

Crime Prevention and Reduction Strategy 2021-2024

Crime prevention

An Garda Síochána
Garda National Community Engagement Bureau



FOREWORD



The mission of An Garda Síochána is to keep people safe.

A consistent approach to preventing and reducing crime is vital in fulfilling our commitment to the safeguarding of our communities. This document outlines our Crime Prevention and Reduction Strategy from 2021 to 2024.

This strategy has emerged from and replaces the previous 'Crime Prevention & Reduction Strategy - Putting Prevention First', published in 2017.

The prevention and reduction of crime is a significant deliverable of our Strategy Statement, which outlines our vision for a victim-centred police service, focused on keeping people safe, protecting the most vulnerable and providing a consistently high standard of service. This strategy is also informed by our organisational objectives of protecting people from crime through reducing crime and the fear of crime, leveraging our improving data to enhance information-enabled policing, using multi-agency partnership approaches in tackling crime, and providing crime prevention advice through education and awareness.

Crime prevention is achieved through effective and comprehensive engagement with communities and businesses, and it is acknowledged that An Garda Síochána cannot reduce and prevent crime without such support. This strategy outlines goals and actions centred on our five crime prevention strategic objectives, which are:

- Partnerships,
- Creating Awareness & Communication,
- Protecting Communities,
- Consistent and Professional Crime Prevention Service, and
- Review and Evaluation.

Assistant Commissioner, Roads Policing and Community Engagement, is the policy lead for this strategy. This strategy will complement other current and emerging strategies and initiatives. This strategy is designed to support and enhance the continuing valuable work of Crime Prevention Officers (CPO's) nationally and locally.

I look forward to the national implementation of this strategy, which will be supported by the best use of resources as part of the Garda Operating Model. An Garda Síochána will continue to work closely with public and private sector partners to prevent the commission of crime and reduce the opportunities for criminal activity and re-offending.

J A Harris

Commissioner,

An Garda Síochána



HOW CRIME OCCURS

A crime occurs when a motivated offender and a victim are in a location or situation where there may be a lack of measures to prevent crime. The Problem Analysis Triangle (PAT), often referred to as the crime triangle, provides us with a model for how a crime occurs.



Offenders commit crime for a variety of reasons. The drivers of crime include opportunity, profit, drugs, alcohol, character and perceptions of the criminal justice system. Offenders often choose locations (either physical or virtual) that they are familiar with, and choose a victim because they are perceived as a suitable target. This is usually because the potential victim is unaware of the danger.

Victims suffer harm as a result of crime and the harm can be physical, mental, emotional or economic.

Locations of crime are not evenly spread within communities. They are often clustered in small areas known as crime 'hot spots'. Policing crime hot spots is a strategy that involves the targeting of resources and activities to those places where crime is most concentrated. Focusing resources and activities in crime hot spots aims to prevent crime in these specific areas and has the potential to reduce overall crime levels in the wider geographical area. An Garda Síochána recognises the growth in online crime and the Garda National Community Engagement Bureau works closely with the Garda National Economic Crime Bureau and Garda National Cyber Crime Bureau to provide crime prevention advice and education in this growth area.

Effective crime prevention requires an understanding of how offenders and their victims come together in locations and consideration of how these elements can be effectively controlled. An examination of the elements of the Problem Analysis Triangle in the context of a particular problem will point the way to a crime prevention solution. A change in even one element of the triangle will have an impact on crime prevention and reduction.

An Garda Síochána focuses on that element of the triangle that we as an organisation and our key stakeholders can have the most impact on.

PRINCIPLES OF CRIME PREVENTION

Many crime-prevention techniques work by making crimes harder to commit. If a crime is hard to commit, it is less likely to occur. An Garda Síochána uses established principles as a guide to crime prevention. These are:

TARGET HARDENING

This involves making targets more resistant to attack or difficult to remove or damage.

TARGET REMOVAL

This involves permanent or temporary removal of vulnerable persons or property.

REMOVING THE MEANS TO COMMIT CRIME

This involves promoting good housekeeping practices to ensure that material capable of being used to help the criminal is not left lying around with easy access.

REDUCING THE PAYOFF

This means employing a means to reduce the value of loss if a crime is committed.

