



Garda Professional Standards Unit

ANNUAL REPORT 2015



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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 Authority on the activities of the Professional Standards Unit in the preceding year.

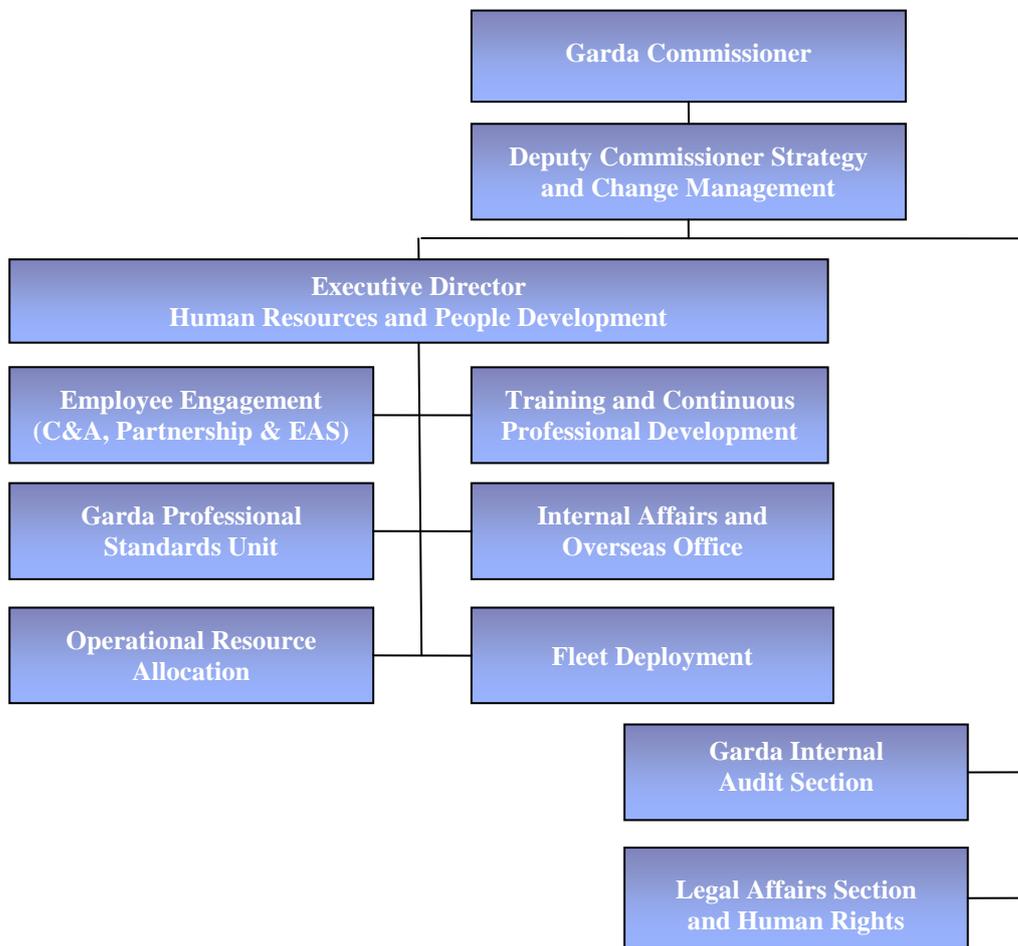
The Garda Professional Standards Unit was established on 6th January 2006 and commenced work at Garda Headquarters, Phoenix Park on 2nd February 2006.



1.2 Garda organisational chart referencing the Garda Professional Standards Unit

The Garda Professional Standards Unit is under the remit of Strategy and Change Management and reports directly to the Executive Director, Human Resources and People Development who was appointed to An Garda Síochána in October 2014, replacing the post of Assistant Commissioner, Human Resource Management.

Fig. 1 Garda organisational chart referencing the Garda Professional Standards Unit

