

An Garda Síochána

Oifig Saorála Fáisnéise,
An Garda Síochána, Teach áth Luimnigh,
Lárionad Gnó Udáras Forbartha Tionscail,
Baile Sheáin, An Uaimh,
Contae na Mí.
C15 DR90



Freedom of Information Office,
An Garda Síochána, Athlumney House,
IDA Business Park,
Johnstown, Navan,
Co Meath.
C15 DR90

Teileafón/Tel: (046) 9036350

Láithreán Gréasain/Website:

www.garda.ie

Bí linn/Join us



Ríomh-phoist/Email: foi@garda.ie

Re: Freedom of Information Request FOI-000375-2021 Request Part Grant

Dear

I refer to your request, dated and received on 28th October, 2021 which you have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 (FOI Act) for records held by An Garda Síochána.

Part 1(n) of Schedule 1 of the FOI Act states that An Garda Síochána is listed as a partially included agency "insofar as it relates to administrative records relating to human resources, or finance or procurement matters". Therefore, only administrative records that relate to human resources, finance or procurement shall be considered.

Your request sought:

I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act to request the following information about the employee structure of the Communications department within your organization.

- 1. Can you please outline the structure and titles of the roles within the Garda Press Office team?*
- 2. Can you please include the number and gender of Press officers/ Communications officers/ Media relations officers - who deal primarily with media queries, interview requests and issuing press releases.*
- 3. Can you please include the number and gender of Social media coordinators/ officers/ digital coordinators - who are primarily responsible for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram content etc.*
- 4. Can you please include the number and gender of Communications/ Social media Team managers?*

5. Can you please provide a recent job description for each role within the Communications/ Press/ Social media team?
6. Can you please provide the salary scales for each of these roles in line with current Government pay policy?

I appreciate that job titles may vary slightly within your organization or institution.

1. Findings, particulars and reasons for decision

Upon receipt, your request was forwarded to the relevant sections of An Garda Síochána where searches were conducted in respect of same. The Garda Press Office is a unit within the overall Office of Corporate Communications. The Press Office is headed by a Superintendent, who is also the Garda Press Officer. The Superintendent is supported in this role by a Press Office Manager (HEO). The Press Office is staffed by a mix of both Garda Sergeants, Executive Officers and Clerical Officers.

The table below details a breakdown of the records requested in part 2, 3 and 4 of your request.

Number of Press, Communication & Media Relation Officers		Number of Social Media Social Media Coordinators		Number of Communication/Social Media Managers	
10		15		2	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
6	4	9	6	1	1

I am refusing part 5 of your request in accordance with Section 15 (1)(a) of the FOI Act as the record does not exist in the format requested.

Section 15 (1)(a) of the FOI Act, 2014 states;

15(1)(a) the record concerned does not exist or cannot be found after all reasonable steps to ascertain its whereabouts have been taken

However, in order to assist the Garda Press Office has provided a brief description of the roles within their office.

The Garda Press Office is the main point of contact for media seeking information about Garda operations, criminal investigations, missing person appeals, fatal road accidents and a wide range of other information concerning the Garda Síochána organisation. This is one of the busiest press offices in the country. Operating from 7am to 11pm Monday to Sunday, it handles media queries on a wide range of topics relating to policing and security.

A main function of the Press Office is to support the force in relation to distributing appropriate information, which may help in assisting a current investigation e.g. sending out a witness appeal or a missing person appeal. The office sends out press releases on a daily basis to over 650 media contacts. The nature of the work in the Press Office is mainly media orientated. All calls and emails to/from the office must be dealt with in a thorough and professional manner.

Headed by a Superintendent, the Garda Press Office is also responsible for developing public relations campaigns and strategies to protect and enhance the reputation of An Garda Síochána, and make the public aware of key issues to help assist the organisation's goal of protecting and supporting communities. This is delivered in a variety of ways such as press releases, media briefings/press conferences, and social media.

Other functions of the office personnel include attendance at major emergencies/incidents, organising and setting up press conferences, facilitating interviews, and liaison with film makers/documentary makers. The office is also responsible for the maintenance of the Garda website and the publication of the Annual Report.

The Corporate Communications Unit is headed by a Superintendent. It is responsible for An Garda Síochána's digital and social media presence, the Garda website, public awareness campaigns, Crimecall TV programme, and corporate reports, most particularly the Annual Report.

An Garda Síochána's award-winning social media strategy has led to the development of the largest social media following in the public sector of over 1.6m. It is an important channel for us to inform and engage with the public, particularly in emergency and crisis situations. The Corporate Communications Unit has also run a number of significant public information campaigns across multiple media channels in areas such as burglary and assaults that has helped reduce crime rates and protect the public.

Established in 2019, the Internal Communications Unit is tasked with communicating with all personnel within An Garda Síochána. As an organisation, An Garda Síochána has a large and geographically dispersed workforce and the work of Internal Communications is to ensure that all personnel are communicated with regularly and transparently about what is happening in the organisation.

The Internal Communications Unit currently produces Newsbeat twice weekly for all personnel within An Garda Síochána and is involved in numerous other projects aimed at improving communications within the organisation.

I am refusing part 6 of your request in accordance with Section 15 (1)(d) of the FOI Act as these records are published and are readily available in the public domain. Section 15 (1)(d) states:

15. (1) A head to whom an FOI request is made may refuse to grant the request where (d) the information is already in the public domain.

You can avail of this information by following the link below.

<https://www.forsa.ie/civil-service-pay-scales/> & <https://www.gra.ie/documents/PayScales.pdf>

2. Right of Appeal

In the event that you are not happy with this decision you may seek an Internal Review of the matter by writing to the address below and quoting reference number **FOI-000375-2021**.

***Freedom of Information Office, An Garda Síochána, Athlumney House, IDA Business Park,
Johnstown, Navan, Co. Meath C15 DR90***

Please note that a fee applies. This fee has been set at €30 (€10 for a Medical Card holder). Payment should be made by way of bank draft, money order, postal order or personal cheque, and made payable to Accountant, Garda Finance Directorate, Garda Headquarters, Phoenix Park, Dublin 8.

Payment can be made by electronic means, using the following details:

Account Name: An Garda Síochána Imprest Account

Account Number: 30000302

Sort Code: 951599

IBAN: IE28DABA95159930000302

BIC: DABAIE2D

You must ensure that your FOI reference number (FOI-000375-2021) is included in the payment details.

You should submit your request for an Internal Review within 4 weeks from the date of this notification. The review will involve a complete reconsideration of the matter by a more senior member of An Garda Síochána and the decision will be communicated to you within 3 weeks. The making of a late appeal may be permitted in appropriate circumstances.

Please be advised that An Garda Síochána replies under Freedom of Information may be released in to the public domain via our website at www.garda.ie.

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the above, please contact the FOI Office by telephone at (046) 9036350.

Yours sincerely,



ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

PAUL BASSETT

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION OFFICER

 NOVEMBER, 2021.