

Research, Insights and Data Strategy

2026-28





1. Introduction

The Policing and Community Safety Authority (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 CEO. It is a successor organisation to the Policing Authority and the Garda Síochána Inspectorate.

The core objective of the PCSA is to oversee and assess the performance of An Garda Síochána in providing policing services to communities across Ireland and its work with partner organisations to ensure the safety of those communities.

This is the PCSA's first Research, Insights and Data Strategy. It has been developed in line with the Authority's statutory function relating to research and related activities. The Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024 enables the Authority to undertake, commission or assist in research projects and other activities relating to policing services where, in the Authority's view, they can:

- Promote improvements in standards of policing services and the public's awareness of them;
- Promote improvements in inter-agency collaboration and community engagement to improve community safety; or
- Contribute to a reduction in the number of complaints against members of garda personnel or An Garda Síochána in relation to policing services.

The Act also provides that the Authority can make recommendations to the Garda Commissioner and the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration arising from these projects or activities.

It is also designed to support of the achievement of the [PCSA's Strategy Statement 2026-2028](#) and, in particular, the strategic objective to 'Be a Credible, Trusted, and Expert Voice on Policing'.



2. The role of research, insights and data in the PCSA

Consistent, effective and independent oversight activity draws on varied information sources and methods of collecting information, both quantitative and qualitative, to provide a robust evidence base for assessing policing performance.

In support of this, the PCSA Executive routinely collects and analyses a range of information including:

- Comparative analyses of trends and practices in policing in other jurisdictions;
- Documented reviews or reviews of relevant literature; and
- Compilation, analysis and visual presentation of statistical data from a wide range of sources.

Other sources of information include focus groups, meetings with An Garda Síochána frontline and specialist units, stakeholder engagement, surveys, or whatever is most appropriate for the oversight issue in question.

The PCSA also engages regularly with other policing oversight bodies and police services, nationally and internationally, to keep abreast of best practice in policing and policing oversight. Additionally, the PCSA may fund or commission external research, as decided upon through the annual business planning processes.

This activity is guided by three strategic principles. These principles and associated actions aim to expand and enhance capacity to provide day-to-day support for the fundamental PCSA oversight activities of performance assessment and inspection. In addition, actions will support the remit to promote improvements in standards of policing services, and the public's awareness of policing.



In further support of this remit, outputs from ongoing oversight activity are regularly published and communicated with the public, and this strategy aims to further develop this role. A high-level summary of each principle and associated actions is set out in the next section.



3. Principles and actions

This section provides a summary of the strategic principles and some associated actions.

3.1 Contribute to consistent independent assessment

This principle focuses on ensuring that the core PCSA activities of performance assessment and inspection are underpinned by high-quality research and data analysis to support rigorous and objective oversight.

This will be done by:

- Broadening the range of information used to inform oversight, including drawing on international best practice from a range of countries;
- Maximising the effective use of available quantitative data on policing and community safety for oversight activities; and
- Undertaking regular structured horizon scanning to identify potentially important legislative, policy and other developments.

3.2 Build and share expertise

The core objective of this principle is to develop and strengthen internal PCSA research and data capacity and capability, in order to better support oversight delivery. There are related actions to share outputs with the public to promote awareness and understanding of policing.

This will be achieved by:

- Monitoring and making effective use of existing research and information on policing oversight and related areas to support day-to-day oversight work;
- Building capacity to share insights and analysis from PCSA oversight, via a range of outputs and publications; and
- Building expertise in commissioning, managing and disseminating high quality insights and research, in line with agreed business plan actions.

3.3 Collaborate with key stakeholders

The core objective of this principle is to support the PCSA's work towards promoting improvements in inter-agency collaboration and community engagement, as well as the goal of becoming a credible, trusted, and expert voice on policing.

This will include:

- Identifying, supporting and drawing on research expertise on policing in Ireland, to drive an improvement in policing standards;
- Supporting knowledge translation and dissemination of research on matters relating to policing services; and
- Contributing to relevant national and international collaborations, and supporting the development of policing research partnerships in Ireland.