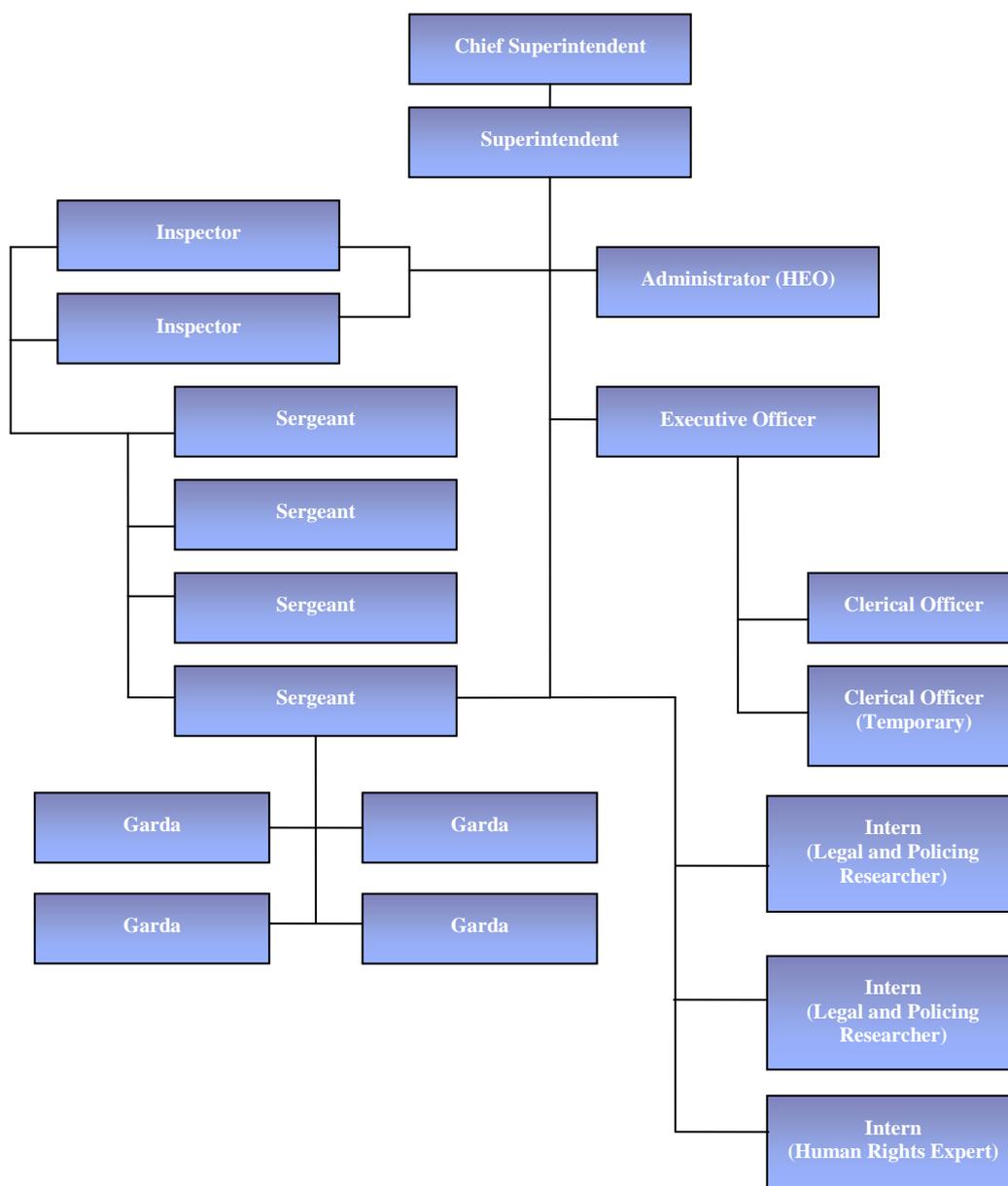




2 STAFFING STRUCTURE

At the end of 2015, there were 19 personnel (including three Interns) attached to the Garda Professional Standards Unit. A competition was advertised and interviews were held during 2015 for the allocation of five additional Garda members to the Unit.

Fig. 2 Personnel structure of the Garda Professional Standards Unit at 31st December 2015





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 and are recommended 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 Commissioner periodically based on Organisational requirements.

The Garda Professional Standards Unit revised its examination and review methodologies during 2013, changing them from wide-scale to more focused thematic examinations and reviews. These revised examinations continued throughout 2014 and 2015, entailing 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 include cash and drugs. This 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 Commissioner.

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

- Investigation of criminal complaints;
- Management of property and exhibits (which include cash and drugs);
- Processes and procedures relating to threats to persons;
- Processes and procedures relating to reports of missing persons;
- Compliance with Health and Safety legislative requirements and Organisational policy and procedures;
- Garda Inspections and Reviews;
- Domestic violence incident review and analysis;
- Audit of local processes of call taking and dispatching of resources and the creation of associated PULSE incidents;
- Custody record analysis;



- Examination of management reports relative to sexual incidents and child welfare incidents to establish if they are being monitored, reviewed and recorded on PULSE in line with Garda policy;
- Examination of the implementation of Garda policy relative to the monitoring of sex offenders;
- Processes associated with bail and sign on at Garda Stations;

3.2 Progress of examinations and reviews

During 2015, the Garda Professional Standards Unit both commenced and finalised a number of examinations and reviews, which have been categorised in Figs. 3 to 6. A number of these were conducted as part of the Unit's business / policing plan and some were conducted with a specific or limited scope. Further details of the examinations with a specific or limited scope are set out at Section 3.3 of this report.