ACCESS CONTROL

This involves restricting access to sites buildings or parts of sites or buildings. This could apply, for example, to a block of flats, student accommodation or a house of multiple occupation (e.g. bedsits) as well as commercial properties.

VISIBILITY / SURVEILLANCE

This means making sure that offenders would be visible if they carry out a crime.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

This involves making changes to the environment of a building, a site, an estate or town, to reduce crime opportunities. Designing out opportunities for crime is considered in the early stages of the planning process but it also applies to existing environments.

RULE SETTING

This involves the introduction of legislation, by-laws and codes of conduct, which set out what is acceptable behaviour.

INCREASE THE CHANCE OF BEING CAUGHT

This refers to anything that slows down offenders or increases their risk of being caught.

DEFLECTING OFFENDERS

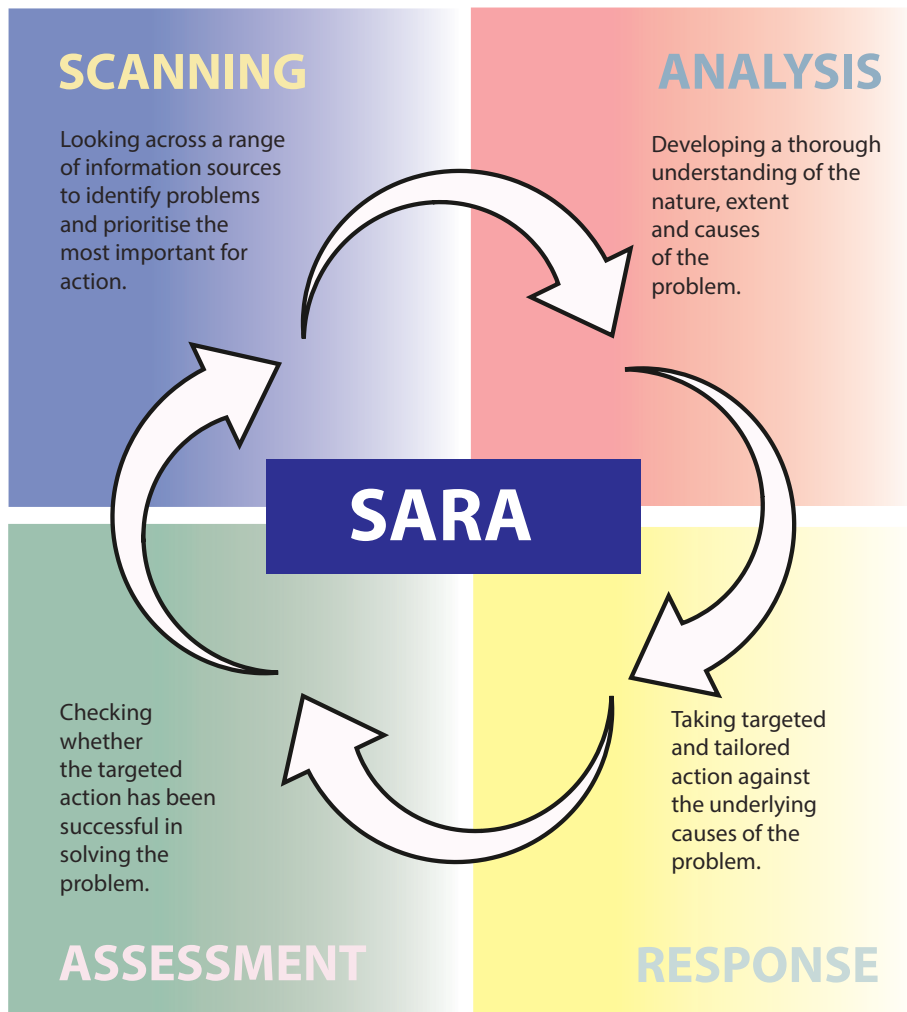
This involves diverting offenders and potential offenders from committing crime and working with other agencies to influence standards, thinking and attitudes.



