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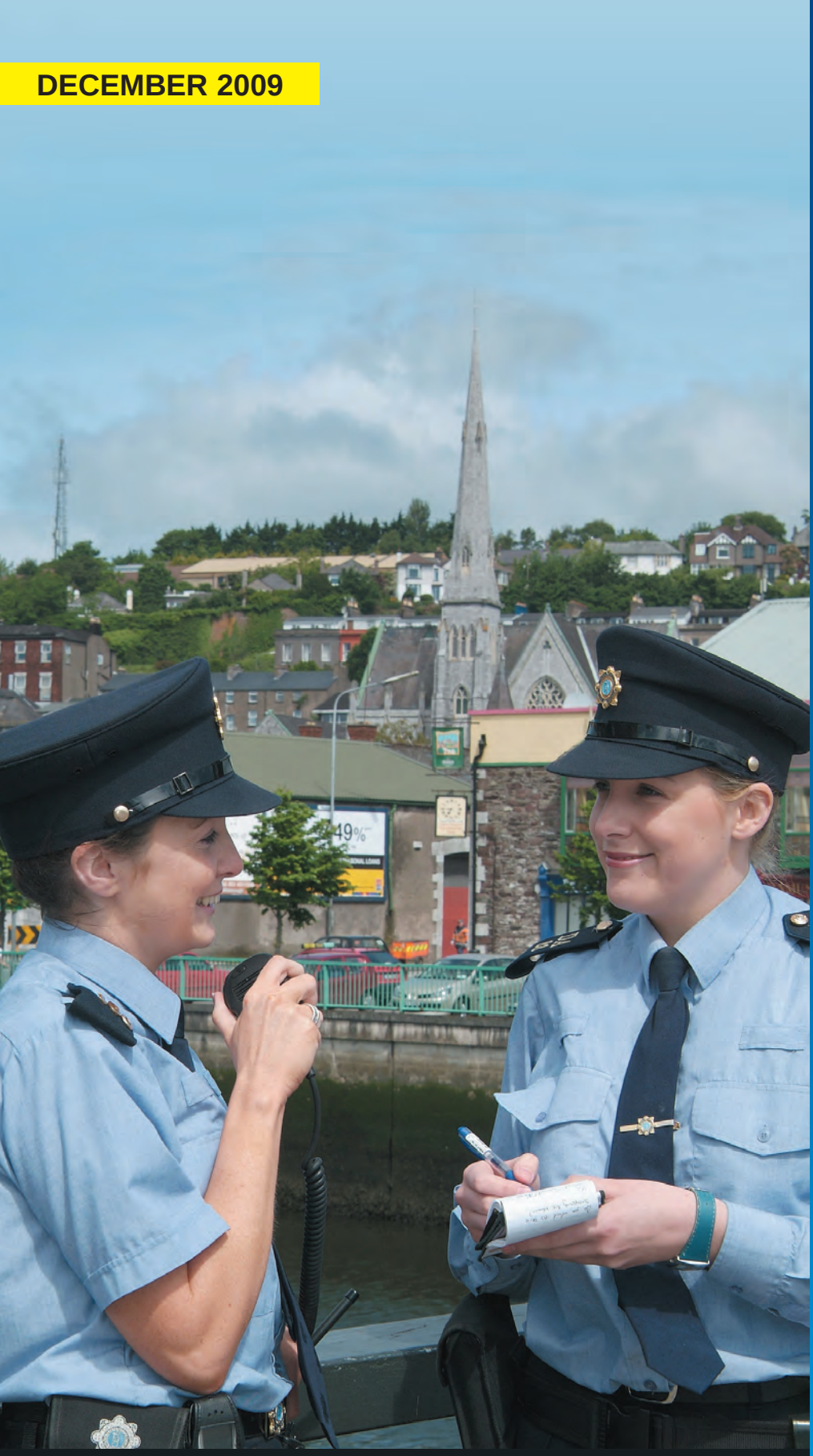

# WOMEN IN POLICING

## "CELEBRATING THE PAST – EMBRACING THE FUTURE"

AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA MANAGEMENT JOURNAL

# Communique

## EDITORIAL

This edition of Communiqué presents the reader with a unique insight into the induction of women into An Garda Síochána and celebrates those pioneering women who commenced such a historical journey through the service. The four articles provide the reader with an understanding of the culture of An Garda Síochána, how people are central to the success of a policing service and how all members, irrespective of gender, are essential ingredients of excellent organisations.

Sergeant Oliver Nally examines how culture is an essential ingredient in successful organisations. Sergeant Nally outlines why culture is a vital determinant in how efficient and effective an organisation is in performing its roles and functions. He outlines the negative and positive elements associated with police culture and concludes with a data analysis the findings of which can also be used to inform training design in the Garda organisation.

Mr. Malachy Feely and Sergeant John O'Dwyer present the reader with a comprehensive overview of competency based interviewing which is a process used by An Garda Síochána to identify suitable people for specific roles within the organisation. Mr. Feely and Sergeant O'Dwyer examine the literature surrounding this area and notes why the process of competency based interviewing has become so popular with modern organisations. This article provides an in-depth analysis of the competency based approach to interview, ensuring the candidate for promotion is well prepared and informed.

Ms. Mary Walker looks at the role of Specialist Victim Interviewers and provides clarity in relation to procedures which must be adhered to by members of An Garda Síochána and social workers from the Health Service Executive. Ms. Walker provides an overview of the pre-selection programme, the training provided, the interview process, the guidelines and legislation, making the article a most useful tool for members of the Garda service, social workers and those who may be thinking of becoming a Specialist Victim Interviewer.

Ms. Catherine Clancy describes the successful journey of women through An Garda Síochána providing a most personal insight having been appointed the first female Assistant Commissioner on the 10th September 2003. Ms. Clancy charts the beginnings of female involvement in Irish policing and examines the historic journey which first began as far back as 1917 and notes the successful pioneers, both domestic and international, who paved the way for female members in present day police services.

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## NOTES ON THE CONTRIBUTORS

SERGEANT OLIVER NALLY is a native of Limerick and joined An Garda Síochána in 1998. Currently stationed in the Garda College, he has served in Mayfield, Watercourse Rd and Henry St, Limerick. He holds a Masters Degree in Criminal Justice Public Management from the Institute of Public Administration, a Primary Degree in Social Science from University College Cork, an N.C.E.A. Diploma in Policing Studies, a Certificate in Addiction Studies from N.U.I. Maynooth and a Certificate in Management Studies from H.S.I. Limerick. He is currently undergoing a Certificate in Training and Education with N.U.I. Galway. He is presently involved in the Programme Development Group who are designing the new Level 7 Programme for Garda recruits.

DR. MALACHY FEELY is a qualified and experienced healthcare professional with extensive knowledge and background in clinical nursing, management, service development, education and public speaking, and a proven record of initiating clinical activities. He has worked in the UK and Irish Mental Health Services and has presented a number of papers at both national and international conferences and has written a number of papers for national and international journals, including Garda Review and the International Police Association Journal (Irish Section). He is currently on secondment from the Mental Health Services of the HSE-Dublin North East and working as a Nurse Advisor (Mental Health and Intellectual Disability) in the Department of Health and Children.



SERGEANT JOHN O'DWYER is a native of Clonmel, Co. Tipperary. He joined An Garda Síochána in December 1982 and served as a Garda at Fitzgibbon Street, Oldcastle, Kells and Kells Traffic Corps, all in the former Louth/Meath Division. From 1999-2000 he served overseas with the UN in Bosnia i Herzegovina. During his tour of duty there he served as Chief of Operations and subsequently achieved the rank of Deputy Regional Commander. During this time he also served as Chairman of the Police Complaints Commission for Brcko District. As Sergeant he has served at Pearse St., Blanchardstown, Drogheda and Sergeant I/C Nobber. He is currently Sergeant in Kells. John holds a Diploma in Criminology.

MS. MARY WALKER is a Researcher at the Garda Research Unit (GRU) based in the Garda College Templemore since 2002. She previously worked in the ESRI. She holds a primary degree in Applied Psychology from University College Cork (UCC), a Masters degree in Criminology from Keele University and a H. Dip in Crim Studies from DIT. She has conducted research in the areas of rape, domestic violence and related sexual violence topics (in addition to various GRU research projects). Moreover, she has completed the Specialist Child Interviewing Course as well as training in many psychological risk assessment tools. She is currently completing her PhD on Sex Offender Risk Assessment and Management in Ireland. This is through the Behavioural Science Unit within the School of Psychiatry, at UCC.

