

muintir na tíre

An Garda Síochána

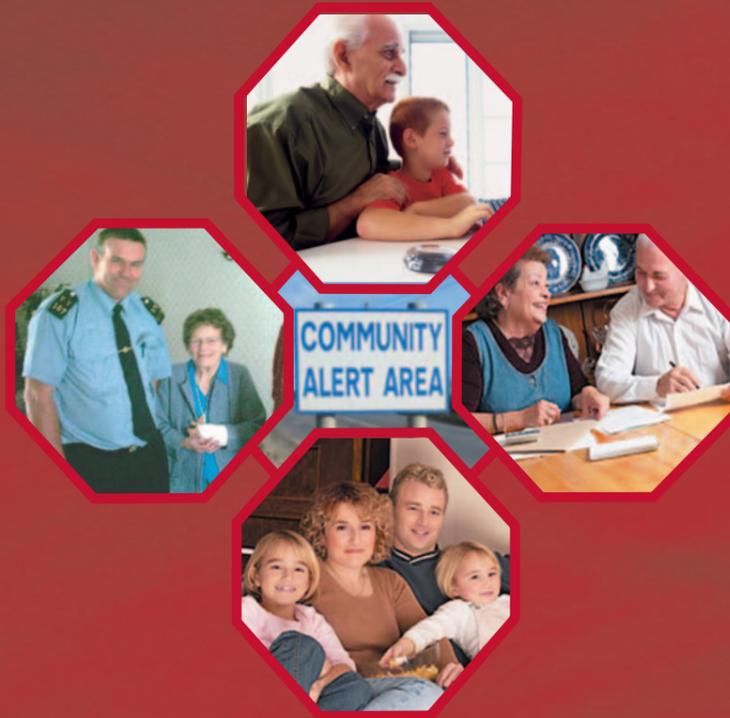


www.muintir.ie



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COMMUNITY ALERT



2007 – 2011

FOREWORDS

Foreword from the Commissioner

We in An Garda Síochána in association with Muintir na Tíre are pleased to present this resource folder to Community Alert schemes to assist and guide their participation with crime prevention. I believe that the information provided will give you a better understanding of Community Alert, its functions and future aims.

On behalf of An Garda Síochána I take this opportunity to extend gratitude to Muintir na Tíre for the time and effort they put into making Community Alert a success. The work undertaken by their Development Officers is pivotal to making Community Alert a success.

Community Alert can help reduce the opportunity for crime in an area. This can be achieved by the people in the Community working in close co-operation with the Gardaí.

An Garda Síochána needs your support in combating crime in rural Ireland. You can give us that support by being an active participant in Community Alert. Together we can reduce crime and build towards a better quality of life.

I wish the programme every success and assure you of the continued support of An Garda Síochána.

Noel Conroy,
Commissioner of An Garda Síochána

Foreword from the President of Muintir na Tíre

Muintir na Tíre is delighted to be associated with An Garda Síochána in preparing and presenting this guide to the Community Alert programme. Community Alert was founded 21 years ago following a number of domestic break-ins with extremely vicious attacks on elderly people in their own homes, some of which were fatal, consequently people were stunned, nervous and certainly did not feel secure or safe in their homes as a result. Recorded crime figures at that time, 1980 – 1984, had doubled in the four years from about 400,000 in 1980 to approximately 900,000 in 1984. Community Alert is more than a Crime Prevention Programme, it is a programme of community care, of crime reduction and crime prevention, supporting the work of the local Gardai in cases of suspicious or lawless activity. The Muintir Na Tíre Community Alert programme is the corner stone of good community policing in rural Ireland.

The hallmark and great strength of Community Alert has always been the voluntary input, the genuine interest and commitment of the men and women who filled the caring role and never counted the cost. The caring and sharing within the community is surely a reflection of that generosity, synonymous with life in rural Ireland, its history and its culture.

Margaret O'Doherty,
National President Muintir na Tíre

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I COMMUNITY ALERT

Community Alert – Introduction

The Community Alert programme was established by Muintir Na Tire in 1984 in partnership with An Garda Síochána. It evolved in response to a rise of crime in rural Ireland, particularly attacks on vulnerable people (including the elderly) living alone. It is a voluntary crime prevention programme for rural communities and it encourages the community to pro-actively participate with Muintir na Tire and An Garda Síochána in improving the quality of life and safety of the community in general.