Fig. 3 Examinations completed during 2015

Divisions / Districts / Sections			Directed / with specific scope	With Garda Internal Audit Section	On the Business Plan of the Unit
DMR East	Blackrock	Dunlaoghaire			✓
Clare	Ennis	Kilrush			✓
Laois/Offaly	Birr	Portlaoise			✓
	Tullamore				

Examinations were carried out in three Divisions, as set out in Fig. 4 below. Reports relating to Cork West and The Garda Youth Diversion Office will be finalised during the second quarter of 2016. Due to the extensive nature of the National Support Services Examination it is envisaged that it will not be finalised in 2016, however a number of interim reports will be prepared and forwarded to Organisational senior management in 2016.



Fig. 4 Divisional examinations conducted by the Garda Professional Standards Unit

Divisions	Districts		Directed / with specific scope	With Garda Internal Audit Section	On the Business Plan of the Unit
Cork West	Bandon	Bantry			✓
	Clonakilty	Macroom			
Garda Youth Diversion Office			✓		
National Support Services comprising of :-			✓	✓	
- Garda National Immigration Bureau					
- Garda Bureau of Fraud Investigation					
- Garda National Drugs Unit					
- Garda Technical Bureau					
- A/C Office including NSS Operational Unit					

During the reporting period, the examinations in Fig. 5 commenced. The examinations will continue and the associated reports will be completed during 2016.

Fig. 5 Examinations commenced by the Garda Professional Standards Unit

Divisions	Districts		Directed / with specific scope	With Garda Internal Audit Section	On the Business Plan of the Unit
Roscommon / Longford	Castlerea	Granard			✓
	Longford	Roscommon			
Kilkenny / Carlow	Carlow	Kilkenny			✓
	Thomastown				

Following each examination, the Garda Professional Standards Unit works with each Chief Superintendent and/or Superintendent to implement continuous improvement through targeted improvement plans. This includes the preparation of separate Health and Safety improvement plans where appropriate.



The Garda Professional Standards Unit carried out reviews in two Divisions and one specialist section as set out in Fig. 6 during 2015.

Fig. 6 Reviews carried out by the Garda Professional Standards Unit during 2015

Divisions	Districts		Directed / with specific scope	With Garda Internal Audit Section	On the Business Plan of the Unit
Mayo	Ballina	Belmullet			✓
	Castlebar	Claremorris			
	Westport				
Wicklow	Baltinglass	Bray	✓		✓
	Wicklow				
Requests sent by the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission in respect of investigations conducted under Section 98 of the Garda Síochána Act 2005.			✓		✓

3.3 Divisional / specialist section examinations with specific or limited scope

In addition to the programme of examinations and reviews in the Unit's Business / Policing Plan, the Garda Professional Standards Unit was directed by the Commissioner / Deputy Commissioner to carry out examinations and associated reviews in the following Divisions / specialist sections comprising a specific or limited scope.

Requests sent by the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission in respect of investigations conducted under Section 98 of the Garda Síochána Act 2005

Following an examination in February 2014, the Garda Professional Standards Unit conducted a review during 2015 of requests sent by the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission in respect of investigations conducted under Section 98 of the Garda Síochána Act 2005.



This review assessed the progress made by Internal Affairs Section to implement all recommendations made in the report of the examination of the Organisation's compliance with the 30 day timeframe provided for in the agreed Memorandum of Understanding Protocols and Agreement on Operational Matters between the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission and An Garda Síochána.

Joint Garda Professional Standards Unit and Garda Internal Audit Section examination of National Support Services

In December 2014, the Commissioner directed the Garda Professional Standards Unit and the Garda Internal Audit Section to conduct a joint examination of Districts/Sections not previously examined within National Support Services. Following initial preparatory meetings, examination visits commenced in the various Districts / Sections of National Support Services and have continued throughout 2015.

Garda Youth Diversion Office (GYDO)

In 2014, Assistant Commissioner, Organisation Development and Strategic Planning directed the Garda Professional Standards Unit to conduct an examination of the procedures and practices at the Garda Youth Diversion Office.

The scope includes the examination of administration procedures, staff training, risk register, roles and responsibilities of personnel and adherence to Garda Síochána policy. Examination visits commenced in 2015 and it is anticipated that a report will issue in the second quarter of 2016.

3.4 Areas the subject of examination for consistent compliance

The Garda Professional Standards Unit has a role in the following areas which require consistent examination and monitoring. Periodic or regular reports are provided to Garda management as appropriate.

Compliance with Data Protection Acts - Item of Interest (IOI) Inquiry Report

The Garda Professional Standards Unit continues to examine District implementation and compliance with data protection policy, procedures and legislative requirements in accordance with An Garda Síochána Data Protection Code of Practice. Audits are conducted by the Garda Professional Standards Unit of the item of inquiry dialogue box on PULSE to



ascertain the quality of information entered where members conduct searches of persons, vehicles and locations. These audits endeavour to ensure that 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 highlights these concerns to local management and requests a response outlining the action taken. Follow up audits are conducted and the Garda Professional Standards Unit has found that where follow up examinations have taken place, noticeable improvements have occurred in all areas.