PROBLEM ORIENTATED POLICING

Often, when addressing community-based crime problems it becomes apparent that such issues require more than a quick fix solution. In order to establish an effective long-term solution to crime, techniques such as problem oriented policing are utilised. Through the use of problem oriented policing techniques, communities, stakeholders and An Garda Síochána can combine resources to effectively reduce or eliminate crime. Crime prevention is not solely the responsibility of An Garda Síochána. All stakeholders, including local communities, businesses and voluntary groups, can contribute to crime problem solving in communities.

It is important to resolve local crime problems because if unaddressed, the issues will damage community cohesion causing fear, mistrust and may lead to increased crime levels. A commonly used problem-solving method is the SARA model (Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment). The SARA model contains the following elements:



A CULTURE OF CRIME PREVENTION

A core function of An Garda Síochána is crime prevention. Compliance with the principles of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), the nine ethical standards and commitments set out in our Code of Ethics and our mission of keeping people safe, guide the crime prevention culture within An Garda Síochána.

An Garda Síochána continues to enhance and develop an organisational crime prevention culture through the use of available resources, to address the needs of the community we serve, thereby meeting our commitment to keeping people safe.

We continue to develop our systems and structures to harness our vast organisational knowledge of crime prevention and share it with our communities, victims and the most vulnerable in society.



RESPONSIBILITY TO VICTIMS AND COMMUNITIES

We must be responsive to the needs of victims, local communities and the evolving nature of crime. An Garda Síochána commits to using resources, including the Garda National Crime Prevention Unit, Divisional Crime Prevention Officers and Community Policing Teams, to effectively disseminate crime prevention advice to victims and communities. Information-led crime prevention campaigns and operations will assist us to be responsive to emerging crime trends and focus our resources on communities that require our services, particularly those most vulnerable.

Crime prevention campaigns provide An Garda Síochána with opportunities for engagement, partnership and problem solving, which are important for fostering relationships with communities. Crime prevention campaigns lead to a reduction in crime and provide reassurance to the vulnerable in society, while making our communities safer places to live. Campaigns will involve partnership working with our key stakeholders and the use of national, local and social media to promote crime prevention advice and awareness.

Community Crime Prevention Programmes, including Community Alert, Text Alert and Neighbourhood Watch, will make individuals and communities more aware of their environment, and more likely to report crime and suspicious behaviour. We are committed to ensuring older people in society feel safe. We will work with them, their communities and representative organisations, to provide tailored crime prevention advice and to develop an Older Person's Strategy.

Targeted programmes, including the Garda School's Programme and Campus Watch, will provide safety advice and educate children and young adults about crime prevention.

Garda social media platforms and the Garda website will be regularly updated to provide up to date crime prevention information based on crime trends.



MANAGEMENT OF OFFENDERS

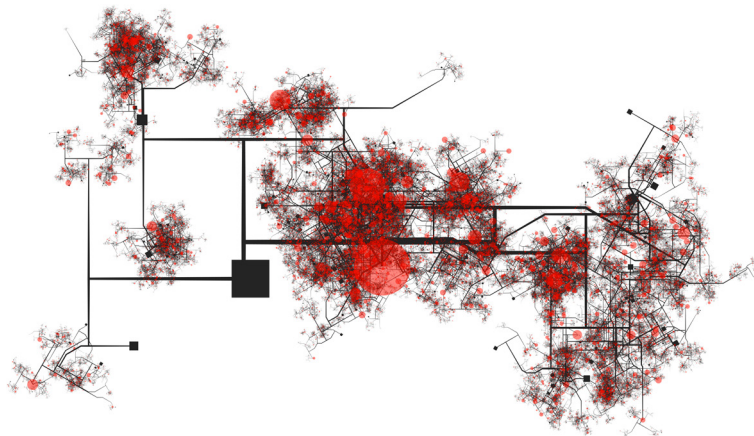
Detecting and investigating crime is one of the core functions of An Garda Síochána. An Garda Síochána will work with partners and specialist agencies to divert individuals from committing crime and will target our activity to prevent those who have offended from re-offending. The Garda Youth Diversion Programme continues to divert young people from committing further offences. We are committed to playing our part at all levels to work with partners to deliver the multi-agency 'Action Plan for the Joint Management of Offenders.'



