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A N G A R D A S Í O C H Á N A

COMMUNIQUE

Civilian HR Directorate, Athlumney House, Navan

EDITORIAL

The five articles in this special Human Resource (HR) edition of *Communiqué* are all linked around the general theme of Modernisation within the Garda HR function. The unprecedented changes that have taken place over recent years within An Garda Síochána have presented a complex and challenging agenda for all those involved in managing people related issues across the organisation. The following articles, a number of which are based on project submissions from the Certificate in Strategic HR – 2008, will provide the reader with some informative insights into several of the proposed change and transformation processes that are currently in train or under consideration.

Mr. Eric Brady's opening article on 'Modernising Garda HR' sets out in clear terms the proposed strategic framework under which all of the forthcoming modernisation initiatives will take place. The framework illustrates the interdependencies between the higher level strategic pillars namely the organisation's HR Strategy and prevailing organisational culture while at the same time highlighting how they are supported and illuminated by the trinity of secondary pillars Systems, Structures and Capability.

Inspector John Dollard's article looks in more depth at the area of HR Capability. In it he outlines some of the initiatives that the organisation has put in place to help increase HR skills and knowledge across all operational and administrative areas of the Garda organisation. He introduces us to some of the bespoke HR training programmes, professional memberships and international knowledge bases that together will form the foundation of the new and evolving HR function.

The third article by Ms. Paula Quinn examines the area of HR structures particularly in respect to the concept of transforming Garda HR from a personnel department into a function that displays more of a strategic business partner type focus that provides a higher value-added HR service to the organisation. This approach would facilitate the development of a HR Business Partner (HRBP) model which would in turn accommodate the setting up of a HR shared services type function that could accommodate all of the administrative and transactional aspects of HR work traditionally associated with personnel functions.

Mr. Finnian Gallagher's article presents an intriguing insight into the 'quiet evolution' that has taken place across the Garda organisation in recent times. In it he highlights current demographic trends within the An Garda Síochána, in particular those influenced by the progress that has been made in the areas of diversity management, family friendly practices and the ongoing civilianisation process. In his conclusions he challenges us to evidence the ways in which we are making best use of our increasingly diverse and multi-national workforce.

The final article by Dr. Donal Collins, An Garda Síochána's Chief Medical Officer (CMO), traces the development of the Garda Occupational Health Service from its inception in 1922 to present day. In his narrative Dr. Collins seamlessly dovetails the pioneering endeavours of the early trailblazers who provided medical services to the organisation with his overview of the new soon to be launched Garda Occupational Health Strategy.

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A N G A R D A S Í O C H Á N A



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INSPECTOR JOHN DOLLARD is a native of Dublin and joined An Garda Síochána in 1991. Currently stationed in Cavan he served previously in HRM, Fitzgibbon Street and Store Street. He is a Chartered Member of the CIPD and holds a Masters degree in Human Resource Management. He enjoys sailing and is a former Commodore of the East Coast Garda Sailing Club. In 2000 he was awarded a bronze Scott Medal for valour and the Coiste Siamsa Millennium award for the sport of sailing. He is married with two children.

PAULA QUINN is a native of Co. Sligo and joined the civil service in 2002. Her first position was as an Executive Officer in the Property Registration Authority where she stayed for 4.5 years. Subsequent to this Paula transferred to Garda Civilian HR under the decentralisation scheme in April 2007. She remained there for six months and was then promoted to HEO and moved to Strategic HR in Garda Headquarters where she took up her current position. Paula holds an Honours Bachelor of Arts Degree in History and Sociology and a Masters in Sociology from N.U.I. Maynooth.

FINNIAN GALLAGHER is a native of County Roscommon and joined the Civil Service in 1995. He served in the Department of Social and Family Affairs in the grades of Clerical Assistant to Executive Officer. He joined An Garda Síochána on promotion to Higher Executive Officer in October 2007 and he currently has responsibility for devolved Civilian human resource support in the South East Region. Finnian holds First Class Honours in the Bachelor of Business Studies (Hons) from Waterford Institute of Technology and has recently completed a Certificate in Strategic Human Resources programme from Dublin City University.

DR. DONAL COLLINS was appointed the Garda Chief Medical Officer, Specialist in Occupational Medicine and General Practice in 2000. He is a native of Nenagh, Co. Tipperary. In 1977 he qualified in medicine in Trinity College after which he worked in hospitals in Dublin and Limerick, specialising in Family Practice. He spent a number of years with the Army Medical Corps where he specialised in Occupational Medicine. He is a member of the Faculty of Occupational Medicine of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland and the Irish College of General Practitioners. He holds a Higher Diploma in Occupational Health (HDOH), Diploma in Child Health, Qualifications in aviation medicine and diving medicine. He is a Fellow of the Faculty of Occupational Medicine of the Royal College of Physicians Ireland.

Dr. Collins remains up to date in Occupational Medicine through his membership of the Irish Society of Occupational Medicine, the Faculty of Occupational Medicine of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland and is currently a member of the education committee of this faculty, and the UK Society of Occupational Medicine. Dr. Collins also belongs to special interest groups of Police Medical Advisors of the UK and Ireland and this group meets approximately 5 times per year to develop many issues of medical import to policing. The group includes Police medical advisors from An Garda Síochána, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Greater Manchester Police, Lancashire Police Constabulary, Merseyside Police, Cheshire Police, North Wales Police and others.

Modernising Garda HR - A Template for Change

Mr. Eric Brady



Mr. Eric Brady

INTRODUCTION

The following article presents a template and underlying architecture for the modernisation of the Garda HR function. The 'Strategic HR Unit' in Garda Headquarters developed the following framework over the course of 2007 as part of a proposal for a programme of renewal and change within the HR function. This paper is based on an actual application that formed part of the Garda Síochána's entry for the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's biennial "CIPD/ Watson Wyatt HR Excellence Awards" in November 2007. The competition submission won the award for best Public Sector HR initiative. The entry was also selected, from an initial pool of over seventy private and public sector applications, as one of the top submissions included for consideration for the best overall HR initiative from the 2007 competition.

THE BEGINNING OF THE JOURNEY

One of the first steps to be taken before starting the process of transforming and modernising the Garda HR function was the development of an organisational wide approach that would draw together all aspects of the delivery of HR services within An Garda Síochána. Not unlike many public sector organisations the Garda organisation has a very well established personnel function that has efficiently served the administrative and transactional requirements of the organisation for many years. However the more strategic and 'value added' aspects of a HR function's role (i.e. moving beyond the transactional and administrative based tasks associated with a successful personnel function) were found to be underdeveloped. As a consequence any links between the activities of the HR function and the organisation's corporate strategy were in the main undocumented and in need of clarity and direction. This is not surprising as the transition from a more traditional 'Personnel' department to an HR oriented function, that clearly supports the organisations business goals, while easily articulated requires quite a significant change process: both in the way people related issues are managed and perceived by employees.

KEY DRIVERS

The Garda organisation by the middle of the 2000s was faced with a number of significant challenges that necessitated a reappraisal of the way in which the organisation delivered it's people related services. The organisation itself had started a process of transformation based on the results of the recommendations of the May 2000 'Report on the Development of Human Resource Management within An Garda Síochána'. However a number of decisions by the then Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform created a transformation agenda of such magnitude that changes in the way the organisation managed its employees became an unavoidable strategic imperative for the organisation and this was reflected in its 2005-2007 Corporate Strategy Plan (Corporate Strategy 2005-2007, p5). The establishment of, a ministerial advisory group under the chairmanship of Senator Maurice Hayes to advise on Leadership and Management Development within An Garda Síochána and the setting up of the Garda Síochána Inspectorate and the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission irrevocably changed the environment and lens through which people related issues were viewed and dealt with within An Garda Síochána. The passing into

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law of the Garda Síochána Act, 2005 in conjunction with the publication of early results from the key tribunals, Morris¹ and Barr² created a dais that necessitated a change in the way the organisation managed its people resources.

One of the first consequences of this new act was that the Garda Commissioner became accounting officer for the organisation thereby acquiring direct responsibility for allocating and accounting for the organisation's budget. This also coincided in October 2006 with the transfer of control of all Garda civilian staff from the Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform to that of the Garda Commissioner. At the time the number of sworn officers within the organisation was rising at a rate unheard of up to then thanks to the accelerated recruitment campaign approved by the then Minister. This accelerated recruitment was augmented through the establishment of a cadre of new Garda Reservists that were recruited to support Garda members in the execution of their policing duties. Employee numbers rose significantly as a result of these initiatives and had continued to rise in both the civilian and Garda cohorts over the following months and years. While the accelerated recruitment process has now slowed due to the current economic situation these changes, which had necessitated a refocusing of work within the HR function, marked the beginning of an internal 'burning platform' for change and transformation within Garda HR.

