

# An Garda Síochána



## **An Garda Síochána**

## **Youth and Children Strategy**

2009 -2011

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## Foreword

An Garda Síochána's core commitment is to ensure a safe community for everyone. We work to achieve this by building partnerships with communities, listening to their needs, and working together to achieve results. Children and young people are important members of any community and it follows therefore that An Garda Síochána should develop a strategy which recognises their place and role.

The approach of the Garda Youth and Children Strategy is positive and inclusive and it aims to give support and guidance to young people. It recognises the particular challenges children and young people face in our society and seeks to address any behaviour on their part which has an adverse impact on themselves, their peers or the wider community.

A minority of young people engage in criminal activity and when this occurs An Garda Síochána will respond effectively and firmly to deal with the behaviour and activity and, at all times, our approach will be fair. We will first seek to deal with these young people by accessing appropriate diversionary interventions which are designed to alter the offending behaviour.

Where this does not work, where the young person is a repeat offender or the incident is of a very serious nature, we will bring the matter before the courts.

We support an inter-agency and partnership approach to problem solving and we rely on the support and assistance of other stakeholders in helping children and young people to reach their full potential.

It is a dynamic time in the field of youth justice and An Garda Síochána is committed to providing a quality and effective service to all children and young people in our society. In doing so we can secure a safer society and a better future for everyone.

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_

**Fachtna Murphy**

**Commissioner of An Garda Síochána**

## **Mission Statement**

*“An Garda Síochána is committed to the delivery of a quality policing service designed to ensure the protection of children and young people in our community and will do so in a fair and effective manner. An Garda Síochána will be particularly sensitive to the needs and rights of children and will endeavour to maintain the highest recognised international standards of behaviour and best practices when dealing with children and young people”.*

## **Organisational Commitments**

An Garda Síochána is committed to ensuring that the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child are upheld at all times when members of An Garda Síochána interact with children.

An Garda Síochána is committed to ensuring that the highest level of international best practices are adhered to when dealing with children in conflict with the law and in particular that the provisions of the Beijing Rules<sup>1</sup> are adhered to at all times in the administration of juvenile justice.

An Garda Síochána is committed to a multi-agency approach when addressing the needs of children and young people and to working with other service providers to develop protocols to facilitate the more effective delivery of services.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice

## **Youth and Children Strategy**

This three year strategy outlines how An Garda Síochána will deliver a quality service to children and young people in our community. It is reflective of the fact that the majority of young people do not come into conflict with the law and that young people are often the victims of crime and/or in need of Garda assistance. This strategy is inclusive rather than exclusive, recognising the special place held by children and young people in our community and the particular challenges that they face in a modern society.

This Strategy sets out three high level goals relating to;

- all children in society,
- children who come in conflict with the law,
- children who are at risk of harm or in need of assistance.

An Garda Síochána will deliver these high level goals through

1. improved service delivery to children and young people,
2. ensuring this strategy is adapted within the Garda organisation,
3. embracing a multi-agency approach.

This Strategy is designed to evolve and respond to the many changes taking place in society and in particular in the area of Youth Justice.

## High Level Goal 1

### A policing service for all children

**To provide a quality policing service to all the children and young people in our society and to do so with dignity and respect for their human rights by communicating, listening and working towards building and maintaining positive relationships with children and young people.**

#### **Objective 1.1 Service delivery**

**To ensure delivery of a quality policing service to all children and young people, to protect them from harm through positive interaction, appropriate guidance and advice.**

	<b>Actions to Achieve Objective</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Performance Indicators/Targets</b>
1.1.1	Engage with young people through Community Policing	Positive interaction with children and young people in their own communities	Base line data to evaluate levels of engagement established
1.1.2	Delivery of Garda Primary Schools Programme	<p>Increased understanding by children of the role of the Garda</p> <p>Increase safety of children through awareness of the importance of personal safety and dangers of substance misuse</p> <p>Contribute to efforts to reduce deaths and injuries to road users.</p>	Visits to Primary Schools increased by 10%
1.1.3	Delivery of Garda Secondary Schools Programme	Contribute to efforts to reduce incidence of injury and death, raise awareness of the dangers of substance misuse and prevent youth victimisation through personal safety advice.	Visits to Secondary Schools increased by 10%