LOCATIONS OF CRIME

A relatively small number of locations generate a disproportionate number of calls for service. Through focusing resources on these locations, the potential exists to significantly reduce crime. Through information-led policing and analysis, An Garda Síochána will focus resources in these locations. Working in partnership with key stakeholders, Crime Prevention Officers will engineer solutions utilising Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and problem oriented policing. Community Crime Prevention Programmes, such as Neighbourhood Watch and Community Alert, will continue to be utilised to ensure community involvement in the promotion of good crime prevention practices. An Garda Síochána will provide due governance and oversight in relation to the Garda Commissioner's legal responsibilities in respect of CCTV.

Community Policing is an established practice throughout the country. The Garda Operating Model of policing will ensure a Community Engagement Superintendent in each Division. An organisation-wide problem-solving approach to community needs will be supported locally by Divisional Crime Prevention Officers.



CRIME PREVENTION STRUCTURE

THE GARDA NATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION UNIT

The Garda National Crime Prevention Unit is responsible for leading on the delivery of the Crime Prevention and Reduction Strategy. The unit develops crime prevention and reduction practices for An Garda Síochána, with a focus on these strategic objectives:

- To develop a national crime prevention strategy for An Garda Síochána that is responsive to changing crime types and delivers on the mission of AGS to “keep people safe”.
- To drive the operational delivery of the strategy.
- To work with partner agencies and the public to prevent crime and reduce harm.
- To ensure Divisional Crime Prevention Officers are supported, trained and have the necessary equipment to undertake their roles.
- To share good practice across the cadre of Divisional Crime Prevention Officers.
- To maximise the opportunities to use existing and emerging technology in the prevention of crime.
- To secure a solid evidence base of “what works” in relation to prevention activities and crime trends.
- To work with partners externally and relevant Bureaus internally to develop communication strategies that inform target audiences.
- To provide due governance and oversight in relation to the Garda Commissioner’s legal responsibilities in respect of CCTV.
- To contribute to building confidence in An Garda Síochána.
- To conduct security surveys on high risk premises.
- To provide relevant crime prevention advice for the planning and development of large scale infrastructure and housing developments, promoting the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).
- To analyse crime trends, initiate crime prevention campaigns and develop crime prevention literature.

DIVISIONAL CRIME PREVENTION OFFICERS

Divisional Crime Prevention Officers are a divisional resource. They will promote and implement national crime prevention initiatives, and will also work locally with both internal colleagues and external parties, to reduce crime and provide advice and expertise in crime prevention and community safety, relevant to the trends in their locality.



OUR OBJECTIVES

This strategy, which will be managed over a three year time frame 2021-2024, is based on commitments to five key objectives. These commitments will form the basis of our action plan, which will ensure that An Garda Síochána is pro-actively engaged in crime prevention, thus making our communities safer.



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|  <h3>Partnerships</h3> <p>We will work to reduce crime and the fear of crime, in partnership with key internal and external stakeholders, including the commercial sector, communities and statutory agencies.</p> |  <h3>Awareness & Communication</h3> <p>We will deliver effective crime prevention advice and guidelines through the most appropriate communication channels, to improve awareness and educate communities and the commercial sector in the principles of crime prevention, and to provide support to victims of crime.</p> |  <h3>Protecting Communities</h3> <p>We will provide reassurance and support for our communities by consistent prevention, detection and prosecution of criminal behaviour. We will work with our communities to keep people safe through collaborative schemes and active engagement.</p> |
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|  <h3>Consistent & Professional Crime Prevention Service</h3> <p>We will train, resource and upskill our personnel to enable them to provide crime prevention services within Divisions. The Garda National Crime Prevention Unit will coordinate a consistent approach throughout the country in the provision of crime prevention advice and guidance.</p> |  <h3>Review & Evaluation</h3> <p>We will evaluate and review the implementation of the Crime Prevention and Reduction Strategy .</p> |
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ACTION PLAN



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1 - PARTNERSHIPS

CONTEXT

Work to reduce crime and the fear of crime, in partnership with key internal and external stakeholders, including the commercial sector, communities and statutory agencies.