In effect the die was now cast and the organisation had no choice but to actively engage in a process of significant modernisation within the HR function.

HR ARCHITECTURE

The evolution of a modern Garda HR department is built around a proposed new HR architecture that combines all of the key areas that need to be addressed within the HR function in order to transform the way in which people related services are delivered across the organisation. Table 1 below lists and defines the five pillars on which this new architecture will rest.

TABLE 1: THE FIVE PILLARS OF THE GARDA HR TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

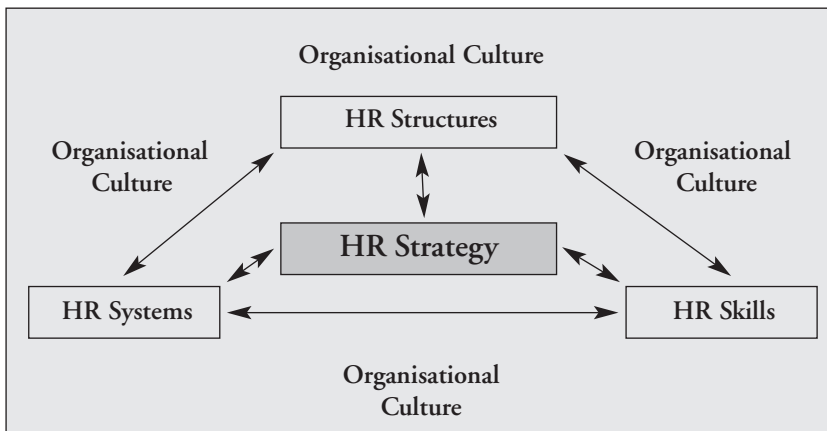
| Architectural Pillars | Definitions |
|------------------------|---|
| HR Strategy | The HR Vision, Mission, Values and Objectives for the Garda organisation |
| HR Structures | How HR staff are deployed and how their work is co-ordinated to ensure that HR services are delivered efficiently and effectively across the Garda organisation |
| HR Systems | The HR processes and information systems (HRIS) that add value to the organisation through facilitating HR service delivery |
| HR Skills | The individual and collective skills/ capabilities of the people working in the HR function e.g. experience, competence etc. |
| Organisational Culture | The values, norms and assumptions that shape behaviour across the Garda organisation but in particular within the HR function |

¹Tribunal of Enquiry Set up Pursuant to the Tribunal of Inquiry (Evidence) Acts 1921-2002 into Certain Gardai in Donegal Division.

²Tribunal of Enquiry into the Facts and Circumstances Surrounding the Fatal Shooting of John Carthy at Abbeylara, Co. Longford on 20th April, 2000. Stationary Office, Government Publications, Dublin, 2006.

The new lens through which this proposed architectural structure is presented links together the five pillars that form the foundation of the new HR service delivery model. Figure 1 below gives a pictorial representation of this new service delivery model highlighting how the elements will work in unison to enable the Garda HR function to operate effectively. It is essential that these key linkages are put in place quickly as they both individually and collectively empower the HR function to successfully manage and deliver on the significant people related challenges the organisation faces in the challenging times ahead. The ensuing HR programme of work will continue to develop as the Garda organisation and its employees adapt to the challenging economic and political circumstances that prevail across the country at this time.

FIGURE 1:
PROPOSED HR ARCHITECTURE FOR THE GARDA HUMAN RESOURCE FUNCTION



As alluded to previously the diagram in Figure 1 above illustrates the key components of the new model and the various linkages and interdependencies between the five pillars.

HR STRATEGY

The Garda organisation is currently embarking on its first ever HR strategy. HR activity up until this now has been co-ordinated and directed through the Divisional Policing plans that feed in to the organisations overall Policing Plan and Corporate Strategy. This approach has been very effective in ensuring that those HR activities directly related to ongoing operational requirements were highlighted and prioritised. However this approach does not easily accommodate the inclusion of some of the more strategic aspects of the HR repertoire or afford sufficient opportunities for more long term people initiatives to be prioritised and implemented.

PROPOSITION

Central to this new approach is the development and roll out of an organisational wide HR strategy that supports and underpins the Garda Corporate Strategy. The HR Strategy forms the key stone of the new HR service delivery model. In it An Garda Síochána articulates the key areas of HR focus within the organisation over the three year term of the strategy (the HR Strategy will sit

under the Garda Corporate Strategy and act as a support and facilitator to the corporate goals and objectives of the organisation). The HR strategy is underpinned by four overarching strategic values out of which emerge seven key HR building blocks. The values which are visionary in purpose and underline the behaviours that Garda HR would like to see espoused across the whole organisation. The four values, Collaborate with Purpose which acts as a higher level umbrella value under which the other three: An Enabling Workforce, Development for All and Execute with Excellence sit, are graphically displayed in figure 2 below.

FIGURE 2: STRATEGIC HR VALUES

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In simple terms they provide the foundation pillars to the overall HR strategic framework. Each of the seven building blocks is linked to one of the strategic values and contains a number of related HR areas that collectively link together under their respective HR themes. Within each building block you will find a number of commitments that through associated initiatives form a series of major HR work streams. These work streams facilitate the organisations transformation process and serve to best meet our ongoing ‘customer’ needs. Table 2 below illustrates how each building block links to its respective strategic value.

TABLE 2: LINK BETWEEN THE HR BUILDING BLOCKS AND STRATEGIC VALUES

| Building Blocks | Strategic Values |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Positive Working Environment | An Enabling Workforce |
| Employee Relations | An Enabling Workforce |
| Employee Development | Development for All |
| Leadership Development | Development for All |
| Strategic Human Resources | Execute with Excellence |
| Business Effectiveness | Execute with Excellence |
| HR Service Delivery | Execute with Excellence |

HR STRUCTURES

The delivery of HR services within the Garda organisation with the exception of core operational police training has traditionally been centralised in Garda Headquarters in Dublin. This is consistent with the manner in which many government departments, public sector and indeed private sector organisations have tended to structure their ‘Personnel’ functions. In the past their focus was on the efficient delivery of a ‘Personnel’ as opposed to an HR service to the organisation and its employees.

PROPOSITION

The proposed new approach outlined in this article puts forward a new mechanism for delivering HR services - an HR Business Partnering approach (i.e. HR trained staff will provide on site HR support to management and employees in the regions, divisions and/or districts). This incorporates the setting up of a shared services type unit to manage all of the essential transactional and administrative type tasks. Locating all work of this nature together can benefit from the standardisation of similar processes and consequently leverage economies of scale that would otherwise be impossible to extract. This new shared services approach will enable a much more efficient and effective collation and delivery of HR information that will in turn allow timely, accurate and useful people based metrics to be made available to management across the organisation. In this new model there will continue to be a centrally based HR function but importantly this core which will now consist of a series of “Centres of Excellence” that will focus on key HR issues of strategic importance that are linked to each particular units’ area of remit e.g. monitoring the way in which the HR function supports the policing service through its recruitment, policy development, training processes etc.

HR SYSTEMS

Any HR department can only ever be as efficient and effective as the IT systems and information handling processes it has in place to support the delivery of its work initiatives. While the Garda organisation has a number of bespoke systems to manage its HR information they currently do not have the capacity to cope adequately with the changing demographics and new emerging deployment challenges that face the organisation. Difficulties with their ability to exchange information electronically and to accommodate any potential future changes to the way in which the organisation delivers its HR service (e.g. the devolution of HR work outside of the centre) are also potentially limiting.

PROPOSITION

Consequently the development of an organisational wide HR Information System which will form the bedrock foundation of the Garda HR department’s knowledge base is an organisational imperative. A new organisational wide system that includes all Garda staff in a single searchable database will allow HR and operational managers to produce real time management information reports. The implementation of an HR system will also require an in depth analysis of all HR processes to test their robustness and ability to add value to the functions overall goals and objectives and to highlight where new or improved information handling processes are required. A ‘Lean Six Sigma’ process re-engineering

technique has already been engaged to test some of the business processes already in place within HR and to highlight processes that can be improved and realigned to the future needs and challenges that will face the organisation.

HR SKILLS

The HR skills part of the overall jigsaw highlights the ongoing need to maintain and develop core HR knowledge and skills across the organisation. The ability of the HR function to deliver on the organisations HR strategy will be dependent on having a core group of both specialist and generalist HR professionals with appropriate experience and knowledge of policing.