	<b>Actions to Achieve Objective</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Performance Indicators/Targets</b>
1.1.4	Deliver Garda Road Safety Programme for transition year.	Contribute to reduction in incidence of injury and death to road users	Visits to transition year students increased by 10%
1.1.5	Establish fora for discussion with youth	Opportunity for two way discussion on policing issues that impact on young people	Three pilot fora for youth established
1.1.6	Meet with Dáil na nÓg	Increase levels of dialogue with young people	Two meetings held with Dáil na nÓg committees and annual conference attended
1.1.7	Examine feasibility of establishing Youth Achievement Awards on a nationwide basis	Reward young people for achievement and good behaviour	Business case to develop the Garda Youth Achievement Awards on a nationwide basis prepared and submitted
1.1.8	Publicise good news stories that demonstrate positive interactions between Gardaí and young people	Aim to increase young peoples confidence in an Garda Síochána	Base line data established on the number of positive Garda/youth news stories in the media
1.1.9	Ensure Garda website is youth friendly	Greater access to information about An Garda Síochána and additional means to communicate advice and safety information	Material of interest to young people included on Garda website

## **Objective 1.2 Improve capabilities to deliver services**

**To ensure An Garda Síochána is equipped to deliver a quality service to all children and young people and endeavour to maintain the highest recognised international standards of behaviour and best practice when dealing with all children and young people.**

	<b>Actions to Achieve Objectives</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Performance Indicators/Targets</b>
1.2.1	Raise awareness of the human rights of children	Organisational commitment to respecting rights of children	Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) reflected in all relevant Garda policy
1.2.2	Provide training on international conventions relating to children in custody	Greater awareness and respect for the rights of children	Provisions of UNCRC included in Garda Student Training and Continuous Professional Development courses
1.2.3	Provide training on delivery of Garda Primary/Secondary Schools Programme	Professional delivery of Schools Programme	Gardaí trained in every Division to deliver the Garda Schools Programme  Work- book for Secondary Schools Programme produced and distributed
1.2.4	Identify issues that impact on the attitude of young people towards An Garda Síochána	Help improve relationship between An Garda Síochána and young people	Existing research relating to relationship between An Garda Síochána and young people reviewed and issues to be included in training identified
1.2.5	Identify and reward best practices when dealing with young people	Strong organisational message and support for good work	Nominations to the Children Act Advisory Board Achievement Awards promoted

### Objective 1.3 Interagency approach

To ensure that An Garda Síochána engage in a multi-agency approach in the delivery of a policing service to all children and young people.

	<b>Actions to Achieve Objectives</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Performance Indicators</b>
1.3.1	Liaise with secondary schools on the delivery of agreed modules of Social Personal Health and Education Programme(SPHE)	Improved learning for children.	Number of secondary School Programme/SPHE visits increased by 10%
1.3.2	Liaise with primary schools on the delivery of Primary Schools Programme	Increased delivery of the Schools Programme	Number of primary School Programme visits increased by 10%
1.3.3	Liaise with the Office of the Minister for Children to discuss issues where input from An Garda Síochána can be of assistance in promoting interagency work	Improved interagency co-operation on a broad range of youth issues	Number of issues where An Garda Síochána assisted the Office of the Minister for Children through advice and involvement on interagency committees

## High Level Goal 2

### A policing service for children in conflict with the law

To provide a quality policing service to children and young people whose behaviour is in conflict with the law and to do so in a manner that respects the rights and needs of victims and is appropriate to the age and understanding of the child or young person, is respectful of their dignity, rights, vulnerability and special needs and, whenever appropriate, will be diversionary in nature.

#### Objective 2.1 Service delivery

To ensure delivery of a quality policing service to children and young people in conflict with the law. To ensure that when a child offends, the child will be treated in an appropriate manner by every Garda and will be considered for inclusion in the Diversion Programme. Where a prosecution is taken, it will be processed swiftly and fairly, and in accordance with law and best practice.