ACTION PLAN

| No. | Goal | Actions | Responsibility | Timeframe |
|-----|---|---|---|--------------|
| 1.1 | Continue partnership working with external stakeholders to share crime prevention knowledge and trends to reduce and prevent crime. | Strategic Retail Theft Forum to continue. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit | Biannually |
| | | National Metal Theft Forum to continue. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit | Biannually |
| | | Consistent representation at the National Rural Safety Forum. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit | Quarterly |
| | | Engage with key stakeholders and develop engagement forums as required. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit | Continuously |
| 1.2 | Support the work of local authorities and associated organisations. | Provide Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) advice to local authorities and other agencies. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit | Continuously |
| 1.3 | Relevant engagement related to the legislative framework to support crime prevention. | Engage with the Department of Justice, Garda Legal and other relevant stakeholders to promote the development of necessary legislation and regulations to support crime prevention initiatives. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit | Continuously |
| 1.4 | Support the operation of Joint Policing Committees, Public Participation Networks, local fora and community safety partnerships as they are introduced. | Continued engagement to provide crime prevention advice with a standardised approach nationally. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit Divisional Officers | Continuously |
| | | Review the role of the JPC function within the Garda National Crime Prevention Unit. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit | Q4 2021 |
| 1.5 | Crime prevention principles to be embedded in planning for events. | Engagement with event planners on crime prevention. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit Divisional Officers | Q4 2021 |
| 1.6 | Review & update An Garda Síochána Alarm Policy. | Review the organisation's current Alarm Policy. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit | Q3 2021 |



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2 – CREATING AWARENESS & COMMUNICATION

Context

To deliver effective crime prevention advice and guidelines through the most appropriate communication channels, to improve awareness and educate communities and the commercial sector in the principles of crime prevention, and to provide support to victims of crime.

ACTION PLAN

| No. | Goal | Actions | Responsibility | Timeframe |
|-----|--|---|--|--------------|
| 2.1 | Review current crime trends to develop and promote appropriate crime prevention awareness campaigns. | Host and facilitate outreach days, both at local and national level, to provide communities with crime prevention advice. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit Garda Office of Corporate Communications | Continuously |
| | | Plan specific themed awareness campaigns for specific times of year or events. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit Garda Office of Corporate Communications | Continuously |
| | | Organise crime prevention engagement at national events. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit Garda National Community Policing Unit Garda Office of Corporate Communications | Continuously |
| | | Support the implementation of internal Garda strategies. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit | Continuously |
| | | Make maximum use of social media tools to reach wider audiences in the community. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit Garda Office of Corporate Communications | Ongoing |
| | | Ongoing engagement with Crime Call programme. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit Garda Office of Corporate Communications | Ongoing |



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|-----|--|--|---|--------------|
| 2.2 | Engagement with hard to reach and vulnerable communities. | Support Garda Diversity & Integration Strategy 2019-2021 by provision of appropriate crime prevention advice to people from diverse backgrounds, minority groups and victims of hate crimes. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit Divisional Crime Prevention Officers Garda National Diversity & Integration Unit Garda Office of Corporate Communications | Continuously |
| 2.3 | Ensure safety advice is provided to children and young people through the Garda Schools Programme. | Support the continuous development of suitable safety advice and awareness, especially online, for inclusion in the Garda Schools Programme. | Garda National Community Engagement Bureau | Continuously |
| 2.4 | Utilise advances in technology to assist in crime prevention. | Ensure modern crime prevention solutions and technological advances are incorporated into crime prevention advice. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit | Continuously |
| | | Review, test and pilot the property section of the Crime Reporting App. which has been developed in conjunction with Garda ICT. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit Garda ICT | Q3 2021 |
| 2.5 | Continued engagement with international partners to promote crime prevention advice. | Engage with the EU Crime Prevention Network and participate in EU focus days for crime prevention. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit | Continuously |



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3 – PROTECTING COMMUNITIES

CONTEXT

To provide reassurance and support for our communities by consistent prevention, detection and prosecution of criminal behaviour. To work with our communities to keep people safe through collaborative schemes and active engagement.