In 2015 the Garda Professional Standards Unit completed a second round (follow up examination) of audits for all 96 Garda Districts. A report containing a statistical analysis and comparison of the audit result, along with recommendations and observations, was compiled by the Garda Professional Standards Unit and forwarded for review to Assistant Commissioner, Organisation Development and Strategic Planning.

The Unit consults with Assistant Commissioner, Organisation Development and Strategic Planning with regard to the scope of audits conducted. In conjunction with Assistant Commissioner, Organisation Development and Strategic Planning, a compliance rate of 90% has been set for all Districts for audits conducted in 2016 and beyond. Audits have also been increased to eight per month to allow for each Garda District to be audited within a calendar year. The Garda Professional Standards Unit has commenced a third round of audits on all Garda Districts.

Examination of decision making processes in relation to cancellations of Fixed Charge Notices (Fixed Charge Processing System)

The FCPS Policies and Procedures Manual (Fourth Edition) came into effect on 16th June 2014. Section 5 of this policy, titled 'Auditing of FCPS', requires the Garda Internal Audit Section to 'conduct regular audit checks of the full operation of the FCPS to ensure full compliance with all aspects of the policy and report to Assistant Commissioner, Traffic'. The policy further outlines that the Garda Professional Standards Unit will provide support to the audit process by carrying out an examination of the decision making process.

The Garda Professional Standards Unit does this by randomly selecting a minimum of 20 Fixed Charge Notice cancellation files per month and examining the decision making process



behind their cancellation. This is done to ensure compliance with policy. Throughout 2015, a total of 392 cancellation decisions were examined.

The examination findings are reported on monthly and these reports are forwarded to the Garda Internal Audit Section and Assistant Commissioner, Traffic. Any issues identified are highlighted and recommendations are made by the Garda Professional Standards Unit where appropriate.

Revised audit / inspection and review policy

On 22nd July 2014, revised policy titled Garda Inspections and Reviews was introduced in An Garda Síochána to ensure an effective methodology for An Garda Síochána in its overall Organisational governance and accountability.

The revised policy incorporated changes in principles including:

- Frequency of inspections;
- The utilisation of risk to identify inspection areas;
- The use of a holistic approach to all areas of responsibility rather than separate geographic areas.

Throughout 2015, workshops and master classes by management of the Garda Professional Standards Unit and the Garda Internal Audit Section continued nationally throughout the Organisation and this subject was introduced into promotion courses for Chief Superintendents and Superintendents to effect further compliance in this area. The Garda Professional Standards Unit has recently included Inspections and Reviews as a process area in their Divisional and District examinations and reviews. A further process to assess Inspections and Reviews and to provide feedback to Divisions and Districts has been implemented by the Garda Professional Standards Unit and the Garda Internal Audit Section.

Investigative Interviewing Policy

The Garda Síochána Investigating Interviewing Policy and Manual for Guidance for Investigative Interviewing was introduced in 2014 following recommendations from the Smyth Advisory Committee.

In accordance with this directive, the Garda Professional Standards Unit is required to ensure quality assurance nationally in relation to the implementation of this policy, by examining and



reviewing a random sample of investigation files pertaining to interviews to include tapes, DVDs, statements and memos of interview annually. The Garda Professional Standards Unit also identifies and conducts interviews with level 3¹ interviewers as part of the examinations.

The Unit reports to the Commissioner and the relevant Chief Superintendent. The Unit also liaises with the National Interview Training Co-ordinator and training staff for all levels under the Garda Síochána Interviewing Model and makes recommendations as appropriate in relation to competencies, supervision, infrastructure and training.

Under this policy, the Garda Professional Standards Unit is also required to issue a report annually to the Commissioner to include the audits conducted by the Unit and any information that required to be brought to the attention of the Governance Board of Crime and Operational Training at the Garda College. A report relating to progress made by the Unit in this area in 2015 was forwarded to the Commissioner.

During the reporting period, Investigative Interviewing has been examined in Clare, Laois / Offaly and Cork West Divisions and the Unit conducted reviews of Garda interviews under the Garda Síochána Interviewing Model.

To fulfil its responsibility under the policy, members of the Garda Professional Standards Unit have undertaken and will continue to participate in specific Interviewer Training.

At present, the examination also assesses deployment of trained level 3 interviewers to ascertain whether these personnel are utilised appropriately in Divisional investigations. It is envisaged that the Garda Professional Standards Unit will commence the examination of members with Level 2 Training in relation to their compliance with the model as members of those with Level 2 Training increase.

