

Service provision to communities in all their diversity

The view from among academics we engaged with was that abuse, coercion, and exploitation are growing issues within disadvantaged communities. Concern was expressed about a lack of engagement from and with garda members within these communities. It was outlined that there is an urgent need to build community relationships, especially in disadvantaged areas or with communities with poor relationships with gardaí, in particular the Traveller community. Consultees noted, this would, in part, be enabled by adequate support and training for frontline garda members. It was seen that there is need for enhanced leadership by garda management in this area, with gaps between management and frontline members described as becoming more pronounced. Consultees suggested that this can contribute to trauma in communities being known about at frontline but not at higher levels, with the potential for a consequent lack of adequate resource allocation in such communities.

A human rights-led service

Consultees spoke about a need to improve both the human rights knowledge of garda personnel and their identification of any vulnerabilities of those coming into contact with policing. Members of Regular Units were highlighted in this regard, given their broad role and contact with the public. Similarly, while there was acknowledgement of improvements made in responding to domestic, sexual and gender-based violence, the need to ensure that members on the Regular are appropriately equipped to respond to these sensitive and complex cases was noted by consultees. The importance of this was starkly outlined and it was stated that if the first contact is poor, the front desk in any garda station could be where an attempt to access justice ends.

Organised crime and vulnerable groups

In the area of organised and serious crime, participants spoke of the need for the coordinated tackling of both extreme behaviour by far-right movements spreading hate against migrants and the LGBTQIA+ community, and the wider targeting of young people, or those vulnerable/isolated, by organised crime groups. This aligned with calls for a greater response to the targeting, by crime groups, of vulnerability or isolation of any sort, particularly in respect of drug-related intimidation.

On drug and drug-related crime more broadly, it was put forward that there needs to be a better understanding of how the particular organised crime groups work or how they operate in local areas, in order to sufficiently disrupt the activity of street level dealers and achieve an impact that is felt by the community. The need for a risk assessment on what impact large seizures are having on communities and those 'lower down the organised crime ladder' was also cited. Consistent with the garda and community consultees, the need for a broader holistic approach to tackle community-level issues was recognised.

Stakeholder feedback and the complaints process

Consultees noted a need for improvement in An Garda Síochána receiving feedback and complaints. At an informal level, this included An Garda Síochána being more open to stakeholder feedback and informal complaints that may be able to be dealt with within, rather than requiring or escalating to a formal complaint to Fiosrú.

However, the importance of formal complaints processes being accessible and efficient was also raised. Within this, the need for procedural fairness was acknowledged, including timeliness of resolution for both the complainant and the person whom the complaint is made about. It was also discussed that, as in other jurisdictions, some individuals may also be "gaming" the complaints system by targeting garda members with vexatious complaints.

Changing nature of crime

It was observed that there is a community perception that An Garda Síochána is insufficiently focussed on crime and there are fewer gardaí on the beat. However, consultees stated that there appears to be a lack of awareness of the scale of fraud and cybercrime being investigated. It was suggested that there is, perhaps, a lack of appreciation of the extent of the enablement of serious crime through mobile and other devices. Crimes cited included domestic violence, hate crimes, radicalisation and sexual offences. It was felt that there is little public awareness of technology-based crime, and that more attention needs to be given in terms of prevention among vulnerable communities, particularly children and the elderly.

Adequacy of skills and training

There was recognition of broad skills gaps that can exist in police services, especially given the growth of cyber-enabled and cyber-dependent crimes. It was acknowledged that the ability of police services to recruit sufficiently skilled and experienced professionals in fields such as cyber-crime/security, IT, and forensic accounting is a global challenge. However, at a more basic frontline level, it was thought that there is an inconsistency in implementing technology at a local level and a lack of technical literacy in An Garda Síochána.