ACTION PLAN

| No. | Goal | Actions | Responsibility | Timeframe |
|-----|--|--|---|--------------|
| 3.1 | Ensuring the safety of our communities through formal Crime Prevention and Engagement Schemes. | Conduct a review of the operation, support, reporting and governance of Neighbourhood Watch, Community Alert and Text Alert Schemes. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit | Q4 2021 |
| | | Engagement with Community Alert National stakeholder group. | | Quarterly |
| | | Enhance the use of Campus Watch Programme. | | Q1 2022 |
| | | Conduct Campus Watch seminar for personnel nationally. | | Bi-annually |
| | | Conduct a review of all other Crime Prevention Watch Programmes. | | Q3 2022 |
| 3.2 | Ensure National Governance for public Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Schemes. | Review and update policy and procedures in relation to all CCTV schemes authorised by An Garda Síochána. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit Garda Data Protection Office Garda ICT Department of Justice | Q3 2021 |
| 3.3 | Utilising problem-solving techniques to assist with crime reduction. | Support the use of the SARA model of problem solving across the organisation. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit | Continuously |
| 3.4 | Support the national approach to offender management. | Ensure An Garda Síochána is represented at all levels in relation to the governance and operational delivery of both adult and youth offender management strategies. | Assistant Commissioner, Roads Policing and Community Engagement Garda National Community Engagement Bureau Garda Youth Diversion Bureau | Q2 2022 |



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4 – CONSISTENT & PROFESSIONAL CRIME PREVENTION SERVICE

CONTEXT

To train, resource and upskill our personnel to enable them to provide crime prevention services within Divisions. The Garda National Crime Prevention Unit will coordinate a consistent approach throughout the country in the provision of crime prevention advice and guidance.

ACTION PLAN

| No. | Goal | Actions | Responsibility | Timeframe |
|-----|---|--|---|--------------|
| 4.1 | Promote the role of the Crime Prevention Officer in the crime functional area within each Division. | Crime Prevention Officers to be consulted on the development of Divisional Policing Plans. | Divisional Officers Garda National Crime Prevention Unit | Continuously |
| 4.2 | Ensure level of expertise amongst Crime Prevention Officers is maintained and developed. | Ensure that every Crime Prevention Officer is suitably trained and accredited in all aspects necessary to function in their role. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit Director of Training | Continuously |
| | | Ensure vacancies for Crime Prevention Officers in Divisions throughout the country are filled as they arise. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit Divisional Officers Human Resources and People Development | Continuously |
| | | Promote awareness of the role of the Crime Prevention Officer. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit Director of Training | Q1 2022 |
| | | Host annual national conference for Crime Prevention Officers to allow for development of the Crime Prevention Officer function and sharing of “what works”. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit | Annually |
| 4.3 | Analyse crime trends to enable targeted crime prevention approaches and initiatives. | Analyse data on crime trends to understand patterns and deliver an intelligence-led, preventative policing response. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit Garda Síochána Analysis Service | Continuously |