MS. CATHERINE CLANCY joined An Garda Síochána in September 1975, she retired in October 2008 holding the rank of Assistant Commissioner Human Resource Management. She is currently pursuing a Post Graduate Diploma in Psychology at Trinity College Dublin.

# Garda Organisation Culture

Sergeant Oliver Nally

*Sergeant Oliver Nally*

"There is nothing accidental about cultural strengths…..There is a relationship between an organisation's culture and it's performance … without exception, the dominance and coherence of culture proved to be an essential quality of excellent organisations"

Heller, 1997

## Introduction

Organisational culture is of heightened interest to managers of all organisations because it can improve performance, efficiency and effectiveness (O'Donovan 2006). It affects the attitudes and behaviours of workers. Culture must be understood to improve it. Organisational culture has been defined by many theorists but it is difficult to identify one comprehensive definition because its boundaries are so wide and parts of it are deeply hidden. The dilemma is how can you change something when you don't know exactly what it is or where it can be located? Despite this difficulty O'Donovan (2006) and Heller (1997) are confident that organisational performance can be improved by improving organisational culture.

## Police Culture

Researchers search for the foundations that police culture is based upon. Reiner (1992) observes that the strength of police culture is based on police work as a mission of "worthwhile enterprise, not just another job" while Goldsmith (1990) suggests that police solidarity is the most basic police cultural value where "values and attitudes" within police forces, forge "the bond of solidarity between officers". The culture within An Garda Síochána comes into existence through the socialisation process. It is through this cultural assimilation that Gardaí obtain what Skolnick (1966) describes as the "working personality". This working personality is made up of different values and behaviours which gel together to form a culture.

Handy (1985) argues that culture is something that cannot be perceived and therefore cannot be defined. However, Deal and Kennedy (1982) defined organisational culture "as the way things are done around here". Policing holds a distinctive position within society and, as Skolnick (1975) argues, the police develop a unique manner in which they perform their duty.

## General Aims and Objectives

An imperative of the Garda Síochána Corporate Strategy 2007-2009 and the National Policing Plan 2008 (An Garda Síochána, 2007) is the reinvigoration of the Garda organisational culture. Against the backdrop of the Morris Tribunal, An Garda Síochána seeks to identify gaps between current practice and the preferred future culture. Garda Staff Attitudes Surveys (1997, 2000, 2003, 2007), Kelly, McGann and O'Sullivan (2007) and other research creates an impetus within An Garda Síochána to reinvigorate the positive aspects of culture within the organisation.

An Garda Síochána states that an important strategic imperative is "to renew and invigorate the culture of An Garda Síochána" by completing "an assessment of the culture of the organisation and appropriate interventions with a high visibility strategy and implementation plan". This strategic imperative is expanded upon in the *National Policing Plan of An Garda Síochána of 2009* where



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the time line for finishing this assessment is Q4, 2009. It is envisaged that it will help to "reduce complaints made against members of An Garda Síochána" (National Policing Plan 2009).

To shed more light on elements of this strategic imperative the author conducted research as part of a Masters Degree Programme and surveyed the attitudes of garda students at the end of Phase 1 Training[1] and at the start of Phase 3 Training to determine changes in attitudes to police cultures.

### Research Questions

The research contained five main questions as follows:



What change in values and behaviours do student Gardaí experience between Phase 1 and Phase 3 training?

How strong is the change in values and behaviours that occurs within student Gardaí between Phase 1 and Phase 3 training?

What ambitions do Phase 1 and Phase 3 students have?

How will the draft *Manual of Good Practice in Police Culture* for Garda field training instructors improve Garda cultures?

What recommendations will reinvigorate the culture of An Garda Síochána?

It is the evidence of the change in values and behaviours that student Gardaí witness and experience while "in the field" in their respective training centres, which influences their own values and behaviours, that is of prime relevance to this research.

### Methodology Used

A quantitative approach was used during this research. A questionnaire was formulated based upon 57 cultural traits identified by Westmarland (2008). These cultural traits can be broadly categorised into three groupings. Group one – Positive Police Cultures which can be negative in circumstances (suspicion, conservatism etc). Group 2 – Cultures of bias, discrimination or denial of rights and Group 3 cultures of integrity and corruption (a full list of all cultural traits can be found in appendix 1). A ten page questionnaire consisting of 128 questions was formulated. It was completed by 186 Student Gardaí at the start of their Phase 2 training. On returning to the Garda College on Phase 3, 174 out of the original 186 students completed the same questionnaire again.

The aggregated set of results data was frequency analysed using SPSS[2].

### Results: Increases in Cultures Experienced from Phase 1 to Phase 3

Of the 57 cultures queried in Phase 1, 51 increased by Phase 3. A brief synopsis of the main findings follows.

1 Garda Training Programme is divided into five phases.
2 Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.

When asked if *"Gardaí put themselves in danger"*, increased from 16 per cent Phase 1 to 41 per cent Phase 3 while the need to get results increased from 58 per cent Phase 1 to 78 per cent Phase 3.
When asked *"is there a gap between law in theory and law in practice"* 68 per cent of Phase 1 agreed while 84 per cent of Phase 3 agreed. When asked *"are there too few arrests and convictions to protect women against violence"* 24 per cent of Phase 1 students agreed while 53 per cent of Phase 3 students agreed. 45 per cent of student Gardaí on Phase 1 stated *"that there was an antagonistic attitude towards certain groups"* in society and this rose to 57 per cent of Phase 3 student gardaí.

26 per cent of Phase 1 student gardaí believed that *"the cultures of traffic units and crime units were very different"* while 74 per cent of Phase 3 student gardaí believed this to be the case.



96 per cent of Phase 1 student gardaí believed that *"you have to look out for each other on the street"* compared to 97 per cent of Phase 3 student gardaí. 77 per cent of student gardaí on Phase 1 believed that *"everyday policing is learnt from each other"* compared to 86 per cent of Phase 3 student gardaí. 18 per cent of student gardaí on Phase 1 believed that *"the culture of detective units is very different"* while 70 per cent of Phase 3 student gardaí believed this to be the case. 9 per cent of student gardaí on Phase 1 believed that *"detective work is more valued than other work"* and this increased to 50 per cent of Phase 3 Gardaí. 49 per cent of Phase 1 student gardaí stated *"they had met a Garda colleague who was unsuitable for policing"* and this increased to 79 per cent on Phase 3. When asked if *"war stories were more widespread in the police than in other occupations"* 48 per cent of Phase 1 student gardaí agreed. This increased to 63 per cent for Phase 3 student gardaí.

55 per cent of Phase 1 student gardaí believed that *"there is a different vocabulary and different objectives at street level policing than at HQ"* compared to 74 per cent of Phase 3 Student Gardaí. Only 3 per cent of Phase 1 Student Gardaí believed *"there is one police culture across the world"*. This increased to 6 per cent of Phase 3 Student Gardaí.

**Decreases in Cultures Experienced from Phase 1 to Phase 3**
Six cultural issues decreased from Phase 1 to Phase 3 training. *"Education bias towards other student gardaí"* decreased from 12 per cent to 10 per cent between the phases. *Corrupt behaviour* decreased from 3 per cent to 2 per cent between the Phases. Sixty one per cent of student gardaí on Phase 1 stated that *"when the chase is on for a capture the hunting instinct kicks in"*, while 50 per cent of Phase 3 student gardaí believed this to be the case. When asked if the *"legitimate use of force is the main symbol of authority"*, 18 per cent of Phase 1 student gardaí agreed while 16 per cent of Phase 3 student gardaí agreed with this statement. Nine per cent of Phase 1 student gardaí agreed that *"the use of authority is the central meaning of policing"* for them compared to 7 per cent of Phase 3 student gardaí.

**Observations from Analysis**
A number of observations can be gleaned from the above data. Observations of *racist behaviour towards others outside or inside the Garda* doubled between phases from 18 per cent Phase 1 to 36 per cent Phase 3. Observations of the *violation of human rights* increased from 7 per cent to 12 per cent between phases and the observation of the wrongful *accusation of offenders either through error or*

*deliberately* increased from 10 per cent to 12 per cent between Phases. There was little change in the assertion that *response and flexibility is more important than pre-planned solutions,* increasing only 1 per cent from 59 per cent to 60 per cent between phases.