A number of programmes and initiatives to up skill HR staff are already in place and will be dealt with in more detail in subsequent articles in this edition. In general following an analysis of the knowledge gaps the purposed approach to skills development takes a tripartite approach;



1. Providing a range of formal and informal learning opportunities that will enable staff to gain new knowledge and expertise or update old skills. This is achieved through the provision of;
 - a. Selected funding opportunities for academic courses in HR or related fields.
 - b. Bespoke training programmes customised to the needs of the Garda organisation
 - c. Regular HR seminars on topics of current relevance or interest to staff working in HR or in positions where knowledge of HR is important.
 - d. The provision of practical up to date HR tools and techniques to supervisors and managers on the various development programmes run by the Garda College.
2. Work to professionalise the HR function and position it within the broader Public Sector HR family and the wider HR community.
 - a. Develop and engage in HR networks within the broader Irish Public sector.
 - b. Encourage senior HR staff to pursue professional membership of the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD) [i.e. Chartered Fellow and Chartered Member status].
 - c. Promote the benefits of general membership of the CIPD for all HR staff.
 - d. Set up an internal HR career development structure that encourages, promotes and facilitates the building up of individual HR skills and competencies.
3. Develop an HR knowledge base that can be easily accessed by all staff across the organisation particularly those that have HR responsibilities as part of their roles (e.g. HR staff, Supervisors, Managers etc.)
 - a. Set up, populate and maintain an HR specific area of the Garda web portal to include copies of all Garda HR policies and procedures.

- b. Source a suitable HR knowledge repository that will provide a research database and support service that will provide real time information of current issues and developments in the HR area.
- c. Engage with and make use of the CIPD on-line data base of up to date information on Irish and UK developments within the HR area.

Organisational Culture

All of the proposed HR initiatives must take cognisance of the strong organisational culture that has developed over the years within the Garda organisation. Change in any organisation is a challenging process to get right. Consequently all of the proposed changes need to be communicated and negotiated with the various internal and external stakeholders (i.e. the Departments of Justice Equality & Law Reform and Finance; the Garda Associations, the Civilian Unions, Garda management and all other employees) if they are to have any meaningful long term life expectancy. As a traditional machine bureaucracy with a command and control management structure the Garda organisation takes a certain degree of comfort in having a predominately centralised management decision making process. This is no different within the HR function. Taking this context into consideration any proposed changes in the Garda HR function will need to be incremental rather than sudden and evolutionary rather than revolutionary.

CONCLUSION

When we look at the proposed transformation process for the Garda HR function it becomes clearly evident that the two primary pillars that will best facilitate the beginnings of the required changes are an awareness of the prevailing organisational culture and the development and roll out of an HR Strategy. When these are agreed and in place the other three secondary pillars, HR Structures, HR Systems and HR Skills and Capabilities can be developed somewhat independently of each other. However it is important to remember that while a focus can be placed on any one the three secondary pillars in order to gain some momentum you must bring all three in unison to ensure that all of the inter linkages and co-dependencies are accommodated thereby allowing the new model of service delivery to develop as a whole rather than in a piecemeal fashion.

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Inspector John Dollard

Increasing HR Skills and Knowledge

Inspector John Dollard

INTRODUCTION

This article describes the Garda organisations first steps in the move to a more strategic way of delivering human resource (HR) services by increasing HR skills and knowledge. This was achieved through a mix of training programmes, sponsoring staff education and gaining membership of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD).

The Garda Human Resources Management (HRM) function is now one of the best in the Irish civil and public sectors. This view was validated by a win in the public sector category of the most recent Watson Wyatt HR Excellence Awards for an entry entitled “modernising Garda HR”. This award recognised the organisations early efforts to transform the way it did its HR business and in particular our efforts at increasing HR capability.

The Garda HR function is highly evolved in the context of the Irish civil and public sector, where administrative and transactionally focused personnel departments have made limited progress in the move to more strategic models of HR service delivery.

In simple terms, the “personnel” approach is mostly about administering the processes associated with employees and is sometimes cynically referred to as looking after “pay and rations”. Strategic HR on the other hand focuses on maximising the way staff are developed, deployed and supported, providing value and benefit to both the organisation and employees.

TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Two customised training programmes are at the heart of HR development within the Garda organisation. These are the Certificate course in Strategic HR and an entry level Foundation in HR course.

CERTIFICATE IN STRATEGIC HR

The Certificate in Strategic HR is a four month long bespoke management development programme designed to increase HR knowledge and capability across the Garda organisation. It consists of four two day modules across a range of HR areas.

FOUNDATION IN HR

The Foundation in HR is an entry level customised programme for individuals working in HR or HR related roles who are looking to acquire their first formal qualification in the field. The programme consists of three two day modules run over a three month period.

With one hundred and fifty Garda and Civilian staff trained, these courses have been at the forefront in preparing the organisation for the modernisation of HR services.

In January 2005 the Irish Management Institute (IMI) delivered the first certificate programme. The course has been run annually since then. In 2008 Dublin City University Business School took over this course.

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The programmes are uniquely matched to meet the requirements of An Garda Síochána. A needs analysis was conducted in which HR managers were asked what content they would like to see included in the programmes. The Saville & Holdsworth (SHL) consultancy report, prepared as part of the Government sponsored Strategic Management Initiative (SMI) review, was also used to match content to report recommendations.

The certificate programme is divided in four themed areas; self awareness, strategic HR, general management skills and an action learning project. The inclusion of self-awareness was advocated strongly by the course provider, who argued before people can manage others effectively they need to understand their own preferences for behaviour. Strategic HR included modules on theory of HR, culture, strategy, change management, employment law and HR doables (measuring HR success). The general management content was made up of negotiation, coaching and conflict resolution. The participants were divided into groups and tasked with researching a HR case study in HR in an action learning project.

One of the most successful areas has been the action learning projects, in which groups present their reports to the Assistant Commissioner HRM, the Chief Administrative Officer and academic staff from the course provider. Groups are assigned a mentor to meet periodically as they prepare their project. Consistently high quality reports have been prepared on a range of HR issues, such as, rostering, devolving HR services and integrating Garda and Civilian HR. “Right, when can you start” was the question posed by one Assistant Commissioner at the conclusion of a presentation. The project on sickness absence is now organisational policy, as are others.

Another area that has worked well is the use of Garda case studies. Modules on strategy and change management both use internal Garda speakers to describe successful projects, thus marrying theory to practical Garda examples.

From the start there was a conscious decision to target distinct groups for inclusion as participants. With twenty five participants per course and the programme run once per year, the selection was often difficult. The first and most obvious group was managers and supervisors working in HRM and Internal Affairs. Next came operational managers, mostly Superintendents, Inspectors and Higher Executive Officers. This group was targeted as they would be critical to longer-term success as implementers of future devolved models of HR services. The final group were strategic partners, influential decision makers in other support functions, such as Finance, IT, Change Management, Garda College, etc. The strategic partners were included as any significant change project would typically require their support.

All of the above groupings were made up of Garda and civilian staff. The mix of HR, operational and strategic partners works well in a number of ways. Class discussion is typically lively with different backgrounds ensuring the absence of unitary perspectives. Networking has been another benefit, with participants gaining an informal alumni of contacts throughout the organisation.



A foundation programme was introduced in 2007 in response to HR training needs of more junior level staff. A four day programme made up of eight half day modules was designed to provide an insight into the following areas; absence, performance and change management, employment law, diversity, employee relations and self awareness. The IMI has delivered both cohorts of the programme run so far.

From the organisations perspective these programmes provide value on a number of fronts. Firstly, because they are customised the content matches Garda requirements exactly. Both prepare participants for a move from more traditional ways of doing personnel business to a more strategic model. Abstraction is also low requiring work place absence of eight days for the certificate and four for the foundation. Costs associated with both programmes are also keen by industry standards.

SPONSORED EDUCATION

A second pillar in the effort to increase HR capability was the drive to encourage staff to gain formal HR related academic qualifications. This was achieved in two ways, sponsored education and the refund of fees scheme. The annual HQ directive for refund of education fees listed HR courses as one of the organisations priority areas for funding. This directive also advertises a competition for a number of sponsored or fully funded courses mostly at postgraduate level, with HR courses consistently featuring. A final element was the use of delegated training budgets to sponsor staff working in HR roles.

The result of this effort is that the senior HR team is almost exclusively qualified at a post graduate level in either HR or a related field such as organisational behaviour. Within the organisation, HR courses are one of the most popular choices under the refund of fees schemes.