The partnership has been strengthened by an agreed Memorandum of Understanding between the partner organisations which was signed on the 23rd of April 2002. This memorandum also included the Community Alert Mission Statement as follows:

“That Community Alert will promote the best quality of life for people and particularly older people in rural communities, by:

- Crime Prevention
- Neighbourliness and Self Reliance,
- General Community Safety and Well Being,
- Accident Prevention,
- Promotion of Personal Safety,
- Anti-Poverty focus and Awareness of Social Inclusion”

There are now 1300 Community Alert Groups throughout the country. Each Community Alert Group is organised on a recognised local community basis and has an elected committee, a Liaison Garda and Community Relations/Crime Prevention Officer who link the Garda and local communities together to provide an effective Community Policing and Crime Prevention Network.

Community Alert is community driven and is absolutely flexible in serving the needs of local communities. Local volunteers identify community needs and collectively address them in a holistic way. Community Alert is the ideal vehicle, an existing framework for moving forward and implementing community policing. Crime Prevention is the key to effective Community Policing.

The programme is funded by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Department of Health and Children. Community Alert groups work closely with the Community Support for Older People Scheme funded by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

Community Alert – A Review

Community Alert has operated for the past 21 years as a partnership between the community, Muintir na Tire and An Garda Síochána and has worked and is still working well. It is in need of further development, however. Consequently, it was considered that this was an opportune time to consult with all scheme participants from Garda management to community members in order to prepare a strategy for the continued development of the programme. This was achieved by organising District Community Alert Meetings and by convening a National Conference in November 2005.

The key findings were:

- A re-focusing of support by the Garda organisation is required to ensure the continuing operation of Community Alert schemes.
- Engagement by young people in the running of Community Alert schemes and activities should be encouraged and sought.
- Training and resource issues have been identified.

The future operation of Community Alert is outlined in detail in the following sections and will require commitment and co-operation from all partners to keep Community Alert relevant and meaningful.

Community Alert – Objectives

This section outlines the key challenges that will guide and inform our involvement with Community Alert over the next five years;

- To prevent crime by reducing opportunities for crimes to occur.
- Enhance community safety.
- Foster a caring environment for Older and Vulnerable People.
- Encourage communities to adopt a quality of life approach through partnerships, team-work and good neighbourly relations: thereby reducing the impact and fear of crime.
- Improve Garda and Community liaison by encouraging contact with Gardai about any suspicious activity.
- Enable Muintir Na Tire and An Garda Síochána to enhance communication and consultation, with service delivery and timely feedback to local communities.
- Develop and maintain a partnership and multi-agency approach in dealing with anti-social behaviour.
- Promote sporting and recreational facilities for young people and actively encourage young people to become involved in Community Alert at all levels.
- Foster a sense of Community participation
- Promote interculturism, understanding & respect.

2 MUINTIR NA TÍRE

What is Muintir na Tíre – Muintir na Tíre is a national Community Development movement founded in 1937 by Canon John Hayes.

Our Aims are to:

- To foster the process of Community-Development
- To unite Communities in a spirit of neighbourliness and community service
- To devise programmes to better the social, economic and cultural welfare of all

Muintir na Tíre – Community Alert Philosophy

The most important element of Community Alert is that local people become more aware of the need to preserve the quality of life of members of their community, in particular the more vulnerable. Community Alert is about raising the alertness and awareness of everybody to the presence of any person or vehicle acting suspiciously and reporting it to the Gardai. Community Alert is about participation in the scheme by all members of the community through increased neighbourliness and interest in issues affecting community safety in general.

Alarm systems and the like, while helpful, cannot take the place of human contact. This principle must underpin all the activities of local Community Alert committees. The success of Community Alert in the long-term must rely almost entirely on on-going interest of local people in the needs of those around them.