A large learning curve of cultural norms is experienced by Phase 1 student gardaí as 30 per cent of the 57 cultural norms have been observed by Phase 1 student gardaí. This curve increases gradually to 44 per cent for Phase 3 students. This shows that more than twice the number of cultures are learned either before or on Phase 1 rather than picked up on Phase 2 training. Heretofore the first field training period would have been posited as the prime instiller of garda culture in young gardaí but the findings here refute this review. Most of the culture (30 of 44 per cent) is experienced before field training begins.



## Conclusion

Culture in any organisation is a vital determinant in how efficient and effective an organisation is in performing it's roles and functions. The data analysis in this research brings to light some unsatisfactory behaviours and attitudes but it also shows the high percentage of positive attributes which can aid in policing if not taken to extremes, such as *suspicion* (43 per cent to 53 per cent), *conservatism* (62 per cent to 65 per cent) and *pragmatism* (67 per cent to 72 per cent).

One would expect from the outset on joining an organisation that it's cultural norms would be gradually learned and experienced by the new employee. This has certainly been proven by the research. Of the 57 cultural components analysed, 30 per cent of Gardaí experienced these cultures while on Phase 1 of their training (and before) compared to 44 per cent while on their Phase 3 training (Nally, 2009). There is a natural progression of the assimilation of Garda culture while a student Garda progresses from Phase 1 to Phase 3 training, increasing by 14 per cent. The strength of Garda culture experienced also increased from 22 per cent in Phase 1 to 33 per cent in Phase 3 (Nally, 2009). What is most surprising is the large percentage of culture already assimilated by the end of Phase 1 training and the high percentage strengths of some of these cultures.

The high assimilation of Garda culture on phase 1 may be attributed to the fact that 36% of respondents had a family member within An Garda Síochána, 70% spoke to a Garda before the selection process and 56% spoke with several Gardaí before entering (Nally, 2009).

Fifteen recommendations in appendix 2 are prompted by the study. Further research should be carried out on Phase 1 student gardaí before they enter the Garda training programme and on week 1 of their Phase 1 training to ascertain if Garda cultural traits are assimilated before new recruits enter the organisation. Research in this area is currently being undertaken (Reid, 2009, forthcoming). Preliminary findings already to hand from that research show that 20 per cent of Garda applicants have experienced these cultures before joining An Garda Síochána.

Finally, the findings of this research can also be used to inform training design in the Garda organisation.

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| Appendix 1 : Cultures Experienced | % of End of Phase 1 student Gardaí | % Start of Phase 3 student Gardaí |
|---|---|---|
| Machismo culture: aggressive confrontational masculine behaviour dominates (even among women members) | 32 | 47 |
| Sexist behaviour towards others outside or inside the Garda | 17 | 37 |
| Them versus us – those outside or inside are perceived to be against us | 37 | 55 |
| Experienced Garda biased against new Garda | 25 | 40 |
| Garda bias shown against young people in the street | 21 | 36 |
| Racist behaviour towards others outside or inside the Garda | 18 | 36 |
| County bias (culshie, rednecks, jackeens, otherness) towards others outside or inside the Garda | 32 | 29 |
| Education bias towards others with less education than us outside or inside the Garda | 12 | 10 |
| Discrimination where the bias or behaviours mentioned here are acted on to unfairly disadvantage or advantage others outside or inside the Garda | 9 | 20 |
| A sense of mission where the end frequently justifies the means | 33 | 44 |
| Suspicion: where Gardaí suspect others outside or inside the Garda a lot | 43 | 53 |
| Conservatism where a very cautious approach is the norm | 62 | 65 |
| Pragmatism where getting the job done and good results is the most important | 67 | 72 |
| Corrupt behaviour such as seeking or accepting gifts whether large or small | 3 | 2 |
| Violence unjustified by law: using more force than allowed by law | 4 | 17 |
| Class bias towards others outside or inside the Garda where different social classes are seen to be treated differently | 22 | 37 |
| Violation of human rights where all the rights of people are not protected | 7 | 12 |
| Over-extending discretion to non-discretionary offences or particular people | 14 | 30 |
| Wrongful accusation of offenders either through error or deliberately | 10 | 12 |
| Culture of secrecy that excludes family and friends and sometimes colleagues | 34 | 49 |
| Gardaí putting themselves in danger and ignoring health and safety issues | 16 | 41 |
| Need to get results and be efficient means constant pressure for results | 58 | 78 |
| Over-use of authority and under-use of interest and politeness | 26 | 36 |
| Rule-bending, covering up infringements, backing each other up | 18 | 26 |
| An informal code where some behaviours are accepted and others are not | 34 | 53 |
| Abuse of powers where stops, searches, arrests or detention or the use of | | |
| force or discretion is slightly or significantly beyond what the law specifies | 6 | 30 |
| Nicknames created and used either personally or for a group either inside or outside the Garda | 49 | 77 |
| What we say and what we do is different. We say beat patrol is the most important policing locally but few of us want to do it | 42 | 63 |
| When the chase is on for a capture the hunting instinct kicks in | 61 | 50 |
| Is there a gap between law in theory and law in practice? | 68 | 84 |
| Are there too few arrests and convictions to protect women against violence? | 24 | 53 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Is there an antagonistic attitude towards certain groups in society? | 45 | 57 |
| Is there institutional racism in An Garda Síochána where the organisation fails to outlaw racism? | 12 | 21 |
| Do police arrangements for racial minorities cause unwitting racism because there is no similar arrangements for other minorities? | 14 | 21 |
| Does thoughtless behaviour towards racial minorities cause unwitting racism? | 31 | 32 |
| Are the cultures in traffic police units and crime units very different? | 26 | 74 |
| Is the legitimate use of force the main symbol of Garda authority and power? | 18 | 16 |
| Is the use of authority the central meaning of policing for you? | 9 | 7 |
| Is the Garda culture the same as that of a rugby club in terms of physicality and drinking prowess? | 9 | 24 |
| Do you think policing is a danger zone for women? | 17 | 33 |
| Is there a pecking order of good arrests from burglary down to drunkenness? | 31 | 58 |
| Do you think that the Garda occupational culture can override efforts by the organisation and individuals to remove sexist discrimination? | 22 | 36 |
| Do you have to look out for each other on the street? | 96 | 97 |
| Everyday policing is learnt from each other, from tutor Gardaí, or watching how others are treated for getting it wrong rather than from classroom training | 77 | 86 |
| Is flirting by Gardaí common on the street? | 13 | 29 |
| Are the cultures in detective units very different? | 18 | 70 |
| Is detective work valued more than other work in the Garda? | 9 | 50 |
| Have you met a Garda colleague who is unsuitable for policing? | 49 | 79 |
| Are detectives elitist, looking down on uniform members? | 11 | 34 |
| Do you think the chase for numerical detections among detectives is all-engrossing for them? | 7 | 27 |
| Are "war stories" where colleagues tell stories and recount policing exploits more widespread in the police than in other occupations? | 48 | 63 |
| Are the hands of Gardaí on the street tied by the HQ management culture? | 31 | 49 |
| Is response and flexibility more important than pre-planned solutions? | 59 | 60 |
| Is there a different vocabulary and different objectives at street-level policing than at HQ? | 55 | 74 |
| Does a performance-driven culture integrate women better into the prevailing cultures and power structure of senior management? | 24 | 31 |
| Is there one police culture across the world? | 3 | 6 |
| All this talk about police cultures is overdone, it crowds out much-needed practical police training | 52 | 67 |
| **Average percentage of all policing cultures experienced in An Garda Síochána** | **30%** | **44%** |

Source: Nally, (2009)

*Sergeant John O'Dwyer*

*Dr. Malachy Feely*



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# Competency Interviewing – Selling Yourself or Showing Experience?

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Sergeant John O'Dwyer, Dip. Crim.

## Introduction

Organisations, such as An Garda Síochána, working within a complex change environment are increasingly conscious that people are central to organisations responsiveness to societal challenges. Within such complexities, competence and internal competency assessment has taken on greater significance. Increased accountability and the need to support the ongoing development of An Garda Síochána requires identification of personnel at all levels who can respond to the challenges of policing in a complex society through use of a range of selection processes that will facilitate identification of such personnel (Nolan 2007, Murphy 2004, Fitzgerald 2007, Dillane 2003, Fitzgerald 2003, Murphy 1997). One process for identifying specific people for various positions and roles within an organisation is that of competency based interviewing. Whilst much has been written about the competency approach to selection and promotion, it is timely to revisit this significant selection approach as candidates prepare for a range of promotional interviews within the organisation (Grogan 2004).