CIPD ACCREDITATION

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) is the professional body for HR practitioners in Ireland and the UK. In addition to providing resources, advice and practical how-to-guides it awards levels of membership linked to its own professional standard. Membership grades are split between professional (chartered member, chartered fellow) and non professional (associate and licentiate).

The traditional route to the professional membership grades is to gain CIPD graduate membership through an accredited degree or masters in HR. Graduate members can then apply for chartered membership which is awarded based on experience and assessed through interview. Several Garda employees have achieved chartered membership in this way.

In 2008 An Garda Síochána became the first Irish organisation to have staff assessed under the CIPD professional assessment of competence (PAC). The PAC is aimed at experienced senior HR professionals who possess the knowledge and skills of chartered CIPD members but who do not have CIPD qualifications. Candidate's suitability is measured over two days at a multi-test assessment centre. The outcome for An Garda Síochána was two chartered fellows and three

chartered members, the first time 100% of an organisation's applicants gained a chartered level of membership from the PAC process. These individuals are at the heart of the Garda HR management team and this level of accredited HR capability is unparalleled in the Irish Civil Service.

LINKS TO CORPORATE AND HR STRATEGY

It would be misleading to pretend that these efforts were planned in a co-ordinated and strategic way from the outset. Rather there was an acknowledgement that the organisation needed to modernise the way it did its HR business and learning about the technical side of HR was a good place to start. HRM's ability to design and plan strategically grew as people developed through the various initiatives.

The inclusion in the 2005 to 2007 Garda Corporate Strategy of HR capability as one of seven strategic initiatives was a major boost. This high profile prioritisation of HR knowledge and skills was frequently and successfully used in business cases to justify investment in several projects.

The current Corporate Strategy (2007 to 2009) added more HR related imperatives and projects, signalling the importance of HRM to the Garda organisation and its modernisation agenda. As a consequence HR Skills has been selected as a cornerstone of the draft HR strategy.

CONCLUSION

The Garda organisation has invested money and effort into the up-skilling of HR knowledge and skills and so it is reasonable to ask what has been gained in return?

The customised training programmes have been very successful in terms of skilling one hundred and fifty staff in HR knowledge and skills. Participant evaluations are consistently high and both programmes have helped raise awareness of the change and modernisation agenda within Garda HRM. The certificate programme was the subject of a presentation to the European Foundation for Management Development conference in France in 2006 highlighting international interest and portraying An Garda Síochána in a positive light.

Expenditure on formal education has also paid dividends with the senior HR team almost exclusively educated to masters' level in HR or a related subject. Chartered memberships of the CIPD are further evidence of the new technical capability within HRM.

Four years into the project, dividends are accruing as the section now possesses sufficient knowledge and skills to strategically manage the change process. The use of this new internal expertise cuts down on the need for external consultants, thereby saving money and allowing for the efficient implementation of projects.

The win in November 2007 of the Public Sector CIPD Watson Wyatt HR Excellence was a major achievement for An Garda Síochána. The entry entitled modernising Garda HR confirms our position as leaders in public sector HRM.

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Back row left to right: Chief Superintendent Michael Feehan, Deputy Commissioner Peter Fitzgerald, Chief Superintendent John Grogan, Chief Superintendent Kieran McGann.

Front row left to right: Sergeant John Dollard, Miriam O'Callaghan (Awards ceremony MC), Assistant Commissioner Catherine Clancy, Assistant Commissioner Noirin O'Sullivan, Ms. Anne Heraty, CPL Plc. (Chair of awards judging panel), Mr. Eric Brady.

This new capability manifests itself in a confident and progressive HR team that is working hard to modernise and transform HR services within An Garda Síochána. More and more organisation value will flow from this initiative as new skills and knowledge are applied to organisational advantage.

Transforming HR into a Strategic Business Partner

Ms Paula Quinn



Ms Paula Quinn

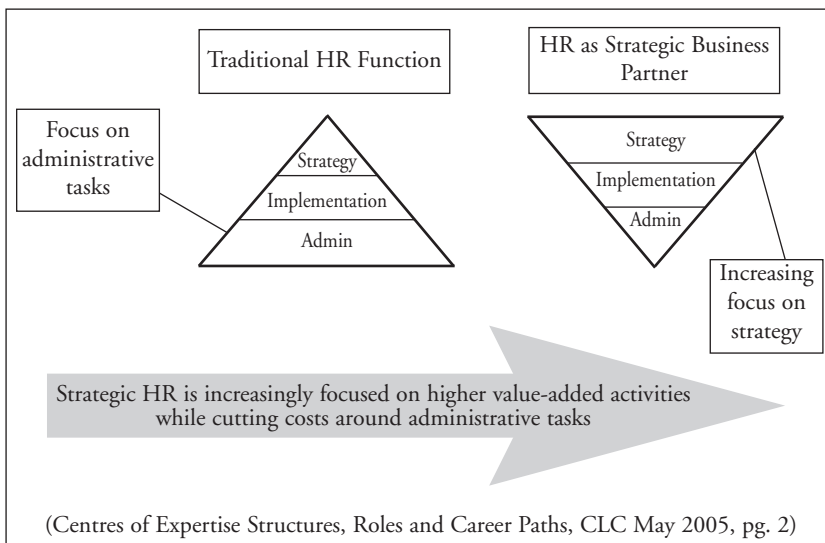
The objective of this article is to examine the theoretical concept of Shared Services as applied to Human Resource Management and investigate how a Human Resources Shared Services model could be implemented in An Garda Síochána.

The Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) report entitled, “Ireland – Towards an Integrated Public Service” which was published in 2008 states “Increased interconnectedness and co-operation are also necessary in order to allow the Public Service to achieve economies of scale through shared services and the development of centres of excellence that can serve as repositories for good practice and expertise. Otherwise, the fragmentation of the Public Service risks driving up costs and decreasing efficiency and effectiveness.” This theory can also be applied on a micro level and thus is relevant to An Garda Síochána.

Shared Services are commonly utilised in world leading organisations as a way of delivering cost savings and achieving economies of scale. The introduction of shared services model is very often driven by the demands of rapid globalisation but it can also represent a transition in corporate thinking from the transactional or process orientation to the strategic.

The Human Resource Management function and a support service is often one identified as viable for transformation from a traditional or devolved structure to a Shared Services Environment. This has evolved as a result of the focus by modern organisations on Strategic Human Resources as opposed to Personnel Management and the concept of aligning HR Strategy to Corporate Strategy and the business needs of an organisation.

TRANSFORMING HR INTO A STRATEGIC HR BUSINESS PARTNER



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The structure or make up of a Shared Services environment can vary from one organisation to another. The concept is very flexible and can be used in a number of areas including IT, finance and HR. Examples of Shared Services in the Irish public sector are the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform Financial Shared Services Centre located in Killarney and the Garda Information Services Centre (GISC) in Castlebar.

Three attributes have been identified as recurring themes when setting up a shared service:

1. The nature of the services are determined primarily by the customer
2. There is common provision of services
3. The services are available to a number of users

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There are three recognised models of shared service:

Centralisation – Organisations centralise previously devolved activities, with standard processes and common service levels to internal customers.

Hierarchical Sharing – Sharing among a hierarchy of organisations, with a lead organisation providing services to others.

Peer Sharing – Sharing between similar organisations.

The service level from a shared service centre can differ from one organisation to another. *“A shared service centre can provide the full service from routine administration in, for example recruitment, payroll and training right through to supplying specialist HR information and advice on HR policy and practice”* (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), 2006). The make up of the shared service all depends on the needs and structure of an organisation and their differing agendas.

HOW A SHARED SERVICE CAN WORK

A shared service centre can be located anywhere in the world. If the right technology is in place then it could be set-up in India while the customers/employees are carrying out their work in Ireland. For many organisations, especially private sector companies, this is an effective means of reducing the cost of administering transactional HR tasks. Locations for the shared service centres maybe targeted for their cheap workforce.

One office or location can be set-up to administer the whole organisation or alternatively a number of shared services offices can be created on an e.g. regional basis. For example Standard Chartered Bank introduced their shared services on a global basis. Although their employees are dispersed across a number of countries their numbers were small enough that one office was sufficient to deal with their employee needs. In contrast IBM introduced their shared services on a regional basis or in the case of PricewaterhouseCoopers in the countries that most of their employees were located.

Although a shared services centre maybe in a remote location this does not stop them having clear communications with their customers. In setting up HR shared service many organisations create an intranet or portal to provide access

for employees to the majority of HR information and services. An online service, which is administered by the shared services centre, can provide a single point of access to HR knowledge, assets and applications. The online service may just be an information outlet containing details on all aspects of HR in the organisation or it may be more advanced and provide a self service component where employees may apply online for e.g. leave or be able to change their personnel details e.g. change of address.