	<b>Actions to achieve Objectives</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Performance Indicators/Targets</b>
2.1.1	Strict compliance with Part 6 of the Children Act 2001 regarding children in Garda custody	Ensure treatment of children in Garda custody is to the highest standards	Base line data established on the number of complaints relating to treatment of children in Garda custody
2.1.2	Where a child is not suitable for inclusion in Diversion Programme, ensure swift processing of referral form	Reduction in time between offence and court appearance	Referrals for children who are not suitable for Diversion processed within one month by the National Juvenile Office
2.1.3	Increase the resources available to the Diversion Programme	Increasing the level of intervention for those included in the Diversion Programme	Additional 14 Juvenile Liaison Officers appointed
2.1.4	Promote understanding of Diversion Programme for children and children's families	Create a greater understanding of diversion process for children, parents and victims	Information leaflets for children and parents on Diversion Programme in 7 languages produced and disseminated
2.1.5	Increase the number of restorative interventions	Greater use of restorative interventions	Restorative interventions increased by 10%

	<b>Actions to achieve Objectives</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Performance Indicators/Targets</b>
2.1.6	Promote awareness of restorative justice within An Garda Síochána	Better understanding of restorative processes	Information on restorative justice disseminated through the Garda Portal
2.1.7	Support use of Garda youth Diversion Projects through referring high risk children for inclusion in Projects.	Challenge offending behaviour and reduce recidivism	In all cases where a child is being considered for prosecution the JLO will have first explored the option of including the child in a Garda Diversion Project
2.1.8	Use Anti - Social Behaviour legislation where appropriate	Challenge anti-social behaviour by young people	The number of warnings, contracts and orders issued to young people monitored by the Garda National Juvenile Office
2.1.9	Ensure more efficient processing of cases in the Dublin Metropolitan Children Court	Reduction in time processing cases in Dublin Metropolitan Children Court	Processes in Dublin Metropolitan Children Court reviewed, improvements identified and implemented
2.1.10	Review procedures for dealing with children detained in custody at the Dublin Metropolitan Children Court	Improved procedures for dealing with children detained in the Dublin Metropolitan Children Court	Existing procedures examined, areas for improvement identified and implemented
2.1.11	Expedite processing of cases involving prolific youth offenders	Allow for swift intervention and reduction in offending behaviour	Garda case management initiative piloted in DMR (NC) evaluated, improvements identified and implemented and initiative considered for introduction on a national basis
2.1.12	Assist children in the Diversion Programme to access counselling or other appropriate intervention for alcohol or substance abuse	Faster access to appropriate service	Baseline data established and number of children referred for counselling by JLOs increased

## Objective 2.2 Improve capabilities to deliver service

**To ensure that An Garda Síochána is equipped to deliver a quality service to children and young people who are in conflict with the law and endeavour to maintain the highest recognised international standards of behaviour and best practice when dealing with these children.**

	<b>Actions to achieve Objectives</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Performance Indicators/Targets</b>
2.2.1	Develop new induction training course for JLOs	Improved level of training for newly appointed JLOs	Course developed and delivered
2.2.2	Raise awareness of Diversion Programme and its benefits at student training and continuous professional development (CPD) courses	Greater understanding of benefits of diversion by members of An Garda Síochána	All appropriate courses addressed
2.2.3	Update and standardise all procedures relating to Diversion Programme	Consistency of process implementation for diversionary measures	Procedures updated, standardised and implemented
2.2.4	Raise awareness of restorative justice at student training and CPD	Greater understanding of benefits of restorative justice within An Garda Síochána	All appropriate training courses addressed
2.2.5	Provide all newly appointed JLOs with specialist training in restorative justice	High standard of restorative intervention	All newly appointed JLOs trained in restorative justice
2.2.6	Provide all newly appointed JLOs with specialised training in mediation	High standard of mediation	All newly appointed JLOs trained in mediation