Competency based interviewing has become increasingly popular as a process to identify candidates who may be deemed *fit for the job* in a range of services. For some, the notion of completing a competency based interview triggers anxiety, for others the notion of doing an interview itself triggers similar anxiety. For all, the process of competency based interviews provides the interviewee with the opportunity to share, show and display their experiences, which are relevant to the post for which they are applying. In essence, competency based interviewing should put the interviewee in the driving seat of the interview process as they identify the actual experiences that will be discussed during the interview itself. The interviewer provides the conduit through which experiences are examined, as their questioning provides the blade for the examination of experience, as they seek clarification of experience, additional data regarding roles and activities, and satisfy themselves as to whether the competencies displayed are relevant to the role currently being applied for. In essence they are assessing the evidential basis for determining whether or not a candidate has displayed the competencies required for the position applied for.

This article gives a broad overview of competency based interviewing and aspects of the interview process itself.

## Preparing for interview

Preparing for interview begins years before the date of the actual interview itself. Preparation is inextricably linked with a person's career and experiences to date. Role change, an ongoing process often engaged in throughout people's careers, will be encountered by many (Mateo et al 1997). What jobs, roles and key experiences have they encountered that have influenced their decision making in their chosen career? What people have they encountered or worked with who have significantly influenced them and how they have responded in differing situations? Equally who have they significantly influenced, in what situations and how?

Such experiences shape and influence what jobs people apply for and how they apply themselves in the process of application itself. Consider, for example, if one believes that a recruitment process is a token and that it is already predetermined as to who will be the successful candidate, then attention to the application process itself will not be very positive and as such possibly not provide rich and relevant material to an external panel in order to make decisions as regards a candidates ability or suitability for the position in question. If, alternatively, a candidate believes that the selection process is a fair and open competition in which each person is judged on their merits and ability through a transparent competitive recruitment process (Commission for Public Service Appointments 2004) as displayed both in the application form and interview process, attention to the process will be greater. This focus needs to begin with the first examination of the advert for a promotional position or new job.



### Examining the advertisement

Consider what are the key requirements and functions of the position in question – focus on the requirements of the role and organisation (Powers 2000, Blazey and MacLeod 1996). Read the advertisement and job description carefully. Is it to lead, direct, regulate, encourage or follow, contribute to, facilitate or organise? Job descriptions and job profiles identify the key activities or roles of a job – it is a broad statement of the purpose, scope, duties or responsibilities of a particular job. Person specifications, if provided, usually identify what is required of the individual to fulfil the job (IPA 2002). These person specifications are often captured under four or five main headings relative to the role itself under which performance indicators can be explored relative to the job, for example:

- Management and organisation
- Legal knowledge and application
- Leading and motivating
- Professional developing
- Investigative ability
- Delegating
- Influencing

Basically what does the job require from the candidate in order to successfully fulfil the role? The question that the possible applicant must ask themselves is: "Have I the abilities and competency required to do this job?" If the answer is "Yes" – then the first opportunity to display this occurs in the completion of the application form.

### Competency approach

Competency based approaches focus on the behaviours, skills, knowledge, understanding and personal qualities deemed necessary for a person to provide a skilled or competent performance (IPA 2002, Powers 2000, Grogan 2004) i.e. what are the capabilities of the person to successfully fulfil the requirements of the position in question? Past behaviours and responses may be used as a potential barometer of future behaviour and responses, hence the focus on: 'What have you done, experiences gained, knowledge gained and applied in real situations' and so forth (Office for Health Management (A). It is a focussing on the behaviours applied in the performance of current or recent jobs relative to the applied for position.

### Completing the application form

The application form is generally the first introduction of the candidate to the interview panel. Each panel member will read the application form to get a sense of the candidate and their experiential base, relative to the role applied for. It is imperative that attention is placed on ensuring that each question is answered fully and correctly. Words matter, and if not sure what a question is seeking for, reread the form, check if there are examples in the paperwork, and check with someone if unsure. The application form itself gives candidates the opportunity to 'shine' or 'fall flat on their faces'. The application is about you and your ability to possibly perform the role applied for, it needs to be used fully. This may be the first and only information a panel will receive about a candidate and so its importance should be fully recognised. It is your 'self-marketing tool' and aims to create interest that ensures a candidate is called for interview (Office for Health Management (B)).

The application form contains questions regarding the present job of the person; previous work experience; career path to date; educational experience; and specific questions may be asked regarding the role being applied for. Only a candidate can complete this form on him/herself. Additional questions, from a competency perspective, will relate to the role in question, and look for examples of where a candidate has used competencies deemed relevant to this role (IPA 2002). For example, as a Garda applying for a Sergeant position, a candidate could be asked to identify an experience in which they had to take the lead in a difficult public order situation, or in a cross-boundary road traffic accident that involved a range of emergency response services and Gardaí from neighbouring divisions. Such areas could be covered under 'Management and Organisation' or 'Leading or Motivating' or 'Teamworking' or 'Promoting Organisational Responsiveness' for example. At a higher level, whilst noting that supervisors traditionally directed the work of others, an Inspector candidate may be assessed under headings such as "Directing and Co-ordinating Operations" from both a strategic and operational responsiveness level (Grogan 2004) as the need to both direct and participate in the work has been recognised as a required supervisor competency (Dillane 2003). The headings, and related information, give the applicant the opportunity to identify particular experiences in which they used behaviours and knowledge that display ability under the particular competency in question. Competencies identified on the application form are deemed to encapsulate the key skills to operate at a particular level in the organisation (Grogan 2004). Think clearly about the skills being asked about on the application form and consider these in the context of one's own experience (Office for Health Management (A)).

Experiences do not fit neatly into boxes, and competency is not a static process, both experiences and competency can overlap. The candidate must choose what they consider as a key example that displays their ability to others. Always use examples that best provide explicit evidence of the key ability being requested. Whilst asked on the application form for one example in relation to particular identified competencies, always have a couple of other key examples per competency prepared using the format identified on the application form itself. These may need to be referred to during the interview process, and preparation is better than perspiration! Also, examples of experience do not always have to be positive, as negative experiences or encounters also provide evidence of experience, ability and learning (Powers 2000). What often separates successful

people from unsuccessful ones is their ability to learn from negative experiences and being able to communicate during an interview a negative experience being used in a positive manner (Mateo et al 1997).

People tend to have a shyness about the use of "I". Competency is about "I" and the ability to display the "I" qualities." Write in terms of experiences, achievements and promote yourself in as constructive a manner as possible, without going over the top (Office for Health Management (B)). However, one does not work alone or in isolation, so when describing a particular experience, it is important to write it in a manner that gives interviewers a sense of both the experience itself, the candidate's role and the roles of others relative to the experience itself as necessary. However, do not write a book. Opportunity to work through the example itself will occur during the interview process. Prior to submitting the application, have someone with experience in the area read it, and consider any feedback given.



Having completed and submitted the application form, it is then useful to engage in mock interview processes with someone who has experience of interviewing or the competency process itself if possible. Consider the practice interview as if it is real, and engage in the process to the best of one's ability (Office for Health Management (A)).

Prepare for the formal interview. Seek as much information as possible regarding the role applied for, so that you have a good grasp of both this role and how you can contribute to the delivery of this, if given the opportunity. Belief in oneself and one's abilities brings one to an interview for promotional purposes, why else apply – this needs to be shown to the panel – **say, share and display one's ability.**

### The interview process

The role of the interview is to examine the evidence of a candidate's competency to undertake the position or role applied for. The 'evidence' is supplied initially by the candidate themselves both in the application form and subsequently during the interview, during which 'examination' and 'cross examination' can occur. This examination is in the context of the interview questioning and clarification process. In addition to the data provided by the applicant (both oral and verbal), the panel may also have, or request, reports/references from others in the organisation regarding a candidates ability in their current role and suitability regarding the applied for role (Wells et al 1996).

The Chairperson co-ordinates the interview process, including completion of a pre-interview meeting (if necessary) during which application forms may be examined, and areas of examination identified for each of the interviewers. The interview panel should have a plan of action regarding each candidate so that all relevant areas are covered in the interview process itself. Discrete roles may be allocated to each interviewer for the conduct of the interview itself (IPA 2002). Completion of the interviewing process should not be an adversarial event, but a conversation with a purpose. Each interviewer needs to satisfy themselves as to the suitability of a candidate to engage in the position applied for. Whilst they will ask a range of questions, these are based on what is written or said to them during the interview process.