As a practical way of ensuring that the Community Alert groups stays alive once the threat to vulnerable people appears to have receded, Muintir na Tíre advises all Community Alert committees to broaden their activities – taking general care of vulnerable members of the community and looking at all issues concerning community safety. This can be achieved by joining forces with other community groups and endeavouring to involve all sections of the community, both young and old.

Muintir na Tíre – National Organisation

NATIONAL STRUCTURE

Full-time National President
Board of Directors
Community Councils
Community Alert Groups
Development Officers (5)

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

Research, Administration, Finance, Training,
Communications & Information Service.

Muintir na Tíre is a company, limited by guarantee and is based at Canon Hayes House, Tipperary Town, Co. Tipperary. A charitable exemption number is available from Head Office. Muintir na Tíre invites Community Alert Groups to affiliate to the national organisation as Associate Members. Membership of Muintir na Tíre entitles a Community Alert Group to use Muintir's Charity Exemption Number.

Membership of Muintir na Tíre is entirely optional and in no way affects the service provided by Muintir's Head Office or its Development Officers. Muintir na Tíre employs a National Co-Ordinator for Community Alert.

Muintir na Tíre is currently actively involved in the following national issues:

- Promotion of the Community Council structure
- Local Government Reform through Strategic Policy Committees, Agenda 2000 and Rural Regeneration
- Community Crime Prevention
- Easy use Websites for Community Groups
- European Interreg I I A Project.
- Nationwide information campaign for older people on financial matters,- pension entitlements, allowances etc.
- Youth Community Crime Prevention- Care and Safety Initiative.

Muintir na Tíre – Community Alert Development Officer

Reporting to the National Co-ordinator the development officer has the following Key Responsibilities:

- The role of the Community Alert Development Officer is to provide cohesiveness and direction for the future development and extension of the Community Alert programme.
- To provide expertise and guidance to Community Alert groups to enable them to carry out their activities in a more professional manner.
- To identify and address needs regarding organisational development capacity in the Community Alert Groups
- To identify new and emerging needs among the Community Alert Groups.
- To develop the capacity of Community Alert Groups to contribute to formulation of policy at local and national levels
- Service existing Community Alert groups and to actively facilitate the development of new groups.
- The Development Officers will hold at least one meeting in each Garda District in their area of responsibility annually.
- Address the meetings on issues connected with the wider Community Alert programme, Crime Prevention, Neighbourliness & Self Reliance, General Community Safety & Well Being, Accident Prevention, Promotion of Personal Safety and an Anti- Poverty focus & Awareness of Social Inclusion.
- The Community Alert Development Officer and Garda Síochána Crime Prevention Officer organise and ensure that representatives of each Community Alert group in the District, the Superintendent for the district and the liaison Garda attend the District meeting. These meetings are in addition to the number of annual general meetings for each group, and information evenings, as guest speakers with other voluntary groups, conferences, exhibitions, schools and other publicity events.
- Liaise with other statutory and voluntary agencies and communities in each area to ensure that the community benefits to the maximum from the various services that are available.
- The Development Officers are based on the Garda Síochána Regional structure. The Community Alert Development Officers service almost 1250 Community Alert groups.

Community Alert Development Officers will utilise the contacts that they have made with local radio and newspapers to communicate information on personal and community safety and security. The development officers are of enormous assistance to Community Alert groups in their applications for funding for the Community Support for Older Persons scheme that is administered by the Department of the Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

Child protection

3 AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA

An Garda Siochana – Commitment

Community Alert is a partnership programme between An Garda Siochana and Muintir na Tíre. An Garda Siochana will give an added commitment at every level to proactively promote and support the establishment and operation of Community Alert groups into the future.

An Garda Siochana will include Community Alert in District and Divisional Annual Policing Plans with performance indicators to realise the full potential of this partnership programme. All resource material (booklets, window stickers, survey forms and associated administration forms) will be provided by An Garda Siochana along with appropriate promotion material. An Garda Siochana is committed to a further national review of Community Alert in 2010. Senior Garda managers in consultation with the Community Alert Development Officer assigned to their respective regions will establish District and Divisional Community Alert Committees.

An Garda Siochana – Community Relations Section:

The prevention of crime is one of the primary objectives of An Garda Síochána. The Garda Community Relations Section initiates and supports the implementation of various programmes designed to prevent crime and develop mechanisms to improve wider community participation in crime prevention and other related issues.