	<b>Actions to achieve Objectives</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Performance Indicators/Targets</b>
2.2.7	Deliver training on Part 6 of the Children Act 2001 to student and probation Gardaí and to Sergeants promotion course	The treatment of children in Garda custody compliant with Part 6 of the Children Act	Training in Garda College for student and probation Gardaí and Sergeant promotion course proofed by Garda National Juvenile Office
2.2.8	Deliver training on Part 6 of the Children Act 2001 to Gardaí working in the Dublin Metropolitan Children Court	The treatment of children in Garda custody compliant with Part 6 of the Children Act	Gardaí in Dublin Metropolitan Children Court trained

### Objective 2.3 Interagency approach

**Ensure that An Garda Síochána engage in a multi-agency approach to service delivery and encourage interagency work with other agency stakeholders in the delivery of a policing service to children and young people who come in conflict with the law.**

	<b>Actions to achieve Objectives</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Performance Indicators/Targets</b>
2.3.1	Establish joint working group with Irish Youth Justice Service (IYJS) to review operation and guidelines of Diversion Projects	Areas for improvement identified	Operations and guidelines reviewed
2.3.2	Collaborate with IYJS to develop evidence based intervention programmes for children on Diversion Projects	Intervention programmes developed	Evidence based interventions developed in five pilot areas
2.3.3	Garda Projects Office and Garda Síochána Analysis Service to profile youth crime in the five pilot areas	Profile of youth crime	Youth crime profiled in five pilot areas
2.3.4	Increase resources to Diversion Projects through the European Social Fund	Second worker appointed	Second worker appointed to all projects
2.3.5	Develop risk assessment tool for youth in Diversion Projects	Standardised assessment of youth	Risk assessment tool developed and implemented
2.3.6	Facilitate seminars to up-skill and promote best practice in Diversion Projects	Staff up-skilled	Number of seminars facilitated
2.3.7	Work with the Health Service Executive to improve delivery of services to children	Improved service delivery	Interagency protocols developed where appropriate and implemented
2.3.8	Participate in pilot interagency Children Services Committees	Improved interagency interventions	Gardaí participated in all four pilot committees



	<b>Actions to achieve Objectives</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Performance Indicators/Targets</b>
2.3.9	Garda representation on the Children Acts Advisory Board	Advise Minister on issues relating to children	Gardaí represented on Children Acts Advisory Board
2.3.10	Liaise with Young People's Probation service to identify opportunities for collaboration	Shared learning and information on children needs	Opportunities identified Joint training provided Protocols agreed
2.3.11	Garda representation on the Children Act National Implementation Committee	Share learning and guide implementation of Children Act at a strategic level	Gardaí represented on Committee

### High Level Goal 3

#### A policing service for children at risk of harm or in need of assistance

**To provide a quality, accessible and effective Garda service for children and young people who are at risk of harm or who are in need of assistance.**

#### **Objective 3:1 Service delivery**

**To provide a quality, accessible and effective Garda service for all children and young people who are at risk of harm or who are in need of assistance and ensure that every child is treated with dignity and respect and is assisted in their efforts to address their own needs.**

	<b>Actions to achieve Objectives</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Performance Indicators/Targets</b>
3.1.1	Actively promote the Garda service as child and youth friendly	A more accessible and friendly Garda service for children and young people in need of assistance	Promotion campaign developed to encourage children and young people to contact the Gardaí if at risk of harm or when harmed
3.1.2	Actively engage with young people who have learning disabilities	Increase trust and awareness for youth with learning difficulties on how to contact Gardaí	Special needs schools assisted in delivering streetwise programme to children with learning disabilities
3.1.3	Notify Health Service Executive (HSE) in accordance with Children First Guidelines of suspected cases of child abuse	HSE intervention allowing child welfare and protection needs to be addressed	All cases considered appropriate as set out in the Children First guidelines referred to the HSE
3.1.4	Use electronic/video recording of interviews of victims of crimes who are under 14 years of age in cases involving sexual and/or violent offences in accordance with Section 16(1)(B) Criminal Evidence Act 1992	Reduction in trauma for child victims	The number of cases where evidence was electronically recorded