Serious Crimes and Critical Incidents – Case Reviews

Following recommendations from the Smyth Advisory Committee, the Serious Crimes and Critical Incidents – Case Reviews Policy was introduced on 31st March 2014. The Garda Professional Standards Unit is required to examine and review files in relation to serious crimes and critical incidents which are referred to them in the following circumstances:

¹ Training in the Garda Síochána Interviewing Model is set from level 1 increasing to level 4, to develop knowledge and skills in conducting interviews during investigations



1. Where a trial of a case in respect of a critical incident collapses.
2. Where an adverse comment is made by a court at a trial of a case in respect of a critical incident in relation to the conduct of the investigation, Garda behaviour, practice or procedure, (including a breach of the custody regulations); or
3. Where an adverse comment is made by the Director of Public Prosecutions in relation to the conduct of the investigation, Garda behaviour, practice or procedure.

The Garda Professional Standards Unit function is to identify issues of importance, good practice / standards or areas for improvement that may influence future investigations, practice, procedures and standards.

Four files were referred to the Unit under this policy during 2015. The Unit requests the investigation file and all associated correspondence from the respective Chief Superintendent. An examination and review of the documentation provided is conducted and a report is developed and disseminated to the relevant Sections within the Organisation.



4 ASSIGNMENT OF ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to the above, during 2015, the Garda Professional Standards Unit was assigned additional responsibilities. Some of these were standalone tasks while others will be the subject of consistent focus by the Garda Professional Standards Unit.

Bail PULSE Sign On Details

In 2014, Deputy Commissioner, Operations requested the inclusion of 'Bail Sign-On Details' on PULSE by the Garda Professional Standards Unit in a number of District examinations. These examinations continued into 2015. The purpose of the examination was to establish if the Bail Sign-On Book was complete and accurate with particular emphasis on the 'Entered on PULSE' tick box. A report of the examination was forwarded to Organisational senior management in July 2015.

O'Higgins Commission of Investigation

In February 2015, the O'Higgins Commission of Investigation was established under Statutory Instrument No. 38 of 2015 to investigate and report on certain matters relative to the Cavan / Monaghan Division of An Garda Síochána. Chief Superintendent, Garda Professional Standards Unit was appointed as a liaison for the initial module under investigation in the terms of reference. This involved the gathering of substantial volumes of documentation/information from across the Garda Organisation and from some retired members for provision to the Commission of Investigation.

Mr. Justice Frank Clarke Inquiry

In June 2015, Mr. Justice Frank Clarke, Supreme Court Judge was appointed to carry out an Inquiry under Section 109 of the Garda Síochána Act 2005 to examine matters relating to the GSOC Investigation following Garda contact with a member of the public shortly before her death in a fatal road traffic incident. Chief Superintendent, Garda Professional Standards Unit was appointed the liaison person for An Garda Síochána. The Garda Professional Standards Unit assisted him in his role and obtained documentation and statements from An Garda Síochána as required by the Inquiry.



The Health and Safety Management System Manual

The Health and Safety Management System Manual was introduced in June 2015 and provides an overview of An Garda Síochána's occupational health and safety management system which is designed to control risks and continually improve health and safety performance. The occupational health and safety management system will ensure that policies and procedures will be implemented, operated, checked and reviewed in accordance with a structured programme with the objective of ensuring continual improvement.

In accordance with policy, the Garda Professional Standards Unit is required to ensure that each Division or Section's safety performance is in keeping with current organisational policies and procedures. The Unit is also required to examine and evaluate the effectiveness and adherence to safety, health and welfare legislation and organisational policy and procedures. In addition, Chief Superintendent, Garda Professional Standards Unit is a member of the Organisation's Health and Safety Executive Management Team which is required to conduct an annual review of the occupational health and safety management system.

Failure to observe any provision of the Custody Regulations in accordance with the Criminal Justice Act, 1984 (Treatment of Persons in Custody in Garda Síochána Stations) Regulations, 1987 and 2006

In accordance with policy issued in March 2015, the Garda Professional Standards Unit is responsible for implementing any recommendations and/or lessons learned from any breach of disciplinary investigations arising from a failure on the part of any member of An Garda Síochána to observe any provision in respect of the above regulations.

Garda Victim Service Policy

The Garda Victim Service Policy places victims of crime and trauma at the centre of the Garda Service. It aims to address the individual needs and expectations of each victim by delivering a respectful, reassuring, responsive and reliable service to the diverse population we serve.

This policy assists An Garda Síochána in complying with EU Directive 12/29/EU which established the minimum standards for the rights, support and protection for victims of crime and commenced on 16th November 2015.



At National level the Garda services being provided to Victims including the Garda Victim Services Offices will be subject to examinations by the Garda Professional Standards Unit to assess compliance with Garda policy. The Garda Professional Standards Unit will commence examinations of these offices in their programme of examinations for 2016.

PULSE Incident Management Policy (PULSE Release 6.8)

The PULSE Incident Management function, under PULSE Release 6.8 became effective on the 1st November 2015 in accordance with HQ Directive 91/2015. This function will allow investigating members, supervisors and District Officers/Inspectors to supervise and monitor PULSE incidents under investigation. It will also ensure that incidents are being properly investigated and progressed in an efficient and timely manner. The Garda Professional Standards Unit has been assigned responsibility to examine and review the implementation of this policy during Division and District examinations.