If the employee is unable to find the information they require on the intranet/portal then they may ring the shared services centre. This is usually set-up like a call centre and the call takers are customer service people rather than HR people. They have an overall knowledge of all HR policies and procedures but they are not experts in any field. If they are unable to help the customer then they will have to redirect the person to an expert in the field the query is in. These experts can be termed as case workers and they may be located in the shared services centre or retained in central HR.

Between the intranet/portal and the call centre it is estimated that 90% of routine HR related work can be administered and more HR professionals in the organisation can focus their energies on more strategic matters and bring HR inline with the business needs of the organisation.

In order to gain a better understanding of implementing such a model in An Garda Síochána, two other public sector organisation were examined; the London Metropolitan Police Force and Her Majesty's Prison Service. Both these organisations introduced the concept of Shared Services in 2006 which came about from Government pressure to generate efficiencies. Both organisations put technology at the centre of the new Shared Services Environment. In both cases the focus moved from process management to quality people management. Both make use of effective Integrated Information Technology Systems to provide for a self-service facility in the first instance and a Customer Service Centre. In the case of the Prison Service, the organisation is already deriving benefits in the form of payroll savings and the London Metropolitan Police project is due to go live in Autumn 2009.

SHARED SERVICES IN AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA

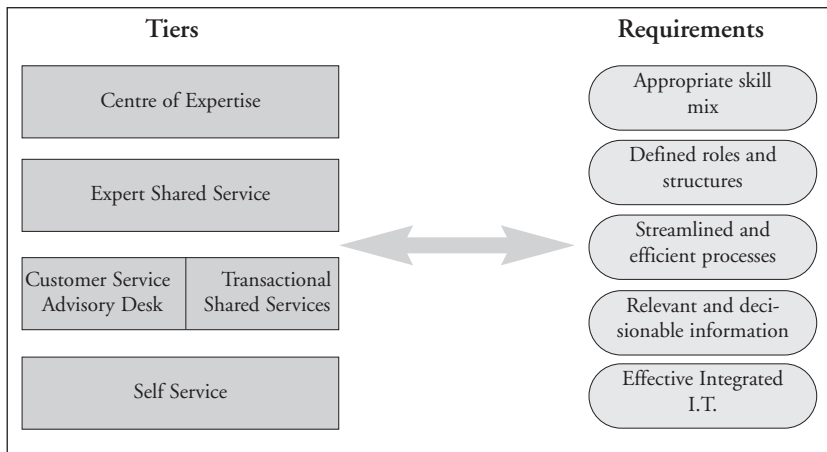
The current delivery of HR services in An Garda Síochána was examined. Garda HR in Headquarters and the Garda Civilian HR Directorate in Navan provide the same service in relation to HR processes but for a different group of employees. The establishment of one such business unit is proposed which is located in Navan and staffed in the main by civil servants.

It was suggested that a 4-Tier Service Model be considered for An Garda Síochána consisting of a Self Service Module, a dedicated Human Resources Call Centre, Specialised Offices and a Centre of Excellence. The information provision role of HR would to a large extent be catered for through the use of a self-service intranet i.e. the Garda Portal¹. Other transactional processes would be facilitated using the dedicated Call Centre and the Specialised Offices who would act as case workers. This would leave the Centre of Excellence to focus on HR Strategy and developing the business goals and objectives for the area.

¹An Garda Síochána's intranet system providing on-line access to the organisations information/knowledge repository

The diagram below demonstrates how a shared service model could be structured for An Garda Síochána.

HR SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL



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BENEFITS OF A SHARED SERVICE FOR AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA

- HR will be able to focus its energies on more strategic matters thus aligning itself with the business needs of the organisation.
- It will help with the integration of Garda and Civilian HR's. No organisation should have two separate HR units if it expects to run smoothly and efficiently.
- It will allow for the redeployment of Garda members back to operational roles who are working in administrative positions.
- It will necessitate the introduction of a new integrated Human Resource Information System (HRIS) that contains information about all employees whether they are Garda, Civilian, Reserve or Student. This can only be an advantage for the organisation as it will allow An Garda Síochána to manage its most important asset, its staff.
- It will lead to a standardisation of policies and procedures. Employees will have access to the exact same information and will be treated in the same manner.
- It will lead to greater efficiencies and reduced duplication.

In conclusion there can be no doubt that there will be huge challenges in implementing a Shared HR Services model in An Garda Síochána. As with any project related to change, there will be resistance. There must be a champion of the project and the benefits that can be derived must be communicated within the organisation. Information Technology issues must be addressed and there can be no doubt that a Human Resource Information System must be created. The investment must be made, but as set out above, the returns will undoubtedly outweigh the investment.

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A perspective on deployment modelling

Mr Finnian Gallagher



Mr Finnian Gallagher

INTRODUCTION

An Garda Síochána has undergone a quiet evolution from a people perspective as is evidenced by some of the significant shifts in the staff demographic that are presented in this article. Changes in gender balance, the civilianisation process and an emerging diversity within the membership of the organisation are among the key drivers of this change within An Garda Síochána. The reader is invited to consider these factors against the changing nature of the society An Garda Síochána has been tasked to serve.

Selected findings of the Garda Public Attitudes Survey (2008) are also presented in the following text and these show that a high level of service delivery is currently being achieved by the organisation. However this article reverts back to the dynamics of the organisational demographic and poses questions on whether or not service delivery pressures are lying in wait arising from gender balance and diversity issues.

This article explores the importance of the effective deployment of human resources from a service delivery perspective. The article explores the idea of human resource deployment models as a means of supporting strategic decisions. The article argues that such a model would deliver value to the Garda organisation, if founded on the following five 'building blocks' namely;

- Ensure equity
- Make the best use of diversity
- Effectively support family friendly working arrangements
- Support the integration of Civilian staff
- Facilitate excellent service delivery in the future.

BACKGROUND - CHANGING ORGANISATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

The current strength of An Garda Síochána is 14,657 sworn members and has moved from an almost exclusively male base towards the significantly more gender balanced organisational profile seen today. To reinforce this point, figures obtained from An Garda Síochána (2009) show that while female participation stood at just 8 female members in 1970, this figure now stands at in excess of 3,000 members. In service terms, while almost 70 per cent of our female strength hold less than 10 years service, the future female/male ratio will increase as the vast majority of retiring, or soon to retire members are male. The following tables are presented to highlight important age, gender and service considerations;

TABLE 1 SERVICE BY GENDER PROFILE IN AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA

| Length of service | Males | Females |
|---------------------------------|-------|---------|
| Less than 10 years | 4915 | 2278 |
| 10 years but less than 20 years | 2523 | 718 |
| 20 years but less than 30 years | 2574 | 258 |
| Greater than 30 years | 1365 | 26 |



TABLE 2 AGE BY GENDER PROFILE OF AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA

| Organisational Profile - Age by Gender | | | | | |
|--|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Age (years) | Male | Female | Total staff | % | |
| | | | | Male | Female |
| <25 | 930 | 453 | 1383 | 6.3% | 3.1% |
| 25-30 | 2187 | 1097 | 3284 | 14.9% | 7.5% |
| 30-35 | 1989 | 809 | 2798 | 13.6% | 5.5% |
| 35-40 | 1603 | 471 | 2074 | 10.9% | 3.2% |
| 40-45 | 891 | 169 | 1060 | 6.1% | 1.2% |
| 45-50 | 1984 | 201 | 2185 | 13.5% | 1.4% |
| 50+ | 1793 | 80 | 1873 | 12.2% | 0.5% |
| Totals | 11377 | 3280 | 14657 | 77.6% | 22.4% |

SOURCE [TABLES 1 AND 2]: An Garda Síochána (2009)

The relaxation of recruitment regulations in recent times is also altering the demographics of An Garda Síochána i.e., the increase in the age limit for new recruits from 28 years to 35 years and the dropping of the requirement to have passed Irish in second level education. A rich diversity is thus emerging in the organisation as highlighted in Table 3:

TABLE 3 NATIONALITIES IN AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA
[NUMBERS OF NEW GARDAÍ BY GRADUATION YEAR]

| Nationality / Graduation Year | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | * 2009 |
|-------------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| South African | | | 1 | |
| American | | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| Canadian | 1 | | | |
| Chinese | | 10 | 8 | 2 |
| Danish | | 1 | | |
| Dutch | | 1 | | |
| Greek | | 1 | | |
| Polish | | 1 | 6 | 2 |
| Romanian | | 2 | | |
| Lithuanian | | | 1 | |
| Bosnian | | | 1 | |
| German | | | | 2 |
| Total (s) | 1 | 17 | 21 | 7 |
| <i>* to May 2009</i> | | | | |

SOURCE: An Garda Síochána (2009)

Another noteworthy and significant change in the constituents of the organisational cadre is the recent increased level of civilianisation within the

organisation which has gained impetus, especially since the Publication of the 2006 Report of the Garda Síochána Act Implementation Review Group. The following quote taken from that report is noteworthy in that respect, as it encapsulates the Public view on the policy of civilianisation:

“The objective of Public policy, and a clamant Public demand, is for the visible presence of uniformed Gardaí on the streets. One immediate way of ensuring this is to replace those Gardaí who are presently invisible in support jobs in stations by the recruitment of Civilian staff, thus releasing trained Gardaí for duties more appropriate to their training and experience.”