	<b>Actions to achieve Objectives</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Performance Indicators/Targets</b>
3.1.5	Explore restorative intervention for child victims of youth crime	Greater use of restorative interventions	Base line data established with a view to increasing number of restorative interventions
3.1.6	Inform child victims of crime about the services of victim support services	Awareness of victim support services	Base line data established with a view to increasing number of young people made aware of services
3.1.7	Assist children seeking to access welfare services out of hours	Access by HSE to children in need of care	All children in need of out of hours services assisted by Gardaí
3.1.8	Refer all unaccompanied children in asylum system to the HSE	HSE informed about the child	All children in the asylum system referred to the HSE
3.1.9	Refer all children found homeless to the HSE	HSE informed that the child is homeless	All known cases of homeless children referred to the HSE
3.1.10	Assist gay, lesbian and bisexual youth who are victims of homophobic crime	Better service to youth victims of homophobic crime	Meeting held with gay youth group BelongTo and issues of concern agreed and acted on

### **Objective 3.2 Improve capabilities to deliver service**

**Ensuring that An Garda Síochána is skilled to deliver a quality service to children and young people who are at risk or in need of assistance and endeavour to maintain the highest recognised international standards of behaviour and best practice when dealing with such children.**

	<b>Actions to achieve Objectives</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Performance Indicators/Targets</b>
3.2.1	Provide specialised training for the electronic/video recording of interviews of victims of crimes who are under 14 years of age in cases involving sexual and/or violent offences in accordance with Section 16(1)(B) Criminal Evidence Act 1992	Increased skills for dealing with investigations	Sixty eight Gardaí trained
3.2.2	Provide specialised mediation training to all newly appointed JLOs to deal with victims of youth crime	Provide improved service to victims of youth crime	All newly appointed JLOs trained
3.2.3	Provide Children First Guidelines training to JLOs	Greater awareness by JLOs of Children First Guidelines	All JLOs trained
3.2.4	Develop and implement new Garda policy and guidelines for missing children	New guidelines for dealing with children reported missing	Policy and guidelines developed and implemented
3.2.5	Review Garda policy for unaccompanied children in the asylum process	Give greater protection for children in the asylum process	Policy reviewed

### Objective 3.3 Interagency approach

**Ensure that An Garda Síochána engage in a multi-agency approach to service delivery and encourage interagency work between An Garda Síochána and other agency stakeholders in the delivery of a policing service to all children and young people who are at risk or in need of assistance.**

	<b>Actions to achieve Objectives</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Performance Indicators/Targets</b>
3.3.1	Provide specialised inter-agency training with HSE for the electronic/video recording of interviews of victims of crimes who are under 14 years of age in cases involving sexual and/or violent offences in accordance with Section 16(1)(B) Criminal Evidence Act 1992	Gardaí and HSE staff trained to conduct joint interviews	Sixty eight Gardaí and sixteen Health Service Executive staff jointly trained
3.3.2	Develop and implement protocol with HSE regarding children missing from care	Appropriate inter-agency response when a child is reported missing	Protocol developed and implemented
3.3.3	Agree protocol with HSE for execution of special care orders issued by High Court	Agreed procedures for taking children into special care	Protocol developed and implemented
3.3.4	Meet with National Education Welfare Board about children at risk who are not attending school	Improved interagency service to children at risk through non attendance at school	Meeting held and areas of collaboration identified  Protocols for collaboration developed and implemented
3.3.5	Meet with victim support services regarding youth/child victims of crime	Improved interaction between An Garda Síochána and victim support services	Meeting held and areas of collaboration identified
3.3.6	Meet with Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC) to identify issues for collaboration with An Garda Síochána to improve service delivery to children	Improved interaction between An Garda Síochána and ISPCC	Meeting held and areas of collaboration identified

	<b>Actions to achieve Objectives</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Performance Indicators/Targets</b>
3.3.7	Meet with children's protection charity Barnardos to identify issues for collaboration with An Garda Síochána to improve service delivery to children	Improved interaction between An Garda Síochána and Barnardos	Meeting held and areas of collaboration identified