

An Garda Síochána

Oifig Saoráil Faisnéise
An Garda Síochána
Teach áth Luimnigh
Lárionad Gnó Udáras Forbartha Tionscail
Baile Sheáin
An Uaimh
Contae na Mí
C15 DR90



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

Teileafón/Tel: (046) 9036350



Láithreán Gréasain/Website:
www.garda.ie

Ríomh-phoist:/Email: foi@garda.ie

Re: Freedom of Information Request FOI-000213-2016 Request Refused

Dear

I refer to the Freedom of Information Act 2014 (FOI Act) and your submission to An Garda Síochána dated the 30th May and received on the 31st May 2016. I also refer to correspondence sent to you dated 28th June 2016.

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

Your request is shown below:

- Under the Freedom of Information Act 2014, I wish to request all records relating to the Irish Language abilities of Gardaí stationed in the Gaeltacht areas.

I wish to inform you that I have decided to refuse your request on 25th July 2016.

The purpose of this letter is to explain my decision.

1. Findings, particulars and reasons for decision.

The Human Resources and People Development section was contacted to identify records relating to the Irish language capabilities of Gardaí within areas designated as Gaeltacht areas. The information requested is not available in a manner to provide the records you have requested. Therefore I am refusing your request under section 15(1)(a) of the FOI Act. Section 15(1)(a) states the following:

Refusal on administrative grounds to grant FOI requests

15. (1) *A head to whom an FOI request is made may refuse to grant the request where—*

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

However from the information supplied by Human Resources and People Development section I am able to provide you with the following:

Irish Proficiency Test Scores for Members in Designated Gaeltacht Areas

Percentage Score	Number
40% or Less	8
Between 41% and 60%	231
Between 61% and 80%	201
Between 81% and 100%	46
Total	486

**figures are correct as of 30th June 2016.*

The table above shows the number of Gardaí working within Gaeltacht areas and have undertaken the Irish Proficiency Test. As members may have undertaken the test more than once, the records show the highest recorded percentage score by those members.

The figures refer specifically to Garda members who are serving in one of the 57 Garda Stations which have been designated Gaeltacht areas in Donegal, Galway and Kerry Garda Divisions. It should be noted that Gardaí from areas which are not designated as Gaeltacht areas may also be proficient in the Irish language.

An Garda Síochána, since its inception in 1922, has endeavoured to provide a quality service in Irish, and is committed to the full implementation of the Official Languages Act 2003 (Act 2003). The implementation of statutory requirements of the Act 2003 is the responsibility of the Official Languages Governance Group and the Official Languages Implementation Group. In addition, An Garda Síochána has appointed an Irish Language Officer to oversee matters pertaining to the Irish Language and Gaeltacht courses are run for employees who wish to improve or practice their Irish Language skills.

The Student/Probationer programme also contains a compulsory Irish Language Module. In 2013 An Garda Síochána introduced an Irish Language stream in the recruitment process to attract applicants with fluency in Irish.

The Oral Irish Proficiency is the standard test applied by An Garda Síochána to assess an employee's level of fluency in Irish. Employees may take the test any number of times and a minimum mark may be a required to qualify for certain promotions.

Gaeilge le Chéile, a new Irish Language webpage, was launched in 2013 on the Garda Portal. This facility is available to every staff member with access to the Garda Portal with an interest in improving his/her Irish language skills. The staff of Rannóg na Gaeilge in the Garda College also provide assistance to members studying for the Oral Irish Proficiency Test or wishing to improve their standard of Irish. Language classes have been conducted in the Garda College and in Garda Headquarters with courses also being offered in Gaeltacht areas.

2. Right of Appeal

In the event that you are not happy with this decision you may seek an Internal Review of the matter by writing to the address below and quoting reference number **F01-000213-2016**.

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

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

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

Account Name: Garda Síochána Finance Section Public Bank Account
Account Number: 10026896
Sort Code: 900017
IBAN: IE86B0F190001710026896
BIC: BOFIE2D

You must ensure that your FOI reference number is included in the payment details.

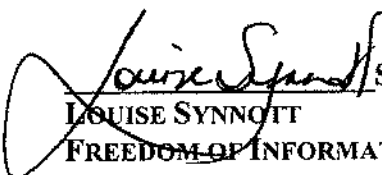
You should submit your request for an Internal Review within 4 weeks from the date of this notification. The review will involve a complete reconsideration of the matter by a more senior member of An Garda Síochána and the decision will be communicated to you within 3 weeks. The making of a late appeal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

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

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

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

Yours sincerely,

 **SUPERINTENDENT**
LOUISE SYNNOTT
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION OFFICER.

26th JULY 2016 .