



Garda Professional Standards Unit

ANNUAL REPORT 2013





AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA

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Mr. Alan Shatter, T. D.
Minister for Justice and Equality

Dear Minister

I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Garda Professional Standards Unit for 2013 pursuant to Section 24(2) of the Garda Síochána Act 2005 (as amended) setting out a summary of the Unit's activities and achievements from 1 January to 31 December 2013.

The Unit's focus during the reporting period included:-

- The revision of the Garda Professional Standards Unit Examination and Review process in adherence with the Organisation's commitments under Section 24 of the Garda Síochána Act 2005 (as amended) to ensure the achievement of maximum benefit through an enhanced approach and the selection of thematic and risk focused process areas. (Details of the revision of the Unit's processes are set out in Section 3 of this report);
 - The provision of feedback to the Organisation's senior management in relation to the findings of the Unit and associated observations on the implementation of policies and procedures at operational level, based on these findings;
 - The provision of findings to the Director of Training and Development at the Garda College with the Unit's Recommendations regarding the modification or intensification of Garda training, in particular areas where required;
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- Closer liaison with the Garda Internal Audit Section through combined operations where required. This cooperation ensures a comprehensive and in-depth Examination and Audit of operational and financial processes and procedures;
- Liaison with the Garda Síochána Internal Affairs Section regarding behaviours which create Organisational risk and those of particular concern. The Unit devises its Examinations around certain processes where additional focus is required;
- The inclusion of various specific and targeted Examinations when appropriate and periodic alteration of its business/policing plan to address issues raised by internal and external stakeholders.

During the reporting period, the Garda Professional Standards Unit carried out Examinations in 5 Divisions/specialist sections incorporating 14 Garda Districts, throughout the country. The associated Examination Reports identify Strengths, Areas of Concern and Organisational Risk and make specific Recommendations to senior management with regard to addressing these areas. Following the publication of Examination Reports, the Unit assists Districts in the development of comprehensive Improvement Plans to implement the Recommendations made to the Division and each District. Approximately six months after publication of the Examination Report, the Garda Professional Standards Unit commences a Review of each District that was the subject of an Examination with specific focus on each District Improvement Plan.

Also during 2013, the Garda Professional Standards Unit, was directed by the Commissioner to carry out the following, as part of their Examination and Review programme:-

- Examinations of Nationwide compliance with Data Protection policy, procedures and legislative requirements;
- Examinations of the operation of Fixed Charge Penalty Notices to ensure compliance with Organisational policy;
- Co-ordination of Organisational property audit returns;



- Monitoring adherence to crime counting rules and Garda policy on crime recording;
- Review of Garda Síochána policy in relation to Divisional and District audits;
- Implementation of the Garda Professional Standards Unit's Recommendations on custody management as part of the Organisation's Working Group on Deaths in Custody.

During the reporting period, for the second year, the Garda Professional Standards Unit engaged with the JobBridge National Internship Scheme. Two Legal Policing Researchers were assigned to the Unit as Interns in August and November 2013 for a period of nine months. While obtaining valuable work experience, the Interns support various projects and teams and assist the Garda Professional Standards Unit in the preparation of presentations and reports and conducting research and analysis for the development of policy in the policing field.

The Garda Professional Standards Unit Examinations and Reviews promote Organisational awareness of issues, more streamlined and effective processes, greater efficiencies and enhance the professionalism of An Garda Síochána.

Yours sincerely

**NÓIRÍN O'SULLIVAN
COMMISSIONER OF
AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA**

March 2014

Ráiteas Misin/Mission Statement:

[Ag obair le pobail chun iad a chosaint agus chun freastal orthu / Working with communities to protect and serve](#)



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Garda Síochána Act 2005 (as amended)

The Garda Professional Standards Unit holds a statutory remit in accordance with Section 24 of the Garda Síochána Act 2005 (as amended). Section 24 of the Act provides:-

- (1) As soon as practicable after the commencement of this section, the Garda Commissioner shall establish a Professional Standards Unit, to be headed by an officer not below the rank of Chief Superintendent, to
 - (a) examine and review, as directed by the Commissioner, the operational, administrative and management performance of the Garda Síochána at all levels,
 - (b) propose measures to the Commissioner to improve that performance, and
 - (c) promote the highest standards of practice, as measured by reference to the best standards of comparable police services, in operational, administrative and management matters relating to the Garda Síochána.
- (2) Not later than 31 March in each year, the Garda Commissioner shall submit a report to the Minister on the activities of the Professional Standards Unit in the preceding year.

Following on from this statutory requirement, the Unit was established on the 6th of January 2006 and commenced work at Garda Headquarters, Phoenix Park on the 2nd of February 2006.