A range of questions can be asked, initially in relation to aspects of the application form that require clarification, or an overview of a candidates career to date, in order to help the candidate settle. Gaps on an application form will

need to be filled in. Open questions encourage expanded answers in relation to an experience, such as "what was your specific role in relation to this event?" "What was your learning as a result of this experience?" Closed questions can be used when looking for more specific questions – "were you the only person dealing with this situation?" – these provide for limited responses. Some use leading questions, which may suggest an answer – "do you not think it would have been better if…" (IPA 2002). Leading questions should be avoided as they may place the candidate in a position of trying to 'please' an interviewer rather than display their ability in the competency area itself.

Double questions may confuse a candidate. For example, "Tell me about your role in dealing with that event and how it impacted on your dealing with similar events?" In this instance break the question down, answering the first part first, followed by the second response (Office for Health Management (A)). If a candidate forgets a part of the question, ask for clarification from the interviewer.



Probing questions could be considered similar to investigative questioning as the interviewer seeks answers or evidence of a particular nature in relation to the experience being examined - "What exactly was your role in dealing with this situation?" "Earlier you said to… that you were the first member on the scene, could you tell me exactly what you did?" or "You mentioned that legislation in relation to dealing with this incident is archaic, could you briefly outline this piece of legislation?" followed by "tell me how you used this legislation in pursuit of this case?" "You mentioned how you used management and organisational skills in dealing with that public order event, would you describe exactly the situation that you had to put them into effect?" Probing questions help put the interviewers at the scene itself, hence the importance of giving good examples on the application form, and knowing these inside out. Additionally, an expert on the panel may ask questions of a technical nature relative to the role applied for. A good interviewer does not have to be proficient in the role applied for, but must have expert support or advice on the panel, in order to assess the technical aspects of the candidate's responses as necessary (IPA 2002).

If asked a hypothetical question, which generally should not occur in a competency based interview, try and relate the answer back to a previous experience (Office for Health Management (A)). For example, "How would you deal with a drunken and abusive driver?" Answering "I would…" tells nothing of a candidate's actual ability, but saying "On various occasions in my career I have had to deal with such situations. One example from the recent past was… the situation was… I did… The outcome was… In view of this, I would continue to respond in this manner, taking note of the individuality of the situation and related legislative requirements…" Or indeed, one can also say "The learning I accrued from that particular situation was such that I've now changed my approach when dealing with this type of situation…" Remember that any answer given provides opportunity for further exploration by the panel.

Throughout the interview, members of the panel may record notes of responses or observations. The making of comprehensive notes, often using candidate's exact words, is necessary to support the evaluation and decision-making process that occurs immediately after the interview itself (Office for Health Management (A)).

Throughout the interview process a candidate will be provided with ample opportunity to clarify responses. If during a question, one loses one's train of thought, stop, take a drink of water (if one provided) and take stock. Never rush a response, the use of 'pause' provides opportunity for a considered and thoughtful response (Office for Health Management (A)). If a candidate thinks they have not fully answered a question or omitted a significant aspect of the response, look for opportunity to return to the particular issue saying, for example, "Earlier you asked about… I meant to say… in relation to that matter…" and then continue on the topic in hand. If unsure about when such a clarification should occur, generally at the end of the interview the Chairperson will ask "Is there anything you want to ask the panel or add before finishing?" Be careful, if asking a question, that the answer is not already provided in the information pack regarding the role applied for, as this could send a message to the panel that you have not diligently applied yourself to the application process itself. Be mindful that the interview panel is also working to a tight time-scale and do not ask unnecessary questions (Powers 2000).



However, this is also a prime opportunity to potentially address areas where a candidate may have felt they fell down during the process or alternatively convince the panel that this candidate is not suitable for the job! There is no harm in saying to a panel "At the start of the interview I said… in my initial nervousness I forgot to mention a key aspect of my role in that situation, which was…" An interview is a candidate's time to shine. Each moment should be used to its fullest extent, without labouring the process.

Never try to bluff or suggest that one's role was greater than it was as a good interviewer will respond to vague answers by asking additional probing and clarification questions. If a candidate was involved in an event, it is easy display that, if not, it is easy to be found out. Consider a candidate saying "I read all of… (a key document that supports delivery of a particular service)" and then being asked questions about this document and having to say "I don't know… not sure about that… can't remember that…" – what message is that giving the panel?

When responding to a panel interview, try and keep all members of the panel in the process when answering a question. Focus on the person asking the question but also look at the other panel members whilst responding. Don't make assumptions about who might be considered important on the panel. Each member of an interview panel will have a role in determining the suitability or not of placing a candidate on a panel for a position (Office for Health Management (A)).

Some interviewers may ask questions of an ambiguous nature. In this event, a candidate should seek clarification as to what exactly is being asked. Never answer what one thinks is the question, if unsure check it out. Remember clarification in an interview process also shows ability that is transferable to the working world.

### Achieving success

Interviewing is a skill just like many areas of policing. Such skills can get rusty, particularly if not used often. Understanding the nature of the interview process, and gaining practice in this area can help candidates be better prepared for engaging in what is, for most of us, a challenging process (Powers 2000, Mateo et al 1997). There are numerous resources available to support people engaging in the interview process.

**Concluding comments**

This article is a brief introduction to a number of aspects of the process, and reference to more comprehensive literature in this area is suggested for anyone planning to engage in the interview process. Competency based interviewing, whilst noted as a positive introduction to the selection of suitable candidates for specific roles within an organisation, it is not without its limitations, including, for example, the potential for significant aspects of a candidate's work history not been explored. However, *"the benefits far outweigh the limitations"* (Grogan 2004, p. 22).

Finally, remember interviewers are human too. Most interviewers are generally proficient at interviewing. However, if one is interviewing all day, or indeed, all week, tiredness can set in and impact on their ability and responsiveness. Be patient and try and make the interview a pleasant process for them too. Good luck…



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# Specialist Victim Interviewing

Mary Walker

*Mary Walker*

## Introduction

Specialist units were established in Ireland in 1988 to provide assessments of children and families where sexual abuse was a concern. The more well known were St Clare's (attached to Temple Street Hospital) and St Louise's (attached to Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital). Further units were located in Cork and Waterford.

The intention in criminal cases was that a joint interview would occur between members of the Gardaí and professionals from the units. This in reality rarely occurred. Instead an interview would occur with the unit professional who would establish if abuse or an offence had occurred (clarification), while addressing any therapeutic or child protection issues. As the interview did not conform to legal constraints, the Gardaí would then interview the child, thereby addressing the criminal aspect of the case. Furthermore, the Gardaí would not interview first until the professional deemed that abuse or an offence occurred (or got a disclosure). The system could therefore result in repeated interviewing sessions for the child.

Legislation introduced in 1992 was aimed at providing a better system whereby the child's interview would conform to the legal constraints, though the welfare of the child would be paramount. Child protection issues would be addressed and follow-up therapeutic measures arranged if necessary. The interview would be videotaped hence reducing the potential for further interviews. Both Gardaí and Health Service Executive (HSE) staff are trained and a joint approach to the interview would occur.[1] Section (16) (1) (b) of the Criminal Evidence Act 1992 allows for a video recording of any statement made by a person under the age of 14 years (being a person in respect of whom such an offence is alleged to have been committed) during an interview with a member of the Garda Síochána or any other person who is competent for the purposes (HSE). Section 16 (1) (b) also applies to persons with an intellectual disability. Though this legislation was introduced in 1992, the good practice guidelines for interviewing children were not fully completed until 2003. Furthermore, this section of the legislation was only enacted in October 2008.

The purpose of this article is to inform Garda members, HSE and interested persons on the role of Specialist Victim Interviewers (SVI). A recent issue of the Irish Psychologist (April 2009) highlighted concerns expressed by members of the Psychological Society of Ireland about the new procedures. This article will aim to provide clarity in relation to the new procedures in addition to providing an overview of the training given. This may help potential trainees when reaching a decision to become a Specialist Victim Interviewer.

## Section 16 (1) (b) System

The offences which Section 16 (1) (b) covers are:

(a) a sexual offence

(b) an offence involving violence or the threat of violence to a person

(c) an offence consisting of attempting or conspiring to commit, or of aiding, abetting, counselling, procuring or inciting the commission of an offence mentioned in (a) or (b) above.