We can be contacted at Garda Community Relations, Harcourt Square, Dublin 2;
Telephone Number 01-6663805/13 or visit the Garda Web site @ www.garda.ie

National Crime Prevention Office

C.P. Surveys
C.C.T.V.
Alarm Policy
Crime Prevention
Design Advisor
Business Watch
Fraud Seminars
Crimecall
Pharmacy Watch

National Juvenile Office

Garda Juvenile
Diversion Programme
Schools Programme
Special Projects
Local Drugs Task Force
Integrated Services Project
Child Care Advisory Committee
Children/Family Bill
Conferences
Age Cards
Copping On
Gay/Lesbian and Transgender

Community Relations Office

Community Policing
Community Alert
Neighbourhood Watch
Campus Watch
Coastal Watch
Mobile Crime Prevention
/Drugs Unit
Victims of Crime
Literature
Rural Community Policing
Hospital Watch
Policing Fora
Focus Groups
Incl. Elderly
Irish Tourist Assistance Service
Garda Racial and Intercultural Office

An Garda Siochana – Regional Assistant Commissioners Role:

- Will incorporate Community Alert into their Regional Crime Prevention Strategy.

An Garda Siochana – Divisional Officers (Chief Superintendents) Role:

- The Chief Superintendent will appoint an Inspector to oversee the operation of Community Alert in each Division.
- Convene a Divisional Community Alert Committee which will include the Divisional Community Alert Inspector, District Community Alert Sergeants, Crime Prevention Officer, District Community Alert Representatives nominated Superintendent / Superintendents and invited representatives from appropriate statutory and voluntary agencies.
- Hold and chair a quarterly Divisional Community Alert Committee meeting.
- Agree with the Divisional Community Alert Committee a series of performance indicators which will be documented and evaluated at the end of each year.

The following matters will be discussed at *Divisional Quarterly Community Alert Committee* meeting:

- Anti-social behaviour problems and remedial action at District and Sub-District level.
- Crime Prevention and reduction strategies.
- Burglaries.
- District / Divisional Community Alert Performance Indicators.
- Sale, supply and abuse of controlled drugs.
- Under age drinking and remedial measures at District and Sub-District level.
- Initiatives at District and Sub-District level to support Older and Vulnerable People and the including “The Bottle in the Fridge Initiative”*.
- Crime against Older and Vulnerable People including crime prevention advice disseminated through Community Alert.
- Youth Clubs and recreational facilities for teenagers / young people at District and Divisional level including the promotion of the “No Name Club” ethos which is entertainment for teenagers in an alcohol free environment.
- Multi-Agency strategies and initiatives to resolve relevant local community problems such as graffiti and anti-social behaviour.
- Strategies and initiatives to enhance and expand Community Alert.
- Other relevant matters.
- The Chief Superintendent will chair the Divisional Community Alert AGM.

* The “Bottle in the Fridge Initiative” involves the homeowner completing a brief form that contains key health and social care information e.g. details of their doctor, medication being taken, allergies, contact names in the event of an emergency etc. This form is then placed in a recognisable container which is kept in the fridge. Stickers on the fridge and entrance doors alert the emergency services / social care workers to the presence of the bottle.

An Garda Siochana – District Officers (Superintendents) Role:

- The Superintendent will appoint a Sergeant to oversee the operation of Community Alert in each Garda District.
- Convene a District Community Alert Committee.
- Hold and chair a District Community Alert Committee bi-monthly meeting with elected/appointed District Community Alert representatives Liaison Gardai, Crime Prevention Sergeant, Juvenile Liaison Officer, District Community Alert Sergeant and invited representative from appropriate statutory and voluntary organisations.
- Appoint a named Liaison Garda to each group and provide appropriate training and resources. The Liaison Garda should be a Community Policing member where possible.
- Facilitate the holding of Community Alert meetings in Garda Stations including the provision of reasonable costs (eg. postage). Support Community Alert Projects such as the Bottle In The Fridge*.