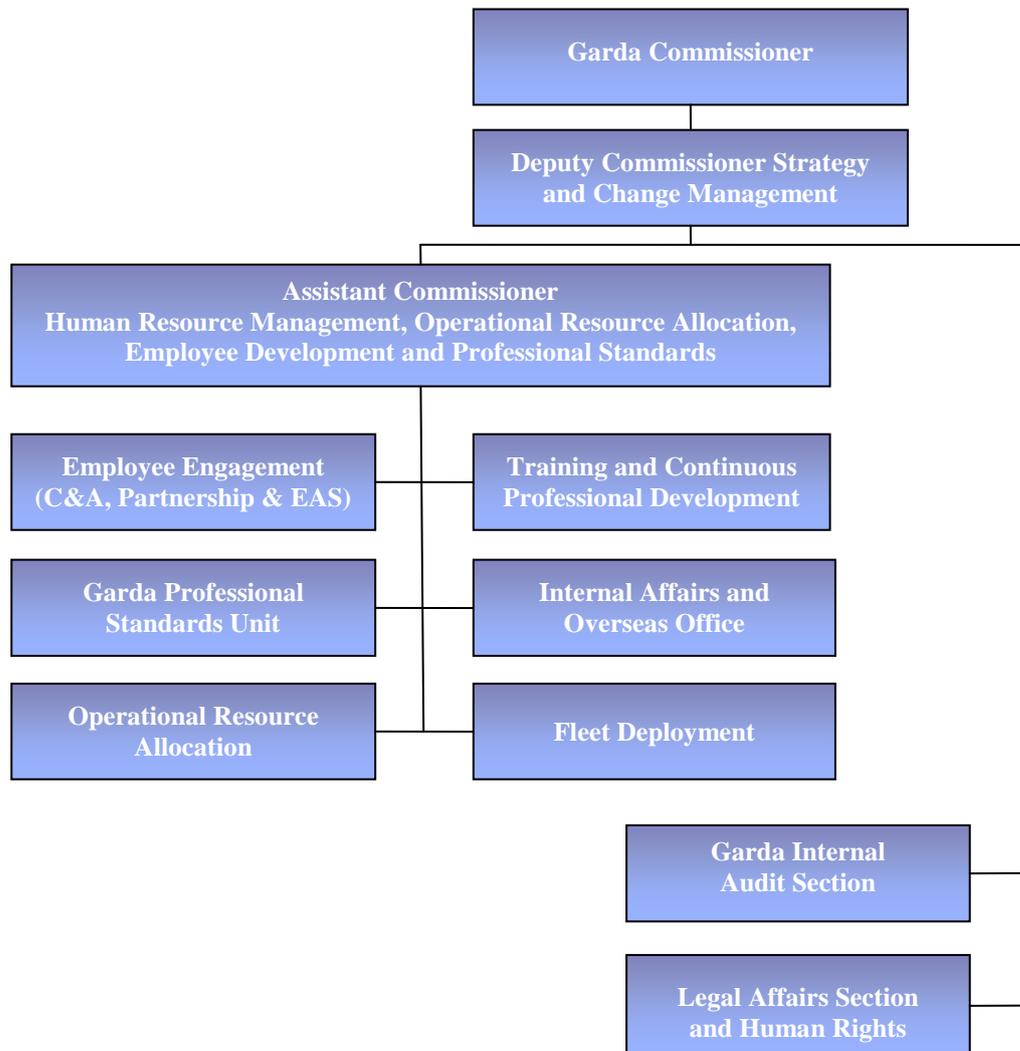


1.2 Report of the Garda Síochána Act 2005 Implementation Review Group and the Garda Síochána Inspectorate Report

In October 2006, the Reports of the Garda Síochána Inspectorate and the Garda Síochána Act 2005 Implementation Review Group issued, which referred also to the mandate of the Garda Professional Standards Unit.

Both reports recommended a new post of Assistant Commissioner for Professional Standards and the Inspectorate report recommended that the new Assistant Commissioner would have responsibility for managing Professional Standards within the Organisation which included the Garda Professional Standards Unit and Internal Affairs.

Fig. 1 Garda Organisational Chart referencing the Garda Professional Standards Unit



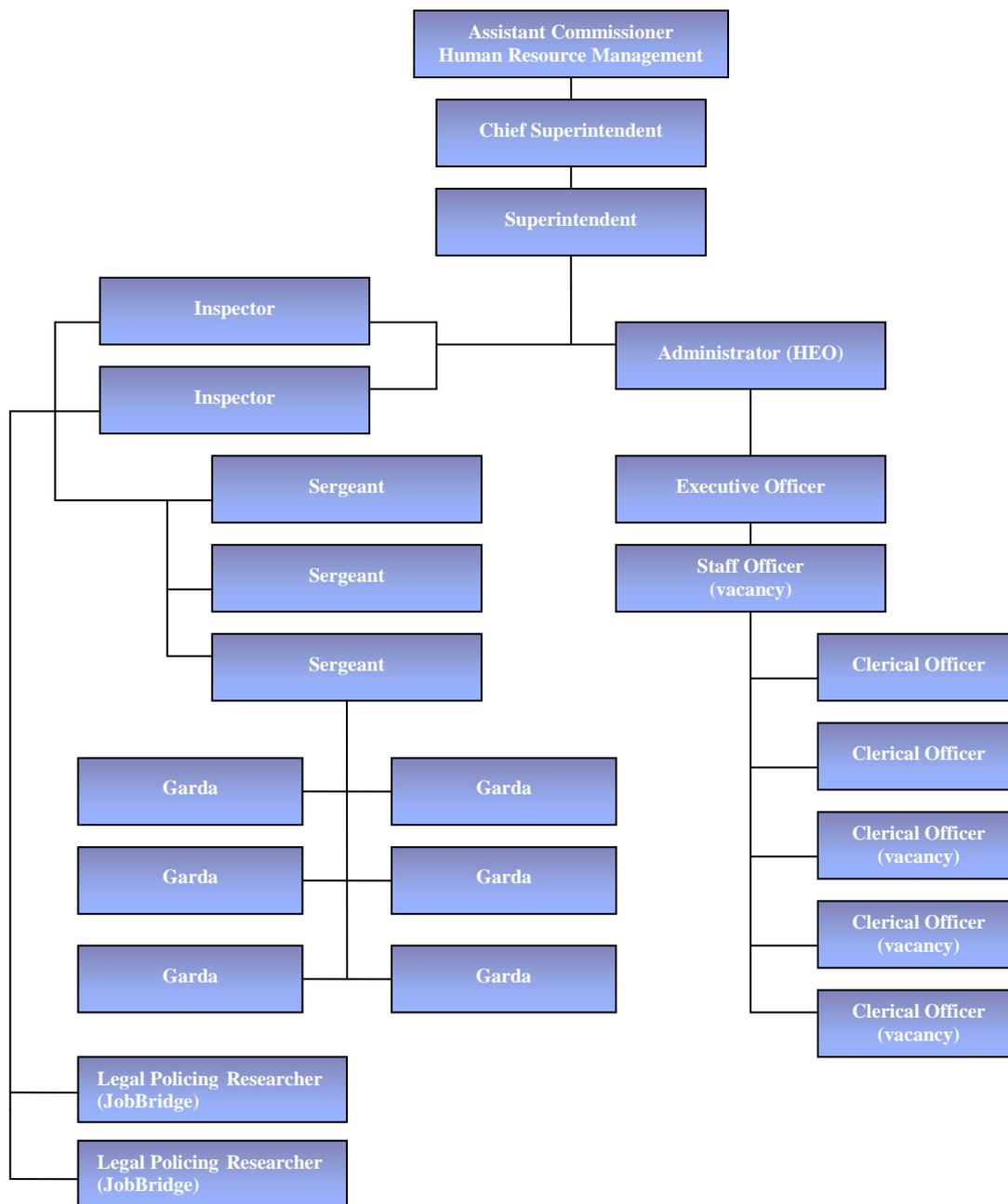
An Garda Síochána – Organisation Structure; HQ Directive 37/2013