5 INTERNAL LIAISON AND FEEDBACK TO THE ORGANISATION

An overview of the broad findings of the Garda Professional Standards Unit is provided at many forums in An Garda Síochána. These result in Organisational sharing of issues encountered during examinations and the associated good practice recommended. This distribution of information provides the opportunity for senior management to address recurring issues within their Divisions in advance of examinations and for specialist sections of the Organisation to consider these areas in the development of revised policy or the implementation of revised processes.

These forums include:-

Deaths in Custody Working Group

Chief Superintendent, Garda Professional Standards Unit is the Chair of the Deaths in Custody Working Group with significant input from members of the Unit. During the reporting period, the Garda Professional Standards Unit continued the implementation of recommendations from their report entitled, 'Review of Deaths in Custody between 1997 and 2006', as part of the Organisation's working group on deaths in custody. Four meetings of the working group were held during 2015.

The working group continues to review recommendations 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 previous years, the working group was responsible for the following during 2015:-

- A pilot of anti-suicide clothing which was rolled out at the Bridewell (Cork), Finglas and Tallaght Garda Stations.



-
- Draft policy on the Assessment by Gardaí of Intoxicated Persons which has been finalised and is currently under consideration by the Commissioner.
 - A pilot scheme involving the use of Velcro leg restraints by the Emergency Response Unit which is also under consideration.
 - Continuation of the review of cell facilities nationally;
 - The development of a briefing document for the consideration of senior management on the provision of defibrillators within An Garda Síochána.

Director of Training and Development

During the reporting period, the Garda Professional Standards Unit presented their findings and good practice to various training modules at the Garda College including promotion courses and detective training. The Garda Professional Standards Unit also presented their findings and associated recommendations to Phase II Students at the Garda College on three occasions.

Interim Report of the Fennelly Commission

In September 2015, two members of the Unit were appointed by Deputy Commissioner, Strategy and Change Management to a group convened to examine the content of the Interim Report of the Fennelly Commission and identify issues arising in respect of An Garda Síochána.

Organisational issues identified during examinations and reviews

As part of the Garda Professional Standards Unit examination and review process, Divisional and District management are provided with areas of concern to address and associated recommendations to implement. The Unit, on occasions, also identifies issues which are outside the control of the Division or District and relate to deficiencies in Organisational policy. During 2015, the Garda Professional Standards Unit forwarded reports on a number of Organisational issues and associated recommendations to the relevant policy owners for consideration.

Liaison with and provision of findings to specialist sections of An Garda Síochána

The Garda Professional Standards Unit continues to liaise with various specialist sections within An Garda Síochána as part of the examination and review process. This ensures that examination materials are current. Where relevant, following examinations and reviews, the



specific findings of the Unit are provided to these internal specialist units to ensure that issues requiring additional focus are addressed.

This has included;

- The Garda Síochána Technical Bureau,
- The Forensic Liaison Office
- National Support Services.
- Liaison and Protection Section, Crime and Security
- Strategic Transformation Office
- Assistant Commissioner, Organisation Development and Strategic Planning

The Garda Professional Standards Unit has also liaised with other specialist sections within An Garda Síochána as part of established workshops and Boards. These include:

- Performance and Accountability Framework (PAF) Meetings Workshop
- Enterprise Content Management (ECM) Workshop
- Property and Exhibits Management Systems (PEMS) Workshop
- Fixed Charge Processing Systems Implementation Working Group
- Protected Disclosures Working Group
- Risk Governance Board
- Transformation Governance Board

Garda Internal Audit Section

Joint examinations, in conjunction with the Garda Internal Audit Section, commenced in 2013 and have continued to date. During 2015, the Garda Professional Standards Unit continued to work with the Garda Internal Audit Section on a number of examinations. Effective cooperation has resulted in the enhancement of knowledge and a comprehensive and in-depth combined examination and audit.



6 EXTERNAL LIAISON AND FEEDBACK TO EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

The Garda Professional Standards Unit interacts with the following external agencies:-

Garda Inspectorate

A number of meetings have taken place between the Garda Professional Standards and the Garda Inspectorate in recent years and it has been agreed by both organisations that there is merit in the continuation of such meetings. In July 2015, a meeting was held between management of the Garda Professional Standards Unit and the Garda Inspectorate as part of its follow-up review of its seventh report, Responding to Child Sexual Abuse.

All reports developed by the Garda Professional Standards Unit have been provided to the Garda Inspectorate and the Unit will continue this in accordance with the recommendations included in the Inspectorate's most recent report "Changing Policing in Ireland".

Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission (GSOC)

As included in Chapter 3, the Garda Professional Standards Unit carried out a review of requests sent by GSOC in respect of investigations conducted under Section 98 of the Garda Síochána Act 2005. This involved liaison between the Garda Professional Standards Unit and the GSOC as part of the examination and review.

