



An Garda Síochána

Policy Document

Open Source Intelligence

Effective Date	10 th January 2023
Version No.	1.0
Approved by	Garda Executive
Introduced by	HQ Directive 002/ 2023
Policy Owner	Assistant Commissioner, Garda National Crime & Security Intelligence Service

Purpose

The internet and in particular social media sites are a rich source of Data and can provide information and intelligence of significant value. Garda members conducting Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) and online investigations provide an important intelligence capability which contributes to all aspects of policing and provides valuable information to support other intelligence led outputs.

It is imperative that Garda members undertaking OSINT enquiries fully understand the concept and function of online platforms. All available techniques will be used in accordance with law and in a proportionate manner, ensuring the constitutional and human rights of all are respected and protected in pursuit of preventing, detecting and investigating criminal offences. The rights that are likely to be engaged are the rights to dignity and privacy. Members will act ethically, professionally and appropriately. They will treat all individuals and material with dignity and respect in line with the [Code of Ethics](#).

Scope

This policy document and all associated documentation apply to all members of An Garda Síochána and Garda staff. It also applies to Police Officers from the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) seconded to An Garda Síochána in accordance with Section 53, Garda Síochána Act 2005.

Policy Statement

All Garda members responsible for conducting open source intelligence enquiries are responsible for ensuring the principles contained within this document are followed and its associated procedure document adhered to.

Garda members must not abuse their policing powers or authority and must at all times treat the public they serve with dignity and respect and in a human rights compliant manner. This is aided by using the Garda Decision Making Model (GDMM). Garda members conducting OSINT enquiries require specific procedures to safeguard themselves and the organisation in order to protect the trust and confidence of the public while maintaining the reputation and integrity of An Garda Síochána.

Compliance

Compliance with this policy and accompanying procedure document is mandatory for all members of An Garda Síochána and Garda staff.

Related Documents

1. Open Source Intelligence procedure document.
2. [Code of Ethics for the Garda Síochána](#).
3. [An Garda Síochána Code, Chapter 6, Employment, Equality and Ethics](#).
4. [The Garda Síochána Act, 2005, as amended](#).
5. [Data Protection Act, 2018](#).
6. [An Garda Síochána Data Protection Code of Practice](#).
7. [ICT Acceptable Usage Policy](#).
8. [Mobile Device Procedure](#).
9. [Code of Practice – CHIS](#).
10. [HQ Directive 19/19 Human Rights Framework](#).

Legal & Human Rights Screening

This policy has been legal and human rights screened in terms of the respective obligations placed on An Garda Síochána for the subject area concerned.

Ethical Standards & Commitments

Every person working in An Garda Síochána must observe and adhere to the standards and commitments set out in the [Code of Ethics](#) for An Garda Síochána and uphold and promote this code throughout the Organisation.

Policy & Procedure Review

This policy and associated documents will be reviewed 12 months from its date of effect and every three years thereafter.

Disclaimer

This document is not intended to, nor does it represent legal advice to be relied upon in respect of the subject matter contained herein. This document should not be used as a substitute for professional legal advice.

Policy & Procedure Document Feedback

The Policy and Governance Coordination Unit maintains a Policy Issues Log. Where there are potential issues regarding the implementation of the Procedures set out in this document, please forward an outline of same through the relevant Divisional Office to the Section mailbox policy.governance@garda.ie. Divisional submissions will be recorded in the Policy Issues Log and forwarded to the Policy Owner for whatever action deemed necessary.