2 STAFFING STRUCTURE

At the end of the reporting period, there were **19** personnel attached to the Garda Professional Standards Unit.

Fig. 2 Current Personnel Structure of the Garda Professional Standards Unit





3 EXAMINATION AND REVIEW

3.1 Process Areas Identified for Examination and Review

The process areas selected for Examination are proposed by the Garda Professional Standards Unit to the Garda Commissioner based on risk assessments which determine local and Organisational risk. The Unit's business / policing plan is based on an Examination and Review programme and approved process areas. Specific Examinations are also directed by the Garda Commissioner periodically based on Organisational requirements.

During the reporting period, the Garda Professional Standards Unit revised its Examination and Review methodologies changing them from wide-scale to more focused thematic Examinations and Reviews. The processes entail an analysis of District investigation files and the Examination of a number of key operational processes. The processes also incorporate the Examination of the management and tracking of evidential property and exhibits, which includes cash and drugs. The revised methodology ensures that the Organisation is adhering to its commitments under Section 24 of the Garda Síochána Act 2005 (as amended) through these enhanced, cost effective and efficient processes as approved by the Garda Commissioner.

The process areas examined by the Garda Professional Standards Unit during 2013 included:-

- File management;
- Investigation of criminal complaints;
- Management of property and exhibits (which include cash and drugs);
- Processes and procedures in responding to threats to persons;
- Processes and procedures in responding to reports of missing persons;
- Workplace Health and Safety Inspection;
- Health and Safety Statements and Fire Register Inspections;
- Health and Safety Annual Reports in accordance with Organisational policy and in line with State Claims Agency requirements;
- Divisional / District Corporate Risk Management Toolkit;
- Divisional / District Audits;
- Domestic violence incident review and analysis;



- Audit of call taking and dispatch (CAD) system incidents and the creation of associated PULSE incidents;
- Custody record analysis;
- Investigation of sexual crime and monitoring of sexual offenders;
- Specific areas as directed by the Garda Commissioner.

3.2 Progress of Examination and Review

During 2013, the Garda Professional Standards Unit completed Examinations of 5 Divisions / National Units incorporating 14 Garda Districts. A breakdown of these Examinations is outlined in Figs. 3 and 4.

Fig. 3 Examinations completed by the Garda Professional Standards Unit

Divisions	Districts	
DMR North	Balbriggan	Ballymun
	Coolock	Raheny
Wexford	Enniscorthy	Gorey *
	New Ross	Wexford
Sligo / Leitrim	Ballymote	Leitrim
	Sligo	

* Gorey District was amalgamated into Enniscorthy District on 10th November 2013

The Garda Professional Standards Unit carried out Examinations in the following Divisions/Specialist Sections comprising a specific or limited scope.

Fig. 4 Examinations completed with specific or limited scope

Divisions	Districts	
Kildare	Kildare	Leixlip
	Naas	
Serious Crime Review Team		



Following each Examination, the Garda Professional Standards Unit works with each District Officer to implement continuous improvement through targeted Improvement Plans. This includes the preparation of separate Health and Safety Improvement Plans.

3.3 Expansion of the scope of Garda Professional Standards Unit Examinations

To achieve continued efficiencies and effectiveness within An Garda Síochána and to implement Strategic Modernisation, the Garda Professional Standards Unit Examination and Review process was included in An Garda Síochána's Revised Action Plan under the Public Service Agreement 2010-2014 (Croke Park Agreement).

In 2013, the agreement was superseded by the Public Service Stability Agreement 2013 – 2016, known as The Haddington Road Agreement. The revised agreement committed to build upon the progress already made and a review of An Garda Síochána will be undertaken. Its terms of reference encompassed all aspects of the operation and administration of An Garda Síochána including the deployment of Garda members and civilian staff to relevant and appropriate roles.