Central Statistics Office (CSO)

In November 2014, the CSO began a comprehensive review of the accuracy of Garda crime data. As part of this study they requested access to paper records used to record incidents reported at Garda Stations. In 2015, the Commissioner appointed the Garda Professional Standards Unit to assist them in obtaining these records. The Unit liaised with the CSO during the reporting period in relation to the specifics of the project and then collected the required documentation in a specified manner on their behalf. In June 2015, the assistance of the Garda Professional Standards Unit was acknowledged in the CSO Report, titled 'Review of the Quality of Crime Statistics'.



Health and Safety Authority Review of An Garda Síochána's Safety Management System

In May 2015, the Health & Safety Authority conducted a review of An Garda Síochána's Safety Management System. The Authority requested the status of a number of health and safety action items which were identified by the Garda Professional Standards Unit in three Divisions. These figures were provided to the Health and Safety Authority by the Garda Professional Standards Unit.

JobBridge National Internship Scheme

As part of the JobBridge National Internship Scheme, two Legal and Policing Researchers and one Human Rights Researcher were applied for and assigned to the Unit as Interns for a nine month period from August and September 2015. While obtaining valuable work experience, the Interns have assisted the Garda Professional Standards Unit in carrying out vast national and international research in the legal, policing and human rights fields. The Unit has employed interns through this programme since 2011 and has found it be hugely beneficial.

Since their appointment, the Interns have conducted in-depth research in the areas of;

- Data protection
- Threats to life
- Domestic violence
- International approaches to missing persons
- Juvenile crime policies, legislation and human rights
- Complaints reduction initiatives
- Tactical Communication Skills
- Body Worn Video for use by policing personnel
- Corruption and substance misuse within policing agencies
- Informal resolution
- Social Media policy
- Police e-mail and e-mail etiquette policy
- Police code of ethics frameworks
- Methods of identifying volunteers for police witness line ups
- Presumptive drug testing
- External accreditation bodies



To ensure the maximisation of their expertise, the interns have attended various conferences and tours associated with An Garda Síochána, Courts and Prison functions including a major emergency exercise at Knock Airport, a seminar on Victims Rights, a Garda Síochána ELO Conference, a National Support Services Open Day, a tour of the Criminal Court of Justice and the Irish Prison Reform Trust Conference.

Since 2011, the majority of Interns appointed through the JobBridge National Internship Scheme have been successful in securing permanent, full time employment in accordance with their qualifications and the benefit of the experience gained.

Two of the Interns appointed during 2015 have been successful in competitions for employment in their chosen fields and are due to take up duty in April 2016. The third intern has been successful in the first stage of a competition for permanent employment.