The new system follows the guidelines set down by Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection of Children in Ireland (1999) and the Good Practice Guidelines[2] drawn up in 2003 for persons involved in video recording interviews with complainants under 14 years of age for evidential purposes in

1 Ideally the two interviewers would be a Garda member and a HSE social worker, though two HSE staff or two Garda staff could conduct the interview.



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accordance with Section 16 (1) (b) of the Criminal Evidence Act 1992.

Essentially, the video recording replaces the statement taking and the court appearance. Furthermore, the video[3] recording will be viewed by the defence team. An edited version can ultimately be shown in court, as certain items may be deleted in the interests of justice. The child must be available to be cross-examined, though this is done in camera.

Those trained to conduct the interviews are called Specialist Victim Interviewers. They comprise members of the Garda organisation and social workers from the Health Service Executive (HSE). The training is conducted by the Crime Training Faculty at the Garda College, Templemore.



**Pre-selection**

The Crime Training Faculty recognises that not all Garda members are suitable for interviewing child victims or witnesses of sexual/violent offences therefore an extensive pre-selection process occurs prior to training. In addition, trainees are advised that if during the course of the training, they feel this type of work does not suit them on a personal level, they can opt out.

Before being considered at pre-selection stage, potential trainees should have three years' service, have previously completed the Children First Interagency training, and have relevant experience.

Pre-selection trainees undertake an examination on the Children First National Guidelines. Furthermore, they are assessed over the course of two role plays as the interviewer of a child (actor) who has fully or partially disclosed a sexual or violent offence. While the assessors are aware that trainees will not demonstrate all good practice guideline requirements, (given they have not completed the course), rapport, communication skills, etc. are nonetheless considered.

**The Training Programme (Module 1)**

The training programme is broken into two modules of two weeks' duration. The first module, often called the 'Front Loading' Module, provides all the theory to conduct the role of Specialist Victim Interviewer. Table 1 shows the components, which are delivered by a number of Garda members and external speakers.

**Table 1**

| Course Modules | |
|---|---|
| • Criminal Law | • Ethnic Diversity |
| • Children First | • Protocol Forms |
| • Child Development | • Rules of Evidence |
| • Cognitive Interviewing | • Children's Understanding of Language |
| • Emotional Intelligence | • Truth and Lies |
| • Good Practice Guidelines | • Sex Offenders |
| • Planning and Preparation | • Reaching Clarification |
| • Intellectual Disability | • Human Rights |

At the end of week two, an examination takes place using confidence marking.

2 These guidelines were drawn up by committee members from the HSE, An Garda Síochána, St. Clare's Unit, the Director of Public Prosecution, the Bar Council, Law Society, Psychologists/Psychiatrists and Victim Support. His Honour Judge Frank O'Donnell presided as chairman.

3 While the legislation uses the term video recording as the process, a DVD is produced.

All participants must pass this stage of the course before proceeding to Module 2. An opportunity to re-sit this examination once is possible, though failure results in the trainee not proceeding to Module 2 of the course.

### The Training Programme (Module 2)

The second part of the course consists of a practical element with approximately 24 role plays. The participants therefore develop learning skills to conduct the interview in accordance with the protocol model. In order for participants to experience a wide range of interview experience the role-play scenarios are many and varied. Furthermore, varying degrees of case complexity are incorporated. The participants must develop teamwork in the pairing process both at the planning stage and the interview itself. The focus on preparation is significant at this stage. Learning outcomes from Module 2 are highlighted in Table 2.



**Table 2**

| Learning Outcomes | |
|---|---|
| • Knowledge of the model | • Develop good teamwork |
| • Planning interview | • Enhance good rapport and communication skills |
| • Tailoring interview for child's developmental or intellectual ability | • Ability to explain terms and truth/lies to child |
| • Adhering to all good practice guidelines | • Dealing with child's immediate welfare issues |
| • Completion of protocol forms | • Develop appropriate questioning skills |
| • Ability to use all equipment - (earpieces, camera, DVD, etc.) | • Control facial expressions, body language or any sign that may b in interpreted as encouragement |

For the examination assessment, each participant is paired randomly with another participant. Two role-play scenarios are provided, with one participant taking the role of first interviewer and the other taking the role of second interviewer. The roles are reversed for the second scenario therefore each participant is assessed as a first and second interviewer.

### Professional Development Portfolio

After passing the exam, there is a probation period of two years. Once the interviewer has commenced the role of Specialist Victim Interviewer, he/she will record all cases. A reflective practice report will also be completed, which will be submitted to the Crime Training Faculty. In addition, feedback will be provided to the interviewer. Interviewers will also complete a one-week placement in a facility for persons with intellectual disability. Furthermore, 10 per cent of DVDs are assured by a Barrister-at-Law with particular expertise in child protection. An additional two-day module focusing on continuous development occurs within this two year probation period.

### The Interview Process

Specialist Interviewers work in pairs. For each interview of a child there is a first or lead interviewer who interviews the child and a second interviewer in another

room watching the proceedings on a camera monitor. Both interviewers have ear pieces, whereby the second interviewer can speak to the first interviewer. The interview model is designed in line with international best practice. The process commences once clarification is reached that an offence or abuse has occurred.

Prior to the interview, all elements of the case should be reviewed by both the Garda Síochána and the HSE (i.e. both interviewers). Key issues and objectives should be identified and agreed upon. Issues to be considered include how the interview can contribute to the investigation, the welfare of the child victim/witness, what is known about the child and what needs to be established, legal requirements, offences and points to prove, as well as practical arrangements. Informed consent of the interviewee is also needed. All DVDs, protocol forms, interview plans are subject to discovery, therefore all can be scrutinised by the defence team. Hence all aspects of the interview are governed by the good practice guidelines.



The welfare of the child is paramount and Good Practice Guidelines emphasise that 'this factor must be taken into account in every case before deciding to proceed with making a video recording' (Pre-Interview Planning, 2003). Specific consideration should be given to the age and intellectual capacity of the child in addition to ethnic or cultural customs. In some situations, it may not be in the best interests of the child to conduct an interview; hence, this decision might have to be taken in some cases.

Regarding the location of the interview, there are a number of dedicated interview suites around the country, namely in Dublin (2), Cork, Limerick, Waterford, Galway, Mullingar, Letterkenny, Cavan and Sligo. They are not attached to Garda stations and have been designed with appropriate facilities for interviewing victims. Furthermore, the interviewers do not arrive at the location in uniform or use patrol cars. The anonymity of the location is also very important; therefore, the suite is not available to personnel other than SVI and not to be used for any purpose other than interviewing victims/witness that fall under the Section 16 (1) (b) category. The suites are under the control of the Detective Superintendent/Detective Inspector in whose division the suite is located.

### Specific Points of Note

Under no circumstances should a child under 14 years of age (or a person with an intellectual disability) be interviewed by a person other than a trained Specialist Victim Interviewer.[4] Therefore, the investigating member should not take a statement but refer the interview to the Specialist Victim Interviewer. A written request for the services of a Specialist Victim Interviewer should be directed to the Regional Detective Superintendent, District Officer or Divisional Detective Inspector.

Once arranged, the Specialist Victim Interviewer does not become involved in the investigation of the offences but is only utilised to take the statement from such victims. Equally, specialist interviewers will not engage in the interview of suspects as there should be no crossover between victim/suspect interviews. Specialist Victim Interviewers are not Family Liaison Officers (FLO) either: they

4 HQ Directive 186/08 lists the provisions of Section 16 (1) (b) of the Criminal Evidence Act 1992.

interview the child, whereas further support can be provided by the FLO whose details should be given to the child/family.

## Conclusion

To date, 84 people have been trained as Specialist Victim Interviewers with 66 from the Garda organisation and 17 from the HSE. In essence, the greater the number of people trained the better the resource available nationwide. Ultimately, if this system is to work effectively then continued joint training and joint partnership with the HSE is needed, while adhering to all the good practice guidelines. In the future, it is envisioned that this course would be formally certified. While some might have their concerns about the new process, it is grounded in best practice. Currently, the one-interview process is used in the UK where both social workers and police have a protocol for joint investigation. This protocol for joint investigation stresses that relevant agencies should be active participants in the information sharing, early assessment, preparation and planning processes in alleged or suspected cases of child abuse. In an Irish context, the perceived concern is that the two interviewers could be Garda members to the detriment of the therapeutic needs of the child or the input from the HSE is limited.