Currently just over 2,720 civilian staff (a mix of industrial, administrative and professional grades) serve in An Garda Síochána and while the current ratio of civilians to Gardaí stands at just over 1:5, this is underwhelming by international norms of between 1:3 to 2:5; Garda Civilian HR Directorate (2009) and so in the circumstances, future increases in civilian representation may also arise.

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A WIDER CONTEXT - PARALLEL SOCIETAL CHANGE

Published statistics from the Central Statistics Office (2008) highlight some significant trends that are fast becoming a watermark of Irish society. For example, the Irish population is expanding with the numbers enumerated on census night 23rd April 2006 standing at 4.24 million persons, compared with 3.92 million persons at the last census in April 2002 (representing an increase of 8.2 per cent over that four years period). However, an interesting feature of that population growth was that net inward migration accounted for 58 per cent of that increase. Thus Irish society has fundamentally become more diverse and a total of 188 countries were represented within the non-Irish national enumerated in the last census. Interestingly, 82 per cent of our non-Irish national population come from just 10 countries: the UK, Poland, Lithuania, Nigeria, Latvia, US, China, Germany, Philippines and France.

According to statistics collated by the Quarterly National Household Survey Series conducted by the Central Statistics Office in 2007, there is a near perfect 50:50 split between the numbers of men and women in the Irish labour force. However from within this balanced state a distinct gender skew develops, as illustrated by the statistics carried in Table 4;

TABLE 4 GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE IRISH LABOUR FORCE

| Position at quarterly survey (Jun – Aug 07) | Male | Female |
|--|------|--------|
| Gender holding a third level qualification - % | 38.8 | 50.7 |
| Portion holding third level and employed - % | 92.6 | 82.5 |
| Overall in mgt, professional or tech positions - % | 19.7 | 15.5 |
| Overall gender participation employment - % | 74.0 | 55.1 |
| Average hours per week worked – weekly | 40.8 | 31.8 |
| Married and participating in labour force - % | 77.1 | 53.1 |

SOURCE: Central Statistics Office (2007)

These figures show that although Irish females are more highly qualified than their male counterparts, significantly fewer remain in employment after they marry, and those that do remain work less hours. The author suggests it is likely that this lesser number of hours illustrates that females typically avail of family friendly working arrangements. In terms of families, research conducted by the Central Statistics Office (2008) has also found that the Irish fertility rate (the average number of children born to each female) stands at just over 2 and females will have their first child (an average of all births, irrespective of marital status) at aged 29.

THE SERVICE ACHIEVEMENTS AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

In order to illustrate the service achievement of An Garda Síochána, the author draws from the primary finding of the Garda Public Attitudes Survey 2008, the tenth (and most recent) in a series of national surveys commissioned by An Garda Síochána and carried out independently by Millward Brown IMS. On a headline level, Millward Brown reported that overall public satisfaction with An Garda Síochána's service was 81 per cent; Garda Síochána (2008). Paradoxically however, 72 per cent of 2008 respondents felt that the Garda service needed to be improved. The most frequent respondent suggestions to contribute a better service were higher levels of manpower, increased frequency of foot patrols, more community contact and longer station opening hours.

While the author asserts there is much to be proud of in terms of the Public perception of the service being delivered by An Garda Síochána, the organisation will face a considerable future service challenge. This article suggests that while the sources of this test are many, the challenges presented within its changing demographic are significant.

From a diversity perspective, An Garda Síochána has already assigned strategic importance to diversity management in terms of service delivery and human resources. The 2008 National policing plan affirms that assertion by impressing a determination 'to provide equal protection and appropriate service, while nurturing mutual respect and trust'. From a human resource viewpoint, the National plan states that An Garda Síochána will 'continue to promote recruitment of full-time and Reserve members in line with the Programme for Government, and particularly from ethnic minority communities to allow An Garda Síochána to better reflect the diversity of Irish society'. However in that context, it is important to note that the sampling methodology of the Garda Public Attitudes Survey was biased towards the settled community and so by collective admission, the ultimate survey results under-represent members of the travelling community and hard-to-reach groups such as non-English-speaking immigrants.

An Garda Síochána already operates a work force family friendly policy in order to extend support to Garda and civilian members who are facing pressure combining work and family commitments. In recent years, an increasing number of family friendly work arrangements are being offered and availed of. While Gunnigle et al (2005) cite organisational benefits like better working environments, increased flexibility and better retention as often arising from

family friendly work arrangements; Taylor (2005) states that there are inherent disadvantages associated with such arrangements, like increased workloads and lowered morale on the part of full-time workers, increased administrative costs, reduced quality standards and a perception, on the part of non full-time workers, that flexible working has an adverse affect on career prospects.

Whatever perspective adopted, the author suggests that the matter of family friendly working arrangements is of huge importance to all service stakeholders and so the implementation of such policies demands careful management.

Deployment pressures

Respondents to the Millward Brown survey clearly cited their view that service would be better if higher levels of manpower were evident. Considering that feedback for a moment, there is an argument to be made that there is no divergence between what the public want and what An Garda Síochána aspires to deliver.

The overall staffing levels of An Garda Síochána are subject to Governmental constraint and consistent debate accompanies the question of the adequacy of the resources made available for policing. In that regard, the author submits it is all the more incumbent on An Garda Síochána to deploy its human resources as astutely and effectively as possible to deliver the best service possible from limited resources. It is further asserted that achieving this is a challenge and so a strategic human resources deployment model should be examined as a means of assisting the best deployment decisions possible to support future service delivery.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DEPLOYING STAFF EFFECTIVELY

Jackson and Schuler (1990) propose that the purpose of strategic human resource planning is to ensure that the right people are in the right place at the right time. Bohlander and Snell (2007) continue that theme and advance the idea that it is ultimately the pattern of human resources deployment and activity that enables an organisation to achieve its strategic goals and vision. The effective deployment of staff is thus of critical importance, as this more or less dictates the organisational service capacity.

The author argues that effective deployment of human resources is of importance to each and every staff member of An Garda Síochána. On an individual level, the behavioural psychologist John Stacy Adams (1965) forwarded a well accepted contention that employees look for equity and fair treatment in the workplace. He argued that employees will compare each other and will seek equity between the efforts they put into work their inputs and the rewards they get from work their outputs. If employees perceive inequity they become as he put it, 'distressed', i.e., resentful, de-motivated and demoralised.

Adams' equity theory remains especially valid in the context of human resource deployment. For example, the project team suggests that it is not unreasonable to expect that two similarly sized Garda Districts, in terms of area and population, will be staffed by more or less similar numbers. The author thus asserts it is fundamentally important that staff are 'evenly' deployed in order to avoid conflicting individual and organisational equity perceptions.

DEPLOYMENT MODELS ALREADY IN USE IN AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA

A limited deployment model called the “Garda Establishment Redistribution Model” (GERM) is already in use within the organisation to assist decisions relating to the deployment of probationer Gardaí. However, GERM is limited insofar as it does not advise on the most effective means to distribute all Garda personnel, both sworn and civilian, nor does it indicate how many personnel should be in any area at a given time.

GERM instead suggests the allocation of probationers based on differing weightings associated with the following, Garda Síochána (2000):

- *District Categorisation* – a product of area covered and resident population.
- *Assessment* - a measure of the percentage workload allocated to each District, taking into account socio-economic factors and types of crimes that are committed.
- *Activity Analysis* – an indication of how much of Garda time was spent carrying out the main activities that were identified as part of the study conducted to inform the initial design of GERM.