The agreement reaffirmed the Organisation's commitment to sustain the delivery of excellent public services, the maximisation of efficiency and productivity and the increase of the use of resources through revised work practices and other initiatives.

To achieve these commitments, the Garda Professional Standards Unit continued the enhancement of their Examination and Review process through the Examination of the supervision and management of the investigation of criminal complaints at District level. The Garda Professional Standards Unit conducted a risk analysis and selected a number of medium to high risk areas for Examination. These areas included burglaries, robberies, assaults, driving under the influence and sexual offences.

Since the process was extended, the Garda Professional Standards has carried out Examinations of investigation files associated with these medium to high risk areas in the following Divisions:



-
- DMR North
 - Sligo/Leitrim
 - Wexford
 - Kildare (specific/limited scope)

The Garda Professional Standards Unit, assisted by personnel at the Garda College also examined such files from the following Divisions which were the subject of Examinations and Reviews in previous years.

- Mayo
- Cork North
- DMR South

The findings of these Examinations are included in the Examination Reports developed by the Garda Professional Standards Unit to ensure the implementation of improvements by local management and for the information of Organisational senior management.

3.4 Additional areas the subject of Examinations for consistent compliance

Data Protection

In 2013, the Garda Professional Standards Unit continued its Examination of Divisional and District implementation and compliance with data protection policy, procedures and legislative requirements in accordance with An Garda Síochána Data Protection Code of Practice.

The Garda Professional Standards Unit, in accordance with their remit under HQ Directive 95/12, extended their examinations to include random audits of the details entered into the Item of Inquiry dialogue box on PULSE to ascertain the quality of information being entered in respect of Persons, Vehicles and Locations. This audit is to ensure the information entered is as informative as possible and best represents the enquiry reason.



Where the information recorded is insufficient to demonstrate compliance with regulations, the Garda Professional Standards Unit informs local management as to their concerns and requests replies by specified dates as to the actions taken. A follow up audit is conducted and the Garda Professional Standards Unit has found that where re-examinations have taken place, noticeable improvements have occurred in all areas.

At the end of 2013, the GPSU had carried out the following:

- Initial examination 72 Districts
- Follow Up examination 24 Districts

To allow local management to conduct self audits and to monitor how Garda members are behaving locally, the Garda Professional Standards Unit has worked with the Garda IT Centre to develop an Item of Interest Report for District Officers. This report will allow District Officers to view checks that are carried out by members under their control. This initiative was piloted by the Garda Professional Standards Unit and approved. The report will be made available in the 1st Quarter of 2014 through a PULSE Release. The Garda Professional Standards Unit has contributed to the development of policy and a HQ Directive to accompany its release.

The Garda Professional Standards Unit, in accordance with its remit under the Garda Síochána Data Protection Code of Practice and associated Garda Síochána policy, will continue to conduct random audits until all Garda Districts have been completed and repeat audits have been carried out. Following the introduction of revised policy, District Officers and Heads of Sections will commence local monitoring and will include the monitoring and auditing of this report in the District/area of responsibility Inspections and Reviews to ensure compliance. The Garda Professional Standards Unit will be required to continue their overall monitoring role in accordance with revised policy.

Fixed Charge Processing System (FCPS)

In April 2013, the Garda Professional Standards Unit submitted the Report of their Examination of the Processes and Systems in Place to Deal with Cancellation of Fixed Charge Processing System Notices by Superintendents and Inspectors Acting in that Capacity. This report was published by the Minister for Justice and Equality on 15th May 2013.



In advance of the publication of the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General, the Garda Professional Standards Unit provided clarification to the Comptroller and Auditor General in relation to Fixed the Charge Processing System.

Following the Garda Professional Standards Unit Examination, An Garda Síochána issued Revised Cancellation Procedures – Garda Fixed Charge Processing System (FCPS). The Garda Professional Standards Unit was also part of the group established to implement the recommendations of the Report of Assistant Commissioner O’Mahoney and the Report of Garda Professional Standards Unit, chaired by Assistant Commissioner Nolan. In accordance with the revised policy, (HQ Directive 73/13 which issued on 30th August 2013), the Garda Professional Standards Unit (in conjunction with the Garda Internal Audit Section and Assistant Commissioner Traffic) is required to conduct examinations and audits of the operation of the Fixed Charge Processing System (FCPS) to ensure full compliance with all aspects of Divisional and District compliance with the policy which includes the decision making process relating to the cancellation of Fixed Charge Penalty Notices. Since the issue of the revised policy, the Garda Professional Standards Unit has examined compliance in the following Districts:-

- Athlone
- Henry Street
- Waterford
- Blanchardstown
- Tallaght
- Dun Laoghaire
- Tuam
- Naas
- Anglesea Street
- Thurles
- Bailieboro
- Ballinasloe



In November and December 2013, the Garda Professional Standards Unit also noted the following Districts where records showed that no cancellations of Fixed Charge Penalty Notices had been effected:

- Ballymote
- Baltinglass
- Bridewell, DMR
- Belmullet
- Carlow
- Carrickmacross
- Trim
- New Ross
- Navan
- Dundalk
- Ashbourne
- Milford

The findings from these examinations and audits were shared with the Garda Internal Audit Section and Assistant Commissioner Traffic.

Investigation into the Management and Investigation of Criminal Complaints at a Garda District

During the reporting period, the Garda Professional Standards Unit continued the monitoring of a Garda District in addressing the issues identified during the Examination into the management and investigation of criminal complaints. This role includes the monitoring of the progress made by the working group and the status of investigation files containing Areas of Concern. A formal Review of the Division will be carried out during the second quarter of 2014 and it is anticipated that the Garda Professional Standards Unit will finalise all matters satisfactorily and conclude the Examination.