If there is a child protection issue, the Children First Guidelines stipulate that the HSE is informed immediately, therefore they will be involved. In the ideal situation, the two interviewers would be comprised of staff from the two organisations, though the good practice guidelines state this does not have to be the case in all interviews. The interviewers have to be trained Specialist Victim Interviewers – this could be two garda members or indeed two HSE social workers. While it is the goal of the Garda Síochána to achieve a prosecution for the alleged offence, ultimately the welfare of the child will be the overriding principle in joint meetings, planning and any subsequent interview.

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*Ms. Catherine Clancy*

# 50 Years Later: Women in Policing

Ms. Catherine Clancy

Thursday July 9th 2009 was an extraordinary day at Garda Headquarters, Phoenix Park, Dublin 8. The recently refurbished Band Room looked magnificent. The Garda Ladies Choir and the Band of An Garda Síochána delighted the guests with their chosen repertoire. The guests of honour were elegant and the atmosphere was one of joy and cheer. Mass was concelebrated by Fr. Joe Kennedy and Archdeacon David Pierpoint. The Garda Commissioner Fachtna Murphy was present as were three former Garda Commissioners. The Secretary of the Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform, Mr. Sean Aylward was also present. A wonderful welcome was extended by the Commissioner to all of the class of July 1959 but with a special welcome for the 11 of its first 12 female members, he stated *"The contribution made by you, the first female members, and your female colleagues who joined in subsequent years, can not be underestimated. You set the standard for others to follow and your achievement is one worthy of celebration."* Present also at the 50th anniversary celebrations was the first female to achieve the rank of Assistant Commissioner (now retired) the author, Catherine Clancy, and serving Assistant Commissioner Noirin O'Sullivan, their presence was an acknowledgement of a journey for women in An Garda Síochána, a journey which took 50 years and a journey which has yet to be completed.



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The journey began as far back as 1917. In that year four women were employed by the Dublin Metropolitan Police (DMP) to patrol the streets of the city between 7p.m and midnight. However, these four were not actually members of the Police Force. Each morning they would present the Commissioner of the DMP (W.E. Johnson) with a report on the *"moral state of the streets"*. When recruiting suitable personnel it was decided *"what we want is a women of fair education, strong common sense and robust health. A woman of this kind, if there is such, may belong to any class"* (Johnson, W, 1917). The educational requirements pertaining female police positions were in accordance with the standards set for male constables, they had to be able to read well, write legibly and have knowledge of arithmetic, spelling and composition.

In 1919 Johnson claimed that the experiment in employing women had been a success and requested the Treasury to sanction the employment of an additional two women. Following the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922, the female police assistants remained in place but were not replaced. as they retired. Therefore in 1955, only one female patrolled the streets of the capitol city, (Elizabeth Watters, 73 years of age). During the period 1955/1956 four further Women Police Assistants were appointed.

As far back as 1929 the Royal Commission on Police Powers and Procedures recommended that women police officers should take statements in sexual cases and the report further outlines duties suitable for women police in plain clothes and in uniform.

One of the greatest campaigners for the introduction of women into the police force was the Joint Committee of Women's Societies and Social Workers and in particular their Honorary Secretary WR O' Hegarty and Mrs Kettel, chairman

of the joint committee. The Joint Committee represented 16 women's societies and in 1936 they strongly advocated for a meeting with the President on the grounds that the Constitution was in the process of being changed and they felt that some of the changes might vitally affect the interests of women. They insisted in meeting with the President rather than presenting a memorandum. They stated that with regard to the request for a further memorandum the Joint Committee had never seen any results achieved from the sending of a memorandum not followed by a personal interview, she added that the committee would have been encouraged to send a further memorandum if they had received any comment on the first. They further stated that a detailed scheme on the question of women police, previously sent to the Heads of the Garda Síochána was sent to the Minister for Justice and he, like the President was unable to find time to receive a deputation. On 3rd November 1936 the Joint Committee received a letter from the Minister for Justice stating the he regretted, owing to pressure of work he was not able to meet a deputation of the Joint Committee to discuss the question of women police.



The Secretary to the Minister for Justice in a letter to the Secretary of the Department of An Taoiseach in November 1939 stated that the Minister was not inclined to meet the deputation. "he is advised that the agitation for women police is an artificial business without any real roots in the country. The reception of a delegation would only prolong the artificial life of the agitation by giving the promoters an opportunity to pose as the recognised representatives of a considerable volume of public opinion, which they are not"

It would appear that the Joint Committee of Women's Societies and Social Workers did get their meeting with the President according to the 'Sunday Independent' 7th February 1937 which also reported that the Joint Committee made demands among other issues for a women police force.

WR O' Hegarty was persistent. On behalf of the Joint Committee she wrote to the Private Secretary to the Taoiseach on 25th May 1939, wherein she stated that it had become clear to her committee *"that in the administration of Justice there are certain duties which it is difficult, or impossible for men police to carry out, and which could be performed appropriately and efficiently by force of women police".*

In a minute from the Private Secretary to the Taoiseach from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Justice, referring to a memorandum on the subject of women police by the Joint Committee, it stated *"in the present circumstances and having regard to the urgent need for economy, the Minister would not be prepared to urge the Minister for Finance to sanction the very considerable expenditure which the adoption of the Scheme would involve".*

However in a minute to the Private Secretary, Department of the Taoiseach from the Private Secretary, office of the Minister for Justice dated 3rd June 1939 it stated, *"relating to the establishment of a force of women police, it has been found that the majority of responsible police officers, both here and in Great Britain, are sceptical as to the value of Women Police and while such grave doubts exist the Minister would not be prepared to approach the Minister for Finance for authority to*

*incur the very considerable expenditure which would be involved" The minute went on "The main argument in favour of the establishment of such Force which has been put forward is that the investigation of cases of indecent assault could best be undertaken by women and that the injured party would be less embarrassed in such circumstances. It is, however, to be remembered that the girl's story must eventually be told in Court and little is gained by the preliminary investigation being conducted by a woman if the Judge, Jurors and Court Officials are to be men. Nobody has seriously suggested that the entire investigation from the beginning to the conviction and sentencing of the offender should be carried out by women".*



A Committee of Inquiry into An Garda Síochána was set up by the Department of the Taoiseach and its function was to enquire into the duties, organisation and strength of An Garda Síochána. The Committee reported in 1952. Amongst its recommendations was the establishment of police*women. Chapter VII of the report dealt with policewomen wherein it stated "there are 2 women police assistants employed in Dublin. Strictly speaking these assistants are not members of the Garda Síochána and women cannot be recruited or attested as members of the force under existing law".* The report stated that the recruitment of women into the regular Garda had been suggested for many years to the Department of Justice. The Committee heard evidence from representatives of the Joint Committee of Women's Societies and Social Workers, Mrs Kettle, Mrs Coote, Miss O' Byrne and Mrs O' Hegarty formed the delegation. The Joint Committee never gave up in their pursuit of a women police force.

Notwithstanding this the Garda Authorities themselves were beginning to warm to the idea of women in the police force.

In 1948 the leaders in An Garda Síochána recognised that women were needed in the Police force and The Deputy Commissioner at the time sought the appointment of five police women.

Four years later in 1952 the Minister for Justice was asked by an Assistant Commissioner to appoint six police women to Dublin City as a matter of urgency.

In February 1958, the Secretary of the Department of Justice informed Commissioner Costigan that provision had been made for the recruitment of 400 Gardaí for the following year (1959), twelve of whom were to be females.

One year later in 1959 the first women police or "Ban Gardaí" were appointed to An Garda Síochána. It took 23 years from the inception of the idea to the actual recruitment.

In a Dail debate before the appointment of Ban Gardaí, our political leaders had very firm views on what type of women should be allowed join the Garda Síochána.

Most of the Dail deputies generally agreed that women should be able to join the force as there were *"many police duties, mainly in connection with matters affecting*

*children and young women, where it is desirable that policewomen should be employed".*

But they were very choosy about the selection criteria to be used in the recruitment programme. One TD suggested that *"while recruits should not be actually horse faced, they should not be too good looking. They should be just plain women and not targets for marriage".*

Another recommended that *"the commanding personalities of the women of the West and North West should form the nucleus of this force".*

The first women police or *"Ban Gardaí"* were appointed to An Garda Síochána in 1959. They were 12 in number and were trained for a period of 21 weeks at Garda Headquarters in Dublin by a woman leader Sergeant D. Prissick of the Liverpool police who had been seconded to this task.