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5 – REVIEW & EVALUATION

CONTEXT

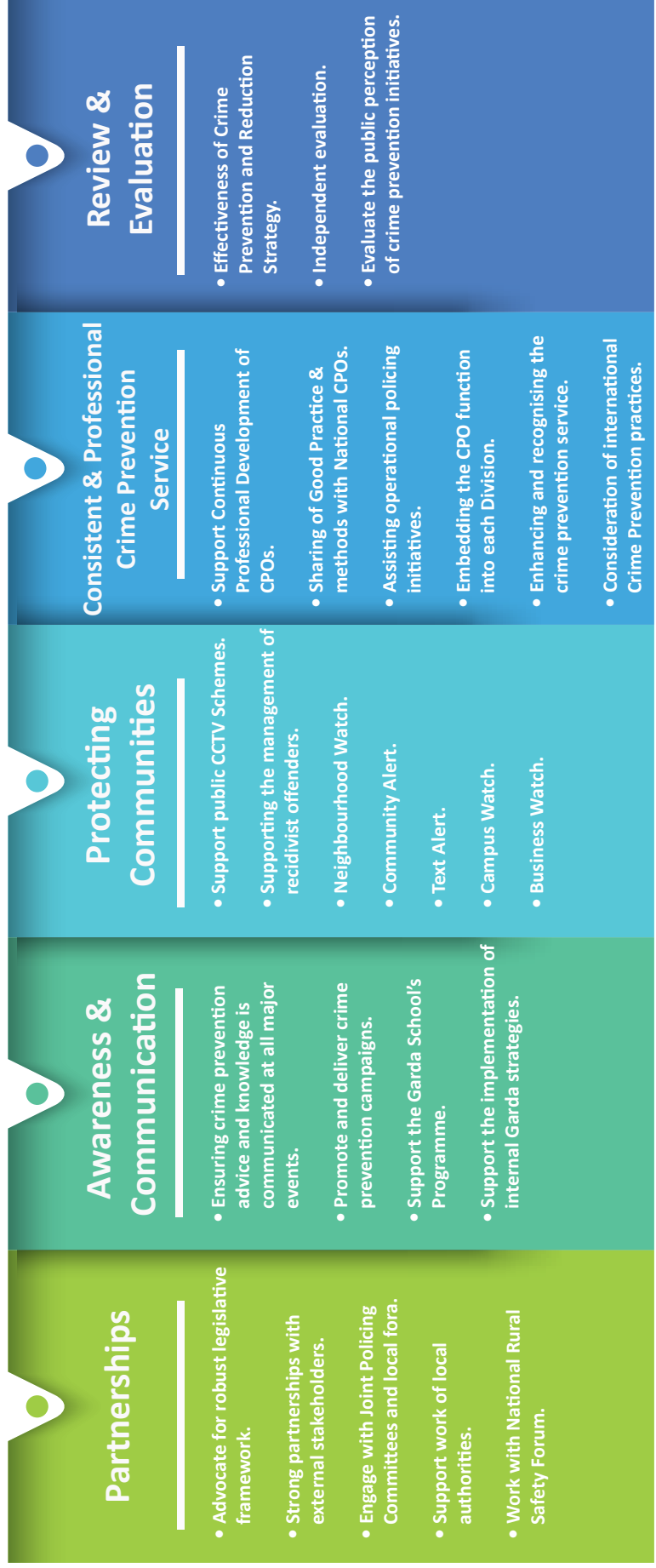
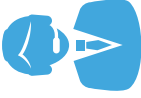
Evaluate and review the implementation of the Crime Prevention and Reduction Strategy.

ACTION PLAN

| No. | Goal | Actions | Responsibility | Timeframe |
|-----|---|---|---|----------------|
| 5.1 | Evaluate the delivery of the Crime Prevention and Reduction Strategy. | Report on the delivery of the strategic objectives of the Crime Prevention and Reduction Strategy. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit | Q1 2023 |
| | | Review engagement with stakeholders. | Garda National Community Engagement Bureau | |
| 5.2 | Evaluate the operation of the crime prevention service provided by the organisation. | Independent review of the crime prevention service provided by An Garda Síochána to be undertaken. | Garda National Community Engagement Bureau Strategic Transformation Office | Q3 2023 |
| 5.3 | Measure the effectiveness of crime prevention information campaigns. | Ensure that information campaigns are supported by suitable reporting processes to allow their effectiveness to be measured and reviewed. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit | Continuously |
| 5.4 | Evaluate the public perception of crime prevention initiatives and the role of Crime Prevention Officers. | Seek to have relevant questions included in the National Public Attitudes Survey. | Garda National Crime Prevention Unit Garda Research Unit | Quarter 1 2022 |



GARDA CRIME PREVENTION STRATEGY 2021 - 2024



STAKEHOLDERS

An Garda Síochána

- Garda National Crime Prevention Unit
- Garda National Economic Crime Bureau
- Garda National Cyber Crime Bureau

Crime Prevention Officers (CPOs)

Legal and Statutory Bodies

Community Partners



CONTACTS

GARDA NATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION UNIT

The Garda National Crime Prevention Unit within the Garda National Community Engagement Bureau is responsible to an Assistant Commissioner for the development of crime prevention and reduction practices for An Garda Síochána. For more information please refer to www.garda.ie.

The National Crime Prevention Unit can be contacted at:-

National Crime Prevention Unit

Garda Bureau Community Engagement

Garda Headquarters

Harcourt Square

Dublin 2

D02 DH42

Telephone: +353 1 666 3669

DIVISIONAL CRIME PREVENTION OFFICERS

Within each Garda Division, there are specialist Crime Prevention Officers (CPOs). A list of Crime Prevention Officers can be found here:

www.garda.ie/en/crime-prevention/who-is-my-local-crime-prevention-officer/