Audit of the Investigations of a member of An Garda Síochána

In June 2013, following the conclusion of a Board of Inquiry in respect of a specific member of An Garda Síochána and an associated adverse discipline finding, the Garda Professional Standards Unit was directed by Assistant Commissioner Human Resource Management to carry out a full audit of all criminal investigations carried out by this member to establish if they were fully and thoroughly investigated. The Garda Professional Standards Unit conducted an Examination of PULSE records with the assistance of the Garda IT Section through the compilation of a list of relevant investigations to be examined. Further assistance was provided by the Inspector in the Division regarding documentation.

Audit of Property of An Garda Síochána

In June 2013, the Garda Professional Standards Unit co-ordinated an Organisational property audit return. This required each Divisional Officer to forward confirmation that all property is accounted for and that the relevant Divisional and District Property Audits were forwarded to the appropriate Assistant Commissioner and copied to Chief Superintendent Garda Professional Standards Unit.

The purpose of the nationwide audit is to ensure that Divisional and District Officers are in a position to account for all property in the possession of An Garda Síochána. It is anticipated that the audit will result in more efficient property management systems and the disposal of items no longer required.

A further National Audit is being conducted in 2014 which focuses on the updating of Property on the PULSE system to ensure that there is accuracy between PULSE Property Records and station property records. The Garda Professional Standards Unit is co-ordinating this Property Audit. It is anticipated that the audit will ensure that the highest standards are maintained with regard to the recording of property.



4 EXTERNAL EXCELLENCE ACCREDITATION

External accreditation is an important element of An Garda Síochána's Continuous Improvement Programme. It is also an excellent approach to improving effectiveness and efficiency in the Organisation. It involves Garda members and civilian staff in the continuous improvement process and supports the achievement of the Garda Síochána Vision, '*Excellent People Delivering Policing Excellence*'. The assessments and validation put the focus on results in terms of service delivery, process improvement and efficiencies as well as improved morale. External accreditation validates An Garda Síochána's commitment to quality management and provides a benchmark with other organisations in the public and private sector.

4.1 Dedicated to Excellence Programme with Excellence Ireland Quality Association (EIQA)

The Dedicated to Excellence Programme commenced in An Garda Síochána in 2010 as part of An Garda Síochána's Continuous Improvement Programme. Divisions who successfully completed the Examination and Review process were nominated to take part in the Programme.

The Dedicated to Excellence Programme encourages the submission of innovative ideas from all sectors of the Organisation, from front line personnel to management. From the Areas for Improvement included in the Improvement Plan, many initiatives are implemented which aid continuous improvement in the District. Divisional Officers, in conjunction with District Officers and the Garda Professional Standards Unit, select an Improvement Initiative, most beneficial to Divisions, Districts and the Organisation in general for further development and submission for the Dedicated to Excellence Programme with EIQA.

During 2013, the Garda Professional Standards Unit assisted a further four Districts of An Garda Síochána (from DMR South Central and Limerick Divisions) in the selection and preparation of individual District Improvement Initiatives as part of Divisional submissions to EIQA. These Divisions achieved Dedicated to Excellence accreditation during 2013. Details of the Improvement Initiatives accredited and the associated Key Results achieved are set out



in Fig. 5. To date, 23 individual and practical Improvement Initiatives by various Districts and Sections of An Garda Síochána have received external excellence accreditation.

Each District participating in the programme is required to achieve financial or resource savings through the Improvement Initiative introduced. Of the 23 initiatives accredited, the majority of those have realised significant financial or resource savings for the Organisation.

Fig. 5 Accredited Improvement Initiatives and Key Results

Division / District	Improvement Initiative	Key Results
Limerick Division		
Bruff District	Text Alert Scheme	Increased interaction to restore community confidence in An Garda Síochána and the promotion of community vigilance. The use of innovative technology solutions. Collation and enhancement of a database of information.
DMR South Central Division		
Donnybrook / Kevin Street Districts	A system to improve the recording and tracking of drug seizures	Improved accountability (tracking and location of drug seizures). Simplified system, greater efficiency and reduced audit times. Increased understanding and ownership of policy. Increased availability for front-line policing.
Pearse Street District	Divisional Child Protection Office	Improvement of internal processes in accordance with Children First Guidelines, Garda Síochána policy and joint protocols. Improvement of internal and external stakeholder relationships. Improvement in investigations and appropriate monitoring by staff and supervisors.

The Improvement Initiatives implemented were identified as practices which could result in significant efficiencies, tangible savings and value for money, improved service delivery and community commitment.



5 FEEDBACK TO THE GARDA ORGANISATION

The valuable and comprehensive findings of the Garda Professional Standards Unit are used to address members of An Garda Síochána at various courses and conferences throughout the year. The Unit also provides its findings and seeks feedback from Management Development Programmes in the Garda College.

During 2013, the Garda Professional Standards Unit, along with the Garda Internal Audit Section addressed the Commissioner and his senior management team on the approach, findings and high level recommendations of both sections, based on the work to date.

The Garda Professional Standards Unit has continued to participate in and contribute to the following working groups, boards and committees established. These groups include:-

Strategic Human Rights Advisory Committee (SHRAC)

Chief Superintendent Garda Professional Standards Unit is a member of the Organisation's Strategic Human Rights Advisory Committee. The Committee is responsible for advising the Garda Commissioner and Garda senior management on how to:

- Progress implementation of human rights initiatives to bring about cultural change across the Organisation.
- Promote human rights policies and procedures internally and externally.
- Ensure that best human rights practice is at the core of our policing service.