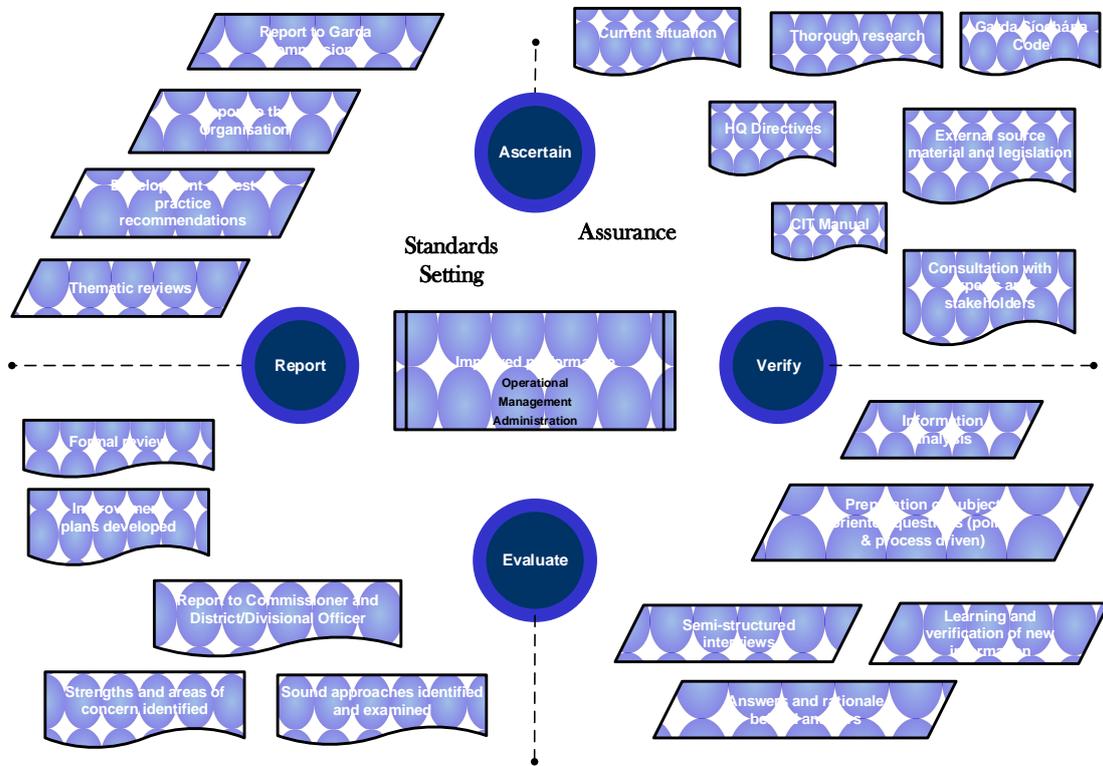


7 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND METHODOLOGY

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. 7 Continuous improvement model for the Garda Professional Standards Unit



The Garda Professional Standards Unit, through its members’ experience and capabilities combined with their training as Internal Quality Management Systems Auditors, uses these 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:

Stage One – Background Research

The GPSU carries out thorough research of each process area to be examined in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the current situation within An Garda Síochána. This research involves identifying and examining the relevant source data relating to the subject area, for example the Garda Code, the Crime Investigation Techniques Manual, HQ Circulars and Directives, operating and training manuals, relevant external source materials and legislation relating to the area.

Stage Two – Investigation File/Incident Examination

In certain circumstances, investigation files are requested and received from the District. In other Examination Areas PULSE Incidents are selected at random. The Files and Incidents are examined by GPSU in advance of the onsite Examination.

Stage Three – Semi-Structured Interviews

Where appropriate, semi structured interviews are carried out with members appointed by the Divisional/District Officer who have a responsibility for or a working knowledge of the subject area under Examination.

The interview process adds to information already gathered and also assists in testing local compliance with current policy in each Examination area.

Stage Four – Analysis of Findings

Evaluation/analysis of all the information gained during the Examination process assists in identifying Strengths and Areas of Concern.

A draft report is then prepared and issued to the Divisional and District Officers for their comments and observations. Following consultation, if required, between the Divisional management team and GPSU, reports are published and forwarded to local management and the Garda Commissioner.



Stage Five – Improvement Plans

Guidance on the preparation of an Improvement Plan based on the identified Areas of Concern is communicated to Divisional management subsequent to the publication of the final report. The GPSU carry out a formal Review of the Division and each District within six months of the issue of the final Examination report to evaluate progress against the improvement plan and to provide advice and assistance if required.



8 SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

Continuous education and training are an imperative of the Garda Professional Standards Unit. Members of the Unit are encouraged and supported, where appropriate, to undertake formal education and training courses to ensure that the Unit's methodologies are innovative, efficient and achieve value. Continuous learning also ensures that the Unit's examination and review process is up to date on existing and new areas of relevance and the associated reports developed are professional and to a high standard.

The majority of members attached to the Unit hold or are undertaking a variety of third level qualifications at both under graduate and post graduate level. Three members of the Unit have undertaken studies for an MA in Ethics (Corporate Responsibility). In November 2015, the first of the three members successfully completed the MA.

In June 2015, a member of the Unit achieved a BA (Hons) in Psychology. Each member of the Garda Professional Standards Unit has been certified as an Internal Quality Management Systems Auditor by Excellence Ireland Quality Association (EIQA). Internal Assessor / Auditor Training will continue to be provided to new members of staff in the future.

During the reporting period, members of the Unit attended the following external conferences and workshops:

- Building Integrity under the auspices of the European Security and Defence College;
- Implementing the New EU General Data Protection Regulations Conference and Workshop;
- Association for Criminal Justice Research and Development Conference on Victims;
- Irish Criminal Justice Agencies Conference, titled 'Engagement with young people';
- Health and Safety Conference titled 'Safety First, Don't Take Shortcuts';
- Head of Internal Audit Forum Conference.

In addition, targeted and specific training was provided to members of the Unit in the following areas;

- PULSE (PULSE Releases and Garda Victim Services)
- Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook
- Freedom of Information



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- New procedures in accordance with Criminal Justice (Forensic Evidence and DNA Database System) Act 2014
 - Garda Inspections and Reviews
 - Investigative Interviewer Training



9 CONCLUSION

The work of the Garda Professional Standards Unit since its establishment in 2006 has continued to evolve, beyond its annual programme of examinations and reviews. While playing a significant role in governance, accountability and promotion of the highest standards, the Unit continues to learn from a wide range national and international, public and private sector partners in the pursuit of best practice.

In accordance with the priorities of An Garda Síochána for 2016, the Garda Professional Standards Unit will continue to listen to the community, its people, its oversight bodies and other stakeholders to promote and achieve effective and enduring improvement and professionalism. The Unit will be flexible, innovative and will maximise its resources to play a significant role in An Garda Síochána's commitment to transform itself into a world-class police service.