Centrality of technology to future service delivery

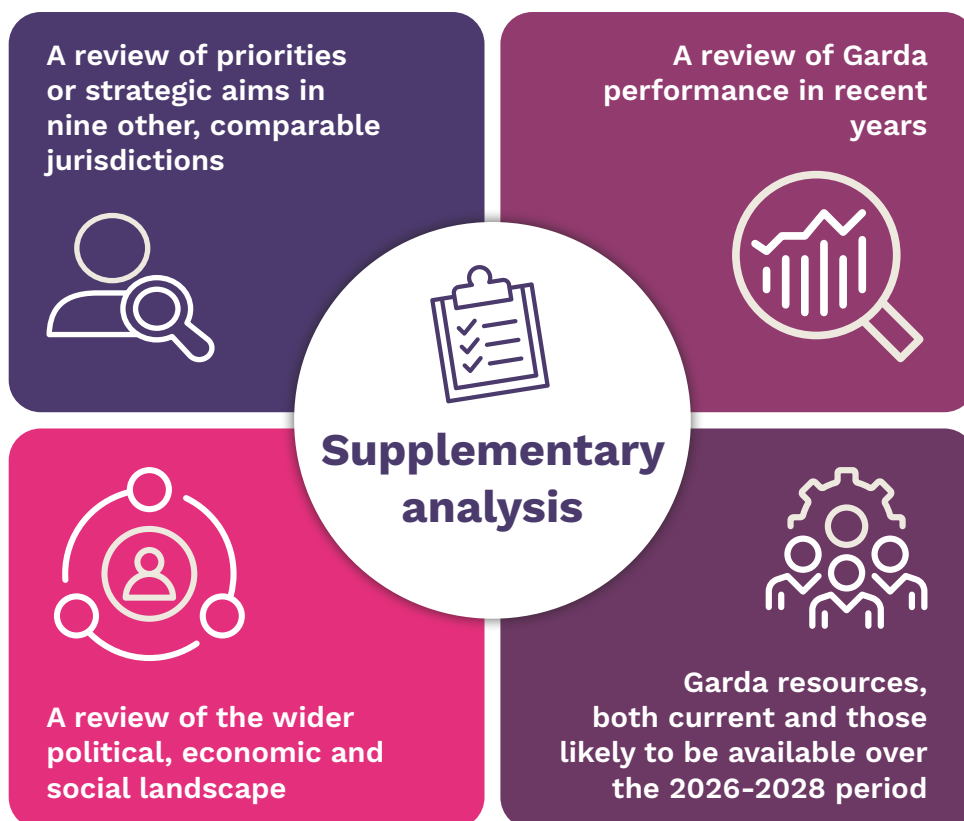
The view was expressed that the impetus to introduce new technology usually comes from suppliers, or Government. It was suggested that An Garda Síochána should be more proactive in identifying the opportunities and needs for new technology. On the introduction of these emerging technologies, their centrality to modern policing was recognised. It was put forward that although there are justified concerns – in particular regarding biases which disproportionately affect ethnic minorities, women, gender minorities, etc. – these are challenges that must be addressed in order to ensure garda personnel are correctly enabled through technology. The vital importance of procurement processes was highlighted in terms of establishing early on the criteria regarding data use, data collection, governance, and rights-based design. On this matter it was also outlined that society should be cognisant of the fact that it is not just An Garda Síochána that use technology, but also criminal groups. So, while there are undoubtedly issues relating to civil liberties, it was noted that these must be balanced with the need to investigate crimes.



How did the Engagement and Consultation Shape the Priorities?

Following the completion of the above outlined consultation activity, the available information and data was comprehensively reviewed and draft Priorities were developed.

This included approximately 250 pages of written notes and other internally produced material covering 140 hours of direct engagement with approximately 600 individuals and data from the 3,794 online consultation responses. This was considered in tandem with supplementary analysis, including:



As anticipated, the primary challenge in the design of these Priorities was balancing the breadth and diversity of stakeholder expectation with realistic and achievable Priorities and supporting measures.

In this context, the drafting stage was approached in line with a set of development principles. Namely, that the Priorities:

- Identified the critical areas of policing that require immediate and urgent attention by An Garda Síochána and, where appropriate, their partners;
- Contained specific measures of success that would provide clarity to An Garda Síochána and wider stakeholders and allow for effective monitoring and assessment;
- Were appropriately realistic but also stretched the organisation to improve services – in particular through the use of policy, technology, staff, etc. i.e. not overly relying on increased allocations of garda members; and,
- Were, in the round, an achievable and coherent list of Priorities and measures that complement and support each other, avoiding competing prioritisation.

This resulted in three high level-priorities, with supporting key areas and specific measures of success advised by the above information. Below, we set out how the views and inputs of consultees informed these key areas and measures of success.



**Work in Partnership
to meet Community
Needs**



**Provide a Consistent,
Supportive, Quality
Service**



**Enable the
Frontline**



Work in Partnership to Meet Community Needs

Key Areas:

Effective and Visible Response

Partnership

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.

When considered in the round, the online consultation and garda and stakeholder engagements showed a clear emergent shared concern regarding visibility and timely response to calls for service. This informed the key area of an **Effective and Visible Response**, specifically the measures including:

- *An improved process for receiving, triaging, responding to, and resolving calls for service; and,*
- *Establishing and maintaining a minimum strength for Regular Units that is demand-led and allows An Garda Síochána to meet community needs.*

The concept of a minimum resourcing for Regular Units aligns strongly with garda feedback that Regular Units numbers have been reduced in recent years. It also recognises that there is a vital role for these units in responding to all calls for service, investigating crime (including DSGBV offences), undertaking roads policing duties, and engaging with communities.

Conscious of the scope of An Garda Síochána to grow the workforce over the period, this is the only area where there is an explicit expectation that there may be an increased allocation of garda members. More broadly, in this context, there are supporting measures concerning growing the Garda Reserve and increasing specialist staff capacity.

The second key area, **Partnership**, contains four measures specific to strengthening relationships with communities – a clear area of prioritisation for all consultee groups. This includes setting a clear garda definition of, and strategy for, community policing, and introducing a system for effectively measuring the range of interactions with communities and the issues they raise. As well as frontline benefits, this should enable greater management and strategic awareness of issues impacting the community locally and nationally. This will then further enable An Garda Síochána to give effect to the other measures of working effectively with Local Community Safety Partnerships and other partners as they respond to issues, in particular drug-related intimidation and exploitation of children by organised crime groups.