Since its establishment, the SHRAC's membership has comprised a number of members of senior Garda management and key external experts drawn from human rights and related backgrounds including the Irish Human Rights Commission, the Irish Council for Civil Liberties, the Equality Authority, Amnesty International and the Department of Justice and Equality.

At the end of 2013, the Committee was progressing a number of projects including Human Rights Training for operational Sergeants and Gardaí, an Irish Human Rights Commission



training programme for public servants and a Monitoring Framework for An Garda Síochána which will cover the areas of Right to Life and Prohibition Against Torture.

Implementation Group for State Claims Agency Report

Chief Superintendent Garda Professional Standards Unit is a member of the group responsible for the implementation of the recommendations arising from the State Claims Agency Report. This group has been responsible for the inclusion of an annual senior management Review of Health, Safety and Risk Management in the Organisation's Corporate Goals in the Annual Policing Plan for 2014.

Diversity Consultations Project

The Diversity Consultations Project is a public consultation initiative aimed at identifying the current policing issues of Ireland's diverse communities. Headed by Deputy Commissioner Strategy and Change Management, the Project collected qualitative data from a series of public meetings and used a combination of thematic and content analysis to formulate a revised draft Diversity Strategy for An Garda Síochána going forward. A member of the Garda Professional Standards Unit played an integral part in this process which included membership of the strategy board, organising and facilitating public consultation meetings, research analysis, and drafting of the Diversity Strategy Document.

Deaths in Custody Working Group

During the reporting period, the Garda Professional Standards Unit continued the implementation of their Recommendations on custody management as part of the Organisation's Working Group on Deaths in Custody.

The Deaths in Custody Working Group was established in November 2010 to address the Recommendations contained in the Garda Professional Standards Unit report, 'Review of Deaths in Custody between 1997 and 2006'. The group also reviewed recommendations which were contained in existing reports on Deaths in Custody and custody related issues from external agencies including:-



- The Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission;
- The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture;
- The State Claims Agency;
- Coroners Inquests;
- Director of Public Prosecutions.

Continuing from the progress made in 2012 and previous years, the working group was responsible for the following during 2013:-

- The issue of Organisational policy regarding supervision, inspection and maintenance of all operational cells in Garda Stations;
- Continuation of the review of cell facilities nationally;
- An analysis of deaths in custody from 2007 to date;
- The establishment of a sub-group to examine the recommendations of external bodies following deaths in custody;
- The commencement of research with regard to a pilot of anti-suicide smocks for high-risk prisoners in accordance with International best practice;
- Research into the modification of the Organisation's custody record to an IT based solution. An analysis of the system in use by the PSNI was carried out by the Garda Professional Standards Unit;
- The implementation of Member in Charge training for Divisions (78 members from 5 Regions were trained up to the end of 2013);
- The procurement of ligature cutting devices and draft policy submitted to Organisational senior management.

Director of Training and Development

The findings of the Garda Professional Standards Unit are provided to the Director of Training and Development at the Garda College in the format of Strengths and Areas of Concern noted by the Unit during Divisional Examinations and Reviews. The Garda Professional Standards Unit in consultation with the Garda College develops training materials which include potential or common Organisational Areas of Concern and associated best practice. The Garda Professional Standards Unit presents these findings and best practice for the Detective training modules at the Garda College.



The Garda Professional Standards Unit has commenced and will continue during 2014, liaison with the Garda College in the development and roll out of the revised Training Programme for levels two, three and four Investigative Interviewing. The Unit, in conjunction with the Garda College commenced the development of a quality assurance programme for the Examination of Investigative Interviewing Policy. These Examinations will include the analysis of interviews through a review of video tape and DVD recording of interviews.

Garda Professional Standards Unit Presentations to Senior Management

During 2013, the Garda Professional Standards Unit and Garda Internal Audit Section presented and facilitated discussions on Divisional and District audits at the Commissioner's Conferences. These presentations provided a high level overview of the findings of the Garda Professional Standards Unit and the Garda Internal Audit Section. They also resulted in the Organisational sharing of issues encountered during Examinations and the associated best practice recommended. This widespread distribution of information provides the opportunity for senior management to address such issues within their Divisions in the absence of or in advance of a forthcoming Examination.

Liaison with and provision of findings to Specialist Sections of An Garda Síochána

The Garda Professional Standards Unit liaises with specialist sections of An Garda Síochána as part of the Examination and Review process. Throughout the year, Examination materials are updated to ensure that the specifics of the Organisation's expertise are included and that the process owner has an up to date knowledge of all areas of policy and Organisational procedures. Following each Examination and Review, the specific findings of the Unit are provided to these internal specialist units. Such cooperation has been carried out with the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Investigation Unit (DVSAIU).

As part of the Examination and Review process, the Garda Professional Standards Unit places significant emphasis on feedback from Operational Divisions and Districts on processes including custody management, health and safety, data protection and monitoring the data quality of sexual assault cases. This feedback is used in the development of Examination and Review preparatory materials and corresponding best practice for the distribution of Recommendations.



The Unit is also cognisant of reports from external bodies and ensures consideration of such reports in their own processes and within the remit of the working groups of which they are members.