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It is seen that GERM was developed to create a scientific, rational and pragmatic model to aid decisions to distribute the Garda personnel allocated by Government. While GERM has achieved this aim with respect to probationer Gardaí, the author suggests that it does not deliver any value to Garda managers faced with decisions on how they should deploy their staff in the day-to-day, nor does it assist planning to address future deployment pressures.

Most deployment models examined in the context of preparing this article were found in operation in private sector enterprises, which by their nature can extract a level of flexibility from staff deployment the type of which does not normally feature in the public sector e.g. private enterprises can achieve flexibilities over a wide spectrum of recruitment practice, ranging from the engagement of casual workers to the implementation of redundancy schemes. In addition, the deployment models in operation in the Private sector were typically found in industries serving a quantifiable marketplace, and their models were ultimately aimed at matching labour hours with market demand; Ainsworth (1995), Park et al (2007) and Khoong (2006).

The author argues that [for the purposes of this article] some similarities exist between An Garda Síochána and The Royal Navy, and so elements of their human resource deployment model may be of interest. These similarities are drawn from a case study conducted by Blosch and Antony (1999), as follows:

- A rank system exists in the Navy and this places emphasis on accurate long-term forecasting, especially in the case of senior ranks as the time taken for them to be trained and to gain the right experience is considerable.
- A high degree of specialisation exists in the Royal Navy and in certain circumstances the possibility for inter-changeability between operational areas can be low [and again, this factor is further complicated by the rank structure].

- The Naval system accounts for what they term ‘regeneration’, i.e. where extra manpower is required in times of crisis but where the level of extra personnel introduced into the system is ultimately a policy decision for Government.
- The Naval system seeks to minimise the risk of not having the appropriate human resources to respond to emergencies. The concept of risk from the Naval perspective essentially contains three components; the risk of an unwanted event, the impact of an event and the probability of the event occurring. The Navy thus seek to identify all potential sources of risk, to estimate the impact of these risks and finally to manage these risks through the effective deployment of its human resources.

IS THERE A CASE FOR A HUMAN RESOURCE DEPLOYMENT MODEL IN AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA?

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As Jackson and Schuler (1990) put it ‘when planning the future needs, the only sure bet is that they will be different from current needs’. This paper has already outlined that An Garda Síochána has already undergone significant change in the make up of its staff. Statistics from the Central Statistics Office also confirm that the principal demographics of Irish society have altered in tandem, especially in terms of the diversity of our population.

Given that future Gardaí will be drawn from a diverse Irish society, An Garda Síochána must adapt to both a diverse society and future workforce. Such a transformation will mean that organisations need to develop management competence in terms of but not exclusively the deployment of a workforce that is more diverse on many levels including age, ethnicity, family situation, educational background, country of origin, and the attitudes and values associated with each of these factors, Jackson and Schuler (1990). The author also suggests that service delivery to ethnic groups will be enhanced and risks lessened if the future ethnic diversity of An Garda Síochána is deployed effectively.

It is also been presented that the changing gender profile of An Garda Síochána will increase demand for family friendly work patterns. This increased demand, if acceded to, will result in a loss of labour hours, which in itself has the potential to cause service delivery disruption. However, that risk could be compounded by retention problems if An Garda Síochána cannot offer family friendly opportunity to staff e.g. the researchers Lynch and Tuckey (2008) found in their study of the Australian Police that female officers resigned at a higher rate than male officers. In particular, the highest percentage of women leaving the service occurred in the 25-39 year age bracket, which coincides with the time period when women are most likely to experience family pressures arising from childbirth and caring for young children.

Another notable feature of An Garda Síochána in recent times is the increased level of civilianisation within the organisation. The OECD (2008) view civilianisation as an especially important concept insofar as it is designed to ensure that An Garda Síochána makes best use of the sworn officers available, by

aiming to release them from duties or roles that could be performed effectively by civilian support staff. The OECD also cite that civilianisation is also of assistance in driving forward the professionalisation of An Garda Síochána, by bringing in specific management and other specialised skills to support the policing effort. In order to get the best from its drive towards civilianisation, An Garda Síochána must thus make every effort to ensure its civilian cadre are deployed astutely.

In the context of deployment models, the authors Bin Idris and Eldridge (1998) advance the argument that it is pertinent that a longer term perspective (of at least three years and extending perhaps to five years for some types of occupations) should be adopted by deployment models. The author supports this view as this length of period is required, at a minimum, to afford the required time to produce new skills e.g. probationer Gardaí to fully operational Gardaí, to upgrade existing skills e.g. to support Officers assuming the responsibility of higher rank or specialised duty and to engage in strategic organisational transformation and change which is already a feature of An Garda Síochána.

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CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

While the obvious strength lent by the people already working within An Garda Síochána is strongly reflected in the Garda Public Attitudes Survey, the author again draws attention to the fact that the survey did not significantly engage with non-Irish nationals and members of the travelling community. In that context, there is a genuine risk that Public satisfaction rates will fall if a more representative and diverse population sample is questioned in future surveys. Based on the research presented, scenarios will arise when it will be advantageous if An Garda Síochána can deploy specific elements of its demographic profile in a targeted manner e.g. a member of non-Irish nationality could achieve excellent results as a community policing officer, if he/she is deployed in an area where a significant non-Irish national community reside.

This article also touches on the challenges that are likely to arise from the gender profile of An Garda Síochána. The research conducted shows that female representation within the organisation is increasing. In addition, the age profile of females shows that almost 72 per cent are aged less than 35 years of age. It is thus asserted that it is certain that the demand for family friendly work arrangements over the immediate and intermediate terms will be strong. Dealing with such demands presents a clear challenge insofar as managers cannot accommodate everybody in a carte blanche manner because doing so could jeopardise the capacity to deliver a good service. Equally, there is much evidence to suggest that a broad brush approach of refusing all such accommodations is likely to drive substantial numbers towards resignation, or even prevent their entry in the first instance.

The author concludes by stressing that there is high potential organisational risk if An Garda Síochána does not address the challenges presented by its own demographics. It is further concluded that a comprehensive strategic human resource deployment model could deliver genuine value by assisting deployment decisions in order to ensure that, in the future, the right people will be in the

right place at the right time to deliver service excellence. Arising from the peculiarities and nuances of An Garda Síochána, some of which were found to be in common with the Royal Navy, the author suggests that experimental design technologies should be employed in the development of that model. From a cost perspective, it is recommended that the GERM deployment model be built upon in order to cater for the unique requirements of An Garda Síochána, so long as any potential solution has regard to the following five building blocks.

Block One – Ensuring equity

It is of fundamental significance to ensure that staff are ‘evenly’ deployed to avoid the prospect of conflicting equity perceptions arising with respect to the workloads individual members are expected to deal with.

Block Two – Making best use of diversity

While it is recommended that An Garda Síochána continues to promote the recruitment of full time and reserve members from non-Irish nationalities, it will be of huge importance that these members are deployed in a manner that best reflects the communities they will be expected to serve.

Block Three – Effective management of family friendly arrangements

The author suggests that if managed cleverly, the benefits of accommodating family friendly policy can outweigh perceived disadvantages. Against that backdrop, it is recommended that An Garda Síochána examines the development of bespoke flexible working patterns in order to help achieve the optimum balance between facilitating the work-life balance of its members and ensuring public service delivery. Thus any future human resources deployment model must be capable of adding value in terms of the effective management of family friendly working arrangements.

Block Four – Supporting integration

Public mandate has sought An Garda Síochána to make best use of its sworn members by consistently releasing them from duties that could be performed effectively by civilian support staff. In that regard, civilian resources must be astutely deployed to complement the efforts of sworn Garda members.

Block Five – Delivering an excellent service

The author asserts that from a service perspective, all organisations must take their lead from those that avail of the service, be that consumers or members of the public. Bringing that thinking back to An Garda Síochána, the author highlights the Public’s frequently suggested wish to heighten Garda visibility. In that respect, any deployment model must also enhance the organisational capacity to deliver what the public demand.

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Garda Occupational Health Service (A Welfare Focus)

Dr Donal Collins



Dr Donal Collins

BACKGROUND

Traditionally, a direction to appear before the Garda Surgeon was usually seen as a sanction to those on sick leave. Despite this image the medical care provided by the Garda Surgeon and his staff played a critical part in the health and success of An Garda Síochána.

From 1922 to 1994 there were three Garda Surgeons, namely Garda Surgeon Vincent Ellis, Garda Surgeon Joseph Quigley and Garda Surgeon John Malone. Vincent Elliot lived in Garda Headquarters with his family and ran “Sick Parade”, or a primary care service to Garda members. This service was later developed and expanded to cater for some in-patient secondary care in what was known as the Garda Hospital. Accommodation consisted of four wards with four beds in each ward totalling 16 beds. Services offered related to treatment for injury on duty and a broad range of other medical conditions.