After the first major intake of women in 1959, their subsequent appointments were less dramatic. They trickled into the force in small numbers until 1975 when 10 women were appointed.

In 1973 the marriage bar was lifted - but the Garda leader of the day was clearly not happy with women being retained in the force after marriage. He wrote to the Department of Justice *"I feel this form of life would not be conducive to a happy family life and would inevitably reflect on their performance as Ban Ghardaí".*

Around the same time a departmental official wrote in official correspondence that Gardaí saw themselves as part of a male force and would *"resent being under the command of female superiors with a consequent fall-off in efficiency and morale".*

I should also point out that in the 70's men could join the force at 18 years of age but women had to be 20 years old. The Garda leader of the day was opposed to changing that regulation. The Commissioner considered that *"a male arrives at that necessary degree of maturity and sense of judgement to perform police functions at an earlier age than a woman".*

He was challenged on his thinking by the then Deputy Commissioner who relied on Tanner the psychologist that said *"it is generally recognised that girls mature physically, emotionally socially and intellectually at an earlier age than boys".*

However the Commissioner was not for changing. He replied that he did not doubt the opinions of a psychologist but that he was *"referring to that form of maturity requiring courage and determination to deal efficiently on one's own with matters which are peculiar to police work".*

A total of 178 applications were received from women wishing to join An Garda Síochána, of which 41 presented for interview and the original 12 Ban Gardaí were chosen as the first female recruits.

In order to ensure that the 12 women would receive the most appropriate training from the outset, Commissioner Costigan consulted the Home Office in

London and a female Sergeant from Liverpool City Police was enlisted to act as their training instructor. Sergeant Doreen Prissick, sadly now no longer with us, spent four months in Ireland as instructor, supervisor and counsellor to the new recruits, offering the benefit of her experience, advice and guidance.

The following were the 1st 12 Bhan Gardaí to be appointed to the Garda Síochána on 9th July, 1959; (Name on the date of appointment)

00001W - Mary Browne, Galway.

00002W - Angela Burke, Dublin.

00003W - Elizabeth Noeleen Cooke, Cavan.

00004W - Elizabeth Dwyer, Sligo

00005W - Kathleen Mcfadden, Donegal.



00006W - Sarah McGuinness, Longford.

00007W - Helena Hayden, Kildare.

00008W - Bridget Sharkey, Donegal.

00009W - Margaret Tierney, Galway.

00010W - Mary, B. Wymbs, Leitrim.

00011W - Deirdre Killeen, Dublin.

00012W - Mary O' Donnell, Limerick.

Three of these were promoted to the rank of Sergeant on the 6th December 1960. One of those, Sarah McGuinness 00006W was the first women to be promoted to the rank of Inspector on 18th May, 1981

Phyllis Nolan, who joined in 1961 was the first female to be promoted to the rank of Superintendent on 22nd February 1989, 30 years after the first appointment of women to An Garda Síochána

The 17th April 1999 saw the appointment of the author as the first female Chief Superintendent, then on 10th September 2003 the glass ceiling within the Garda Síochána was truly shattered when the author was appointed the first female Assistant Commissioner and allocated to the Northern Region.

The integration of female officers into other police services shows a similar pattern. However their elevation to leadership roles seems to have surpassed female leadership within our own organisation but not without controversy.

In 2001, Christine Nixon became the first Commissioner of Police in Australia, while in 2003, Sandra Peisley became the first female police Commissioner in the United Nations.

Kathleen O'Toole, was sworn in as the 37th Commissioner of the Boston Police Department in 2004, and made history as the first female to take this position. She is now the first Chief Inspector of the recently established Garda Síochána Inspectorate.

For certain police organisations the path for females to ascertain positions of leadership has been a slow journey.

The New York Police Department has seen the inclusion of females within the organisation since the 1890's; however until 1964 females were prohibited from taking part in promotional exams.

In 1978, Gertrude Schimmel became the highest ranking female police officer within the New York Police Department when she was promoted to Deputy Chief.

It took nearly another 20 years before another female would reach a higher rank, with Gertrude La Forgia becoming the first female Assistant Chief Borough Commander in 1995.

In the United Kingdom Alison Halford was appointed as the first female Assistant Chief Constable in 1983, the first woman to hold that rank in British police history. Her career began spectacularly, rising to the rank of Chief Superintendent after 21 years service.



Following her promotion to Assistant Chief Constable, her working relationships with her male colleagues began to deteriorate and she claimed that there was a genuine move by her male colleagues to exclude her. Despite repeated attempts, she failed to win further promotion and she felt that she had no choice but to bring charges against her superiors and the force.

In 1992, Alison Halford successfully won her sexual discrimination claim in a landmark equality action and her case has been deemed by the Equal Opportunities Commission as *"having a major impact in raising the profile of the issue of sex discrimination of women in the police and of women in top jobs generally".*

Cases such as those of Alison Halford have assisted in cracking the glass ceiling in policing in the United Kingdom, however many highlight that the number of women holding positions of leadership within policing organisations remains disproportionately low.

The appointment of Pauline Clare as Britain's first Chief Constable in 1996, was described as a "critical juncture in police history", however 11 years since her appointment, there has been little change at the top of Britain's police organisations. In reality, in the United Kingdom females represent approximately 8% of Officers at the rank of Chief Inspector and above.[1]

Research undertaken in the United Kingdom in 2005, identified that within police organisations there remains an unchanging perception of women as unsuitable leaders in policing. Some researchers deem the female police leader as representing a double threat to the "natural order" of things in policing, both as a woman and as a woman in control, invariably over men.[2]

However, in recent decades women are making up a growing proportion of police organisations.

In 2002 Norway and Australia had the highest proportions of female officers, at 30%, respectively. Canada, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Sweden and Hungry have between 15–20% of female officers in their forces. On this

1 Christophen O and Cotton J ( 2004) Police Service Strength England and Wales, Home Office Report 13/04.

2 Silvestri M (2005) "Doing time; Becoming a Police Leader" International Journal of Police Science and Management Volume 8 Number 4.

international comparison carried out by OECD and the United Nations in 2002, Ireland ranked tenth, with females representing approximately 12% of the total organisation and the United States ranked eighteenth with females representing approximately 7% of total police officers.[3] In recent years, the proportion of females within An Garda Síochána has increased and at present, females represent approximately 23% of An Garda Síochána.

**Conclusion.**

The role of women in An Garda Síochána has changed. The term Bhan Gharda no longer exists. No longer are women recruited to fulfil the traditional roles. Female Gardaí have been integrated into all aspects of policing which they have sought to achieve. Their numbers and the ranks which they hold have increased dramatically since those early days. The chart below indicates the current status of women within An Garda Síochána:



| | Assistant Commissioner | Chief Supt. | Supt. | Inspector | Sergeant | Garda |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 31st Dec 1959 | | | | | | 12 |
| 31st Dec 1969 | | | | | 5 | 19 |
| 31st Dec 1976 | | | | | 5 | 29 |
| 31st Dec 1991 | | | 1 | | 16 | 419 |
| 31st Dec 2001 | | 1 | 3 | 10 | 98 | 1428 |
| 30th June 2009 | 1 | 3 | 11 | 23 | 264 | 2976 |
| 31st Oct 2009 | 1 | 3 | 11 | 22 | 264 | 3074 |

And what of the future? This article is an updated version of an article written by the author in June 1997. The increase in female members and the ranks which they now hold tells its own story. Women are now a large part of a police service that has had to battle with its demons in the past and a police service that police in an uncertain economic environment which brings its own challenges. Young members both male and female look for leadership from authorities and thanks to the pioneers who paved a route for women in our great police service, authority is gender neutral. It matters not whether you are male or female the public need our service and the members delivering it need our guidance.

The journey for women police officers in An Garda Síochána is as yet incomplete.

**Endnote:**

With the exception of those references outlined in this article, all material for this article was provided by Inspector Pat Magee of the Garda Museum. I am very grateful to Pat for the trouble he took to provide the material not only on this occasion but on previous occasions. All references can be verified from the Achieve Section of the Garda Museum.

3 Social Data ranking of developed countries, the Organisation of Economic Co operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Surveys of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems, Eighth Wave, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).