6 EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL LIAISON

The Garda Professional Standards Unit interacts with the following internal policy owners and external agencies:-

Internal Policy Owners

Garda College

As stated in Section 3.3, the Garda Professional Standards Unit receives assistance from personnel at the Garda College in the Examination of investigation files. The findings of the personnel in the Garda College support the development of the associated reports to senior management.

Garda Internal Audit Section

In June 2013, the Garda Professional Standards Unit was directed to carry out an Examination of all audit systems and processes in two Divisions of An Garda Síochána. This was the first occasion that both sections were requested to carry out a joint Examination. Effective cooperation resulted in a comprehensive and in-depth combined Examination and Audit.

In addition to the Examination and Audit, the Garda Professional Standards Unit carried out an analysis of the Organisation's policy in the area of internal local audits during the reporting period. This analysis and development of revised policy was carried out in conjunction with the Head of the Garda Internal Audit Section. A plenary session was also held with representatives of the Organisation's senior management team to receive their input.

Garda Internal Affairs Section

The Garda Professional Standards Unit liaises with the Garda Síochána Internal Affairs Section regarding complaints and behaviours of particular concern and those which have the potential to cause reputational risk for the Organisation. In advance of each Examination, as part of the preliminary research, the Unit obtains specific trends of complaints and places additional focus on these areas during its Examination.



External Agencies

Garda Inspectorate

The Garda Professional Standards Unit has had a number of meetings with the Garda Inspectorate and both have agreed that there is merit in such meetings taking place into the future to discuss matters of common purpose in pursuit of continuous improvement. It is anticipated that these meetings will continue during 2014.

During the Garda Inspectorate's examination into the Fixed Charge Processing System, the Garda Professional Standards Unit shared their report and Recommendations and provided information to the Inspectorate which was acknowledged in their report.

Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission

Chief Superintendent Garda Professional Standards Unit, led the negotiation team on behalf of Assistant Commissioner Human Resource Management to oversee the conclusion of the revised Memorandum of Understanding Protocols and Agreement on Operational Matters between the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission and An Garda Síochána. The Protocols were signed by the Commissioner and the Chairman of the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission on 23rd September 2013.

State Claims Agency

Chief Superintendent Garda Professional Standards Unit liaises with the State Claims Agency as part of the group responsible for the implementation of recommendations arising from the Agency's Report. This implementation group has achieved the inclusion of the 'Enhancement of the Management of Health and Safety', in An Garda Síochána Annual Policing Plan for 2014. The implementing of the key recommendations of the Review of Health, Safety and Risk Management conducted by the State Claims Agency has been included as one of the Policing Plan's Organisational Goals.

Consistent interaction with stakeholders allows for an exchange of ideas and views which assist the Garda Professional Standards Unit in the development and promotion of best practice in preparation for Examinations and Reviews.

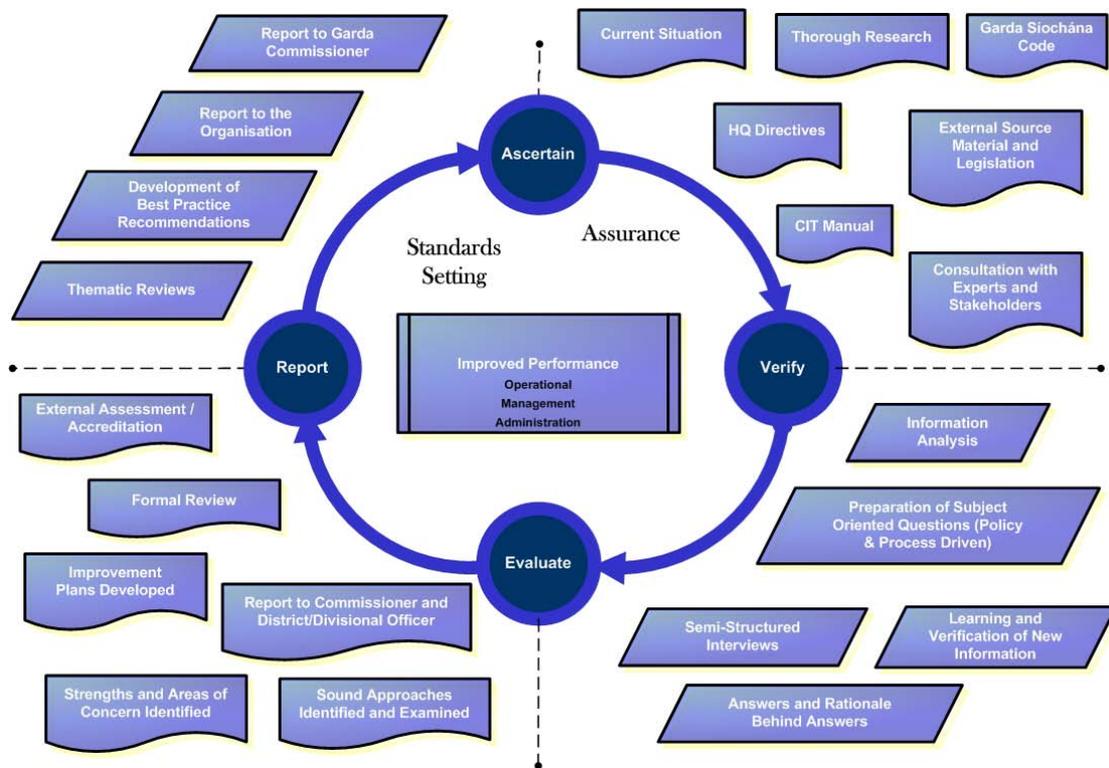


7 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND METHODOLOGY

7.1 Continuous Improvement

The Garda Professional Standards Unit monitors and ensures compliance with professional standards and supports the development and achievement of standards of excellence through a continuous improvement cycle.