Up to the mid 1980’s, 85% of the work was hands-on primary care and some secondary care (i.e. hospital based care). Garda Surgeon John Malone was appointed in 1984 and worked in this appointment for over ten years. He was the first specialist Occupational Physician to hold this appointment. His focus was therefore on preventative medicine and all that this entailed, which included working in cooperation with many other disciplines to affect an improved understanding of health and welfare for members of An Garda Síochána. This improved the life of the member and the efficient working of An Garda Síochána from a health perspective. With the introduction of Health and Safety legislation the focus on primary care was reduced and services provided for in-patient facilities were phased out. Members then availed of primary care and secondary care from their own G.P’s and doctors in their local areas.

A NEW DIRECTION

In 1994 the position of the Garda Surgeon was civilianised. Dr. Gerry McCarthy held the position for a number of years until his untimely death. Dr Donal Collins was appointed to the position of Chief Medical Officer (CMO) in August 2000 and became the second specialist Occupational Physician to hold this post. The Occupational Health Department set out to change the attitude towards the medical department by changing its focus of the department.

With a goal of providing a professional Occupational Health Service (O.H.S.) with organisational welfare at the centre of its ethos. Some of the objectives included early interventions by medical and local management, rehabilitative strategies aimed at supporting and encouraging members of the organisation to return to work as soon as possible after illness or injury.

It is the authors’ opinion that early intervention by all involved is crucial in ensuring an early return to work for those on sick leave and those experiencing difficulties which interfere with their fitness for work. When management intervene in the first two weeks of a sickness absence there is a significant likelihood of an early return to work. The reason for this is simple. Early



communication ensures continued contact with the work place. It shows that management and the organisation care about the members and value their contribution. An indication of the success of proactive intervention policies is evident in the yearly absence rates.

ABSENCE RATES 2008

On average there are 80 members of the organisation on long term sick leave (in excess of 183 days in any period of one year) at any given time. The overall sickness absence rate for the organisation for 2008 was 150,000 tours of duty lost due to sickness. This equates to an average of 10 days per member. When sickness absence due to injury on duty is subtracted and the result equates to an average of 8.5 days per member lost due to sickness. These figures compare very favourable to other similar organisations such as the Prison Service and other police forces. For example the Police Service of Northern Ireland has an average rate of 11.22 days lost per member (Human Resources Department, Police Service of Northern Ireland, 2009).

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With new strategies it is feasible that these rates can be improved further for the benefit of the members (those on sick leave and their colleagues) and the organisation.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH STRATEGY

The O.H.S. objectives include encouraging and recommending strategies aimed at providing working arrangements to members who have been unfortunate to become disabled during their careers. The objective is to allow these members to continue to provide a contribution to the organisation and enjoy a healthy and enjoyable working life.

The overall structure that provides the occupational health service to An Garda Síochána is made up of three complimentary services. The office of the C.M.O. provides expert independent medical advice to the Garda Commissioner, the Medical Department within Human Resource Management (HRM) provides the link to the organisation and management, the Employee Assistance Service provide support services to members of the organisation. The HRM business plan for 2009 outlines the intention to set up a new Occupational Health Structure within HRM that incorporates all these services.

In continuance of the new direction of the O.H.S. a comprehensive review of the occupational health service was undertaken by Assistant Commissioner Human Resource Management in 2005. A working group chaired by Chief Superintendent John Kelly developed a new strategy that was approved by the Commissioner in 2007. This working group included representatives from the staff associations, the Chief Medical Officer, the Employee Assistance Service, Garda Management and members of all ranks.

The terms of reference of the working group included the examination of the current medical services provided in An Garda Síochána and to bring forward recommendations for an appropriate occupational health structure to meet the future needs of the organisation.

The report of the working group made a number of comprehensive recommendations, some of which have already been adopted with many more in development. The title of the department is changed to the “Occupational Health Service” to reflect its new direction and focus. The intention of this report is to bring a new impetus to the monitoring, intervention and health promotion in An Garda Síochána and to move to an interventional type model, as distinct from the previous model. The primary purpose of the reforms is to place even greater emphasis on the health and welfare of every member of An Garda Síochána and support those members on sickness absence in their rehabilitation and return to the workplace. The main recommendations of the report include:

- The appointment of additional Occupations Health Staff (Doctors and Nurses).
- The integration of Civilian Officers into the Garda OHS.
- The development of a new absence management policy that incorporates early reporting of long term sickness to the CMO (28 continuous days or more).
- A regionalised occupational health service with regional service delivery and case conferencing.
- The development of complimentary policies such as ‘drugs and alcohol’ and ‘fitness to drive’.

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COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Greater emphasis is now being placed on communication. Garda management is being encouraged to ensure members on sickness absence, particularly long term, receive supervisory visits as well as all other relevant support such as the services of Employee Assistance Officers, Peer Supporters etc. Liaison and cooperation between the Employee Assistance Service and the Occupational Health Service has proven to be enormously beneficial to both services as well as enhancing the service provided to individual members.

Members returning from illness will be interviewed, so that their needs in terms of rehabilitation and support are discussed and plans put in place to ensure a smooth transition back to work. It is very beneficial that these interviews and supports take place when members suffer either illness, injury or any other difficulties in their lives. It emphasises the value of the member and allows a broad range of supports to be put in place to assist that member to overcome whatever difficulties they may be experiencing. If a member is fit for some duties but not fit for all duties this intervention may facilitate the member with recuperative duties which will in the main eventually result in that member returning to normal duties. This will significantly reduce long term disaffection. Work in general has a very positive affect on ones health in particular when one is well suited to that work, is enthusiastic in relation to that work and gets satisfaction from same.

Other initiatives, such as voluntary health screening for all members of An Garda Síochána, are currently being explored and will be announced in due course. In

addition a health and fitness promotion campaign will be launched in 2009. Health promotion will play a crucial role in the future and it will be implemented more effectively by bringing the occupational health service to the members as far as possible.

REGIONALISATION

The Occupational Health Service is in the process of recruiting two additional full time occupational health doctors, a number of occupational health nurses and clerical support staff. This will allow for the regionalisation of a number of services. A pilot project for audio screening and basic health screening services was carried out in the Northern Region in January this year. The result of the pilot scheme was very positive and the next stage is to develop a similar service in the Western Region later this year. The emphasis is to bring the services to the members and to make it more accessible.

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POLICY DEVELOPMENT

While at present An Garda Síochána, like the prison service and army, has a derogation¹ on the recruitment of personnel with disabilities, members who develop disabilities during their careers are supported by management, HRM, Occupational Health Services and Employee Assistance services in order to help them to deal with that disability. The continued focus provided by the occupational health strategy has spawned the development of other occupational health initiatives.

A separate working group on the Standard of Fitness to Drive in An Garda Síochána, also established by Assistant Commissioner, Human Resource Management, was set up to consider various issues specifically relating to driving standards in the organisation, including medical issues that curtail members from driving. The recommendations of the working group include the recommendation that there would be three standards of driving within An Garda Síochána. This development is welcomed as it will allow the OHS to advise that some members, who suffer from certain medical conditions, including some forms of diabetes, will be found fit to drive, with certain safeguards put in place. The preparation by Human Resource Management of a Drug and Alcohol Policy for An Garda Síochána is also at an advanced stage. This policy is being designed to provide a framework for the prevention and management of alcohol and drug related problems within An Garda Síochána. The aims of the policy will be to provide a safe and healthy work environment for all employees, to assist in maintaining public confidence in An Garda Síochána, to provide advice, assistance and guidance to staff affected by drug and alcohol misuse and to provide advice, assistance and guidance to supervisors and managers confronted with problems associated with alcohol, drug or substance misuse by colleagues. This policy will bring us in line with other police forces throughout the world as well as comply with requirements under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.

CONCLUSION

It is an exciting time for Occupational Health in An Garda Síochána. The new strategy sets out the future direction. Many new policy initiatives such as those

¹ Section 37 of the Employment Equality Act 1998 as amended by Section 25 Employment Equality Act 2004.

outlined will be introduced in the coming years. The building blocks for a new and improved OHS are in place. The importance of focusing on the physical and mental well being of the most valuable asset that the organisation has, its people, has never been more important. Extra organisational capacity can be achieved through the Occupational Health Service, even in times of severe economic constraints. The OHS has a valuable contribution to make to the delivery of an excellent policing service.