Provide a Consistent, Supportive, Quality Service

Key Areas:

First Contact

Protect and Safeguard

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.

Expanding on the broader calls for timely service, the key area of **First Contact** under this priority responds to consultees' concerns regarding the appropriateness of service when individuals engage with gardaí. Specifically, there is an internally focussed measure for An Garda Síochána concerning consistency, appropriateness of treatment and the identification of needs/supports. The other measures speak to areas, raised predominantly by garda personnel, where there is dependency on external partners including: a national approach to mental health response that sets appropriate boundaries for policing and ensures adequate health interventions; improved facilities for engaging with victims and suspects; and timely access to medical assistance for gardaí.

Under the area **Protect and Safeguard** there are four measures of success:

- *"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; and,*
- *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."*

These respond to, and are informed by, areas for service improvement raised by members of the public, various stakeholders and academics through the consultation. These are also areas that are closely aligned with existing oversight concerns and are closely related to the previous Priority's measures concerning building and maintaining community relationships.



Enable the Frontline

Key Areas:

Systems

People

Supporting the Workforce

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.

This Priority and its supporting measures of success were heavily informed by the engagements with garda personnel and the responses to the public consultation, but also by the input of stakeholders and academic consultees.

To allow for the strategic and effective use of garda resources it includes measures under the key area **People** to put in place a strategic workforce plan that identifies areas for priority allocation of garda personnel, and a similar strategy for the training of members and staff. There are supporting measures under **Systems** concerning an increase in the use of specialist staff, and the development of key resource management systems and processes.

The key area of **Supporting the Workforce** contains necessary focus on improving the health and wellbeing infrastructure in An Garda Síochána, as well as those relating to performance management, and the internal disciplinary process. All were cited through the garda engagements as areas that require improvement.

Finally, we have included that “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.”*

We believe that these aspects of the review will be vital to further exploring and responding where appropriate to the concerns raised through our consultation.



Other Considerations

As stated above, the determination of Priorities and the measures supporting them was informed by the need to identify key areas for improvement and specific actions that would enable this improvement. Not everything could be a Priority and there are areas raised in consultation that were not included, either at all or perhaps not in the manner anticipated by consultees. These included:

Response to environmental and wildlife crime

While a specific measure was not included, there is a recognition that concern was raised through the responses to the online survey regarding crime against property and wildlife. This primarily concerned abuse of animals, illegal dumping, and similar offences. There was concern raised that these offences do not receive an appropriate response from An Garda Síochána and partners. While it was not clear what specific measures would lead to improvement, this is an area that we will monitor and explore through our broader oversight activity in the coming period.

Roads policing

While not featuring strongly in many of the consultation activities, apart from garda personnel online responses, the PCSA is conscious of the critical role An Garda Síochána plays, as part of a multi-agency response to road safety. This is an area of extensive, ongoing focus in our oversight. It is present within the Priorities through the measure regarding the Regular Units, given the significant role they play in policing the roads and detecting lifesaver offences (such as speeding and driving under the influence of intoxicants).

Domestic, sexual and gender-based violence

The online consultation results, in line with previous similar public surveys, show the importance that society places on tackling these crimes. Throughout the course of the consultation, it was clear that stakeholders acknowledged the specialist service provided by dedicated, expert units in this area. However, there was widespread consensus that improvements to DSGBV response would be achieved through an improvement in victim support generally and in the first contact and response received from Regular Units and at front desks.



PCSA Chief Executive Helen Hall, Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration Jim O'Callaghan, and Authority Chairperson Elaine Byrne at the launch of the Priorities in February 2026.



Statutory Consultation and Finalisation

In line with the requirements of the Policing and Community Safety Act 2024, the PCSA then consulted with the Garda Commissioner and the National Director for Community Safety on the draft Priorities in July 2025.

In his response, the then Commissioner: welcomed a number of the specific measures; highlighted the critical need for partners to support and enable the delivery of the Priorities as drafted; and, confirmed that, in line with the requirements on him under the Act, there was strong alignment with the draft An Garda Síochána Strategic Plan 2026-2028.

The National Director welcomed the manner in which the Priorities reflected the new approach to policing from a community safety and partnership working perspective. The level of community engagement and consultation that was undertaken in their development was also acknowledged.

Following consideration of the feedback through the statutory consultation, the Authority determined the Policing Priorities 2026-2028 at its July 2025 meeting.

These Priorities were then submitted to the Minister of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration on 28 August 2025, later approved by the Minister, and thereafter published in early 2026.

When submitting the Priorities, the Authority Chairperson outlined the development process undertaken by the PCSA and highlighted three key matters for the Minister's attention:



Interagency working

In the context of the Priorities, the vital nature of effective joint working to the new model of community safety, and the key role of the Department as the lead Government department in the model.



Mental health

Highlighting the universal issues that arose around the country through the consultation period, the intolerable risk it represents for individuals suffering from mental health incidents and garda personnel, and the pressing need to address the current challenges as a matter of urgency.



Garda resources

A reiteration of the resourcing challenges facing An Garda Síochána over the medium-term and the influence of such on the Priorities.