Fig. 6 Continuous Improvement Model for the Garda Professional Standards Unit



The Garda Professional Standards Unit through its members’ experience and capabilities as Internal QMS Auditors, uses the specific competencies throughout the Examination and Review process to clearly identify Divisional and District strengths and areas where improvement actions need to be taken and the reporting mechanisms for escalating and distributing findings.



7.2 Methodology

In 2007, the Garda Professional Standards Unit established the methodology for the preparation of the Examination and Review process to obtain a comprehensive overview of each process area. The methodology has been assessed and refined since then and is currently the five stage approach outlined below:-

7.2.1 Stage One – Background Research

- Thorough research of each process area is undertaken to obtain the current situation within An Garda Síochána.
- Relevant source data is identified and examined, including:-
 - The Garda Síochána Code
 - Crime Investigation Techniques Manual
 - HQ Directives
 - Operating and training manuals
 - External source materials and legislation relating to each area
- Subject matter experts within An Garda Síochána are consulted.
- Discussion takes place with external stakeholders who have knowledge or experience in the relevant areas.

7.2.2 Stage Two – Question Development

- Subject oriented questions are prepared following analysis of the information gained.
- The questions, which are policy and process driven, assist in testing local compliance with current policy in each Examination area.
- The questions are designed to be administered in semi-structured interviews with specialist members who have a working knowledge of the subject area under Examination.



7.2.3 Stage Three – Semi-Structured Interviews and analysis of documentation

- The semi-structured interviews are conducted with members from all ranks who have working knowledge of the subject area under Examination.
- The interview process confirms information that has already been gathered. This provides the opportunity for new information to be highlighted and learning to be gained by the research team.
- The information obtained provides the rationale behind the answers.

7.2.4 Stage Four – Analysis of Findings

- The information gained from the interview process is evaluated by members of the Garda Professional Standards Unit who have achieved certification by Excellence Ireland Quality Association (EIQA) in Internal QMS Auditor Systems. This evaluation assists the Unit in the identifying the Division and District Strengths and Areas of Concern.

7.2.5 Stage Five – Improvement Plans and Reviews

- Guidance on the preparation of Improvement Plans is communicated to District Officers on completion of each Examination.
- The Garda Professional Standards Unit assesses implementation of the Improvement Plan and carries out a formal Review of each District / Section to evaluate progress. The Garda Professional Standards Unit provides advice and assistance where required.



8 SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

To ensure that maximum benefit is achieved from the Examination and Review process, the Garda Professional Standards Unit considers that 'Education and Training' is an imperative for all personnel in the Unit. This includes formal education and training courses and the participation in various Organisational operational training and training under relevant process areas that are subject to Examination. This ensures that the methodologies of the Unit reflect current best practice.

In 2013, each member of the Garda Professional Standards Unit was certified as an Internal QMS Auditor by EIQA. Internal assessor / auditor training will continue to be provided to new members of staff in the future. In addition, a member of the Unit participated in training in the area of Safe Management of Persons in Custody in Garda Stations and a further member was certified as a Data Protection Practitioner. In September 2013, an Inspector and a Higher Executive Officer in the Unit commenced studies for an MA in Ethics (Corporate Responsibility).

All members attached to the Unit, hold or are undertaking a variety of third level qualifications at both under graduate and post graduate level.

The breadth and depth of operational policing experience is central to the role of the Garda Professional Standards Unit. To complement this specific training, the Garda Professional Standards Unit is also focused on maintaining its broad knowledge base. Members of the Unit have backgrounds in or have received training in the following areas:

- Public Order Commander
- Garda Executive Leadership Programme
- Project Management
- Firearms Training
- Detective Training
- Interviewing of Suspects
- Investigative Interviewing of Witnesses
- Children First
- Tackling Trafficking in Human Beings: Prevention Protection and Prosecution



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- Sex Offenders Matrix
 - Diversity Liaison
 - Data Protection Practitioner
 - Public Financial Management for Internal Auditors
 - Money Laundering
 - Fraud Investigation/Money Laundering/Confiscation of Assets
 - Risk Assessment and Safety Statement
 - Safety and Health at Work
 - Safe Management of Persons in Custody



9 CONCLUSION

The number of specific and targeted operations that the Garda Professional Standards Unit has been directed to carry out has increased in recent years, and particularly during 2013. The Examinations of high profile / high risk areas have been successful and the associated Recommendations of the Unit have and will continue to achieve significant Organisational benefits. These included the Examination of the decision making process relating to the cancellation of Fixed Charge Penalty Notices to ensure compliance with Organisational policy and the Examination of Nationwide compliance with Data Protection Policy.

The requirement for such specific operations and for the Examination of Divisions where issues have arisen have increased the workload of the Unit but have enhanced its profile and its reputation as a mature Unit with the expertise to analyse issues and make and effect the implementation of best practice Recommendations.

The importance of the Organisational sharing of the findings of the Unit cannot be underestimated and during the past year in particular, the Unit has used these findings and the associated expertise gained to its greatest potential. Presentations have been provided to the Organisation's most senior management at the Commissioner's bi-annual Conference and findings and best practice have been provided to the Garda College to assist the development and enhancement of training for members of all ranks in An Garda Síochána.

The Garda Professional Standards Unit appreciates the professional assistance provided by the Garda Internal Audit Section in conducting joint Examinations during 2013. This has resulted in a useful transfer of skills and knowledge between the two sections.