- Incorporate the District Community Alert annual performance indicators in the work of the District Community Alert Committee. The District performance indicators should be evaluated at the end of each year and a composite report forwarded to the Chief Superintendent not later than 15th January in the following year.
- Matters for discussion at the bi-monthly District Community Alert Committee meeting will emulate the quarterly meetings chaired by the Chief Superintendents as outlined above.
- The District Officer will chair the District Community Alert AGM.

An Garda Siochana – Liaison Garda Role:

- Actively pursue, foster and develop the Community Alert group in accordance with the terms of the District Policing Plan.
- Attend all Community Alert group meetings.
- Provide appropriate timely feedback at Community Alert meetings.
- Organise liaison between local Community Alert groups where appropriate.
- In consultation with the Community Alert Development Officer arrange the holding of AGMs which should be attended by the District Community Alert Sergeants.

An Garda Siochana – Crime Prevention/Community Relations Officer Role:

- Will study incidents and trends in crime and will commend appropriate preventative measures.
- Through lectures, exhibitions, distribution of crime prevention literature and using television, radio and print media, will advise on crime prevention.
- Attend meetings in relation to community based crime prevention scheme e.g. ‘Community Alert’, ‘Business Watch’, when expert advice on security is required.
- Carry out security surveys of risk premises on request or when considered necessary.
- Liaise with architects and others involved at the planning stage of building projects in order that security recommendations can be included at an early stage.

Crime Prevention Officers:

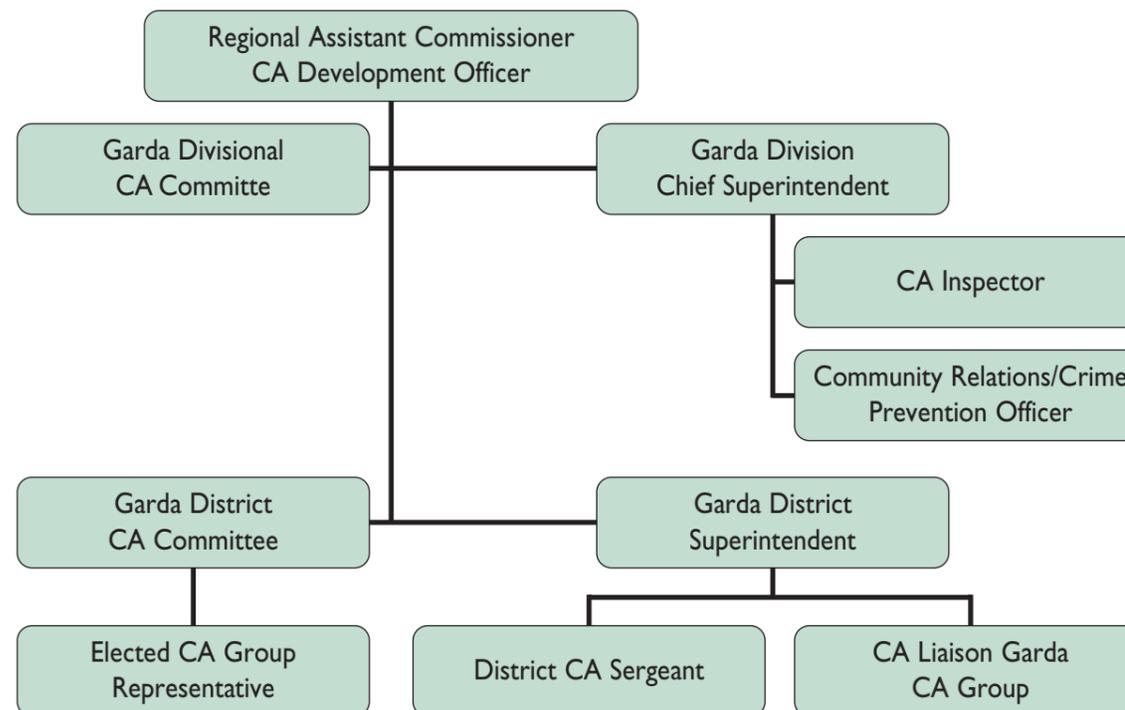
List of Crime Prevention Officers Excluding Dublin Region:

	Division	Sergeant	Station	Telephone
1.	Carlow/Kildare	Mary Corcoran	Naas	045 897333
2.	Cavan/Monaghan	Noel Harraghy	Monaghan	047 82222
3.	Clare	Joseph Downey	Ennis	065 6848161
4.	Cork North	John Kelly	Fermoy	025 31222
5.	Cork East	Tony Davis	Anglesea St.	021 4522061
6.	Cork West	Eamon Foley	Bandon	023 41145
7.	Donegal	Paul Wallace	Letterkenny	074 67161
8.	Galway West	Gerard Mangan	Galway	091 538061
9.	Kerry	Noel O'Connell	Tralee	066 7122022
10.	Laois/Offaly	Padraig Farrelly	Portlaoise	0502 21105
11.	Limerick	Liam Sheehan	Henry St.	061 212461
12.	Longford/Westmeath	John Connolly	Mullingar	044 48915
13.	Louth/Meath		Drogheda	041 9874261
14.	Mayo	Tony Cosgrove	Castlebar	094 9022222
15.	Roscommon/Galway	Larry Shine	Roscommon	090 6626301
16.	Sligo/Leitrim	Ciaran Mulderrig Gda	Sligo	071 9142031
17.	Tipperary	Sean Sherlock	Thurles	0504 25100
18.	Waterford/Kilkenny	Tim Cronin	Waterford	051 305361
19.	Wexford	Pat Carley	Wexford	053 22333

4 COMMUNITY ALERT PROGRAMME

The following table and diagram shows how Community Alert is organised and structured amongst the partners:

Garda Community Relations	Muintir na Tire – National Co-ordinator
Regional Assistant Commissioner	Community Alert Development Officer
Garda Division Chief Superintendent	Garda Divisional Community Alert Committee
Community Alert Inspector	
Community Relations/Crime Prevention Officer	
Garda District Superintendent	Garda District Community Alert Committee
District Community Alert Sergeant	
Community Alert Liaison Garda	Community Alert Group



The schematic helps to show how both the Garda and civilian side of the partnership interact. Community Relations/Crime Prevention Sergeants and District Community Alert Sergeants have multiple roles at Divisional/District/Group and District/Group level respectively.

Community Alert – Organisation

Community Alert adopts a practical joined-up problem solving approach to crime prevention, community safety and anti-social behaviour. Your group and participation can improve the quality of life for your community, your family and your neighbours. Each group is supported by a Liaison Garda who keeps in regular contact with Area Co-ordinators and provides timely feedback. All Liaison Gardai are actively supported by a Sergeant within each Garda District and each Garda Division has a Community Relations/Crime Prevention Sergeant whose functions include supporting individual groups through providing advice and literature. Community Relations, Harcourt Square and Muintir na Tíre Head Office maintains a computerised database of all groups which includes details of each groups' name and location, number of households and the names of Co-ordinators, District Sergeant and Liaison Gardai. Completed forms on each Community Alert group will be sent on an annual basis by District Sergeants and Community Alert Development Officers to Superintendent, Community Relations, Harcourt Square and to Muintir na Tíre Head Office in order to keep the database up to date. Dates on which AGMs are held will in future be recorded on the database at Garda Community Relations and Muintir na Tíre Head Office.

Community Alert – Establishing A Community Alert Group

There are four stages involved in setting up Community Alert Group within an area:

Stage 1: Initial Meeting

It is important to remember that Community Alert groups are run by members of the community in active partnership with An Garda Síochána and Muintir na Tíre. The success of a Community Alert group depends on the enthusiasm, commitment and co-operation of all partners. A small steering group of people interested in setting up Community Alert in their area will come together with the Gardai and the Muintir na Tíre Community Alert Development Officer, to arrange a public meeting and to issue written invitations to all the voluntary associations in the local area to this meeting. The first step in establishing a group may be initiated from within your own community or as a result of direct Garda contact. It is important to canvass local residents with a view to securing their support and involvement before introducing a group in their area. This can be facilitated through a public meeting. An Garda Síochána will proactively encourage, support and participate in the establishment and maintenance of Community Alert groups and a Garda Liaison Officer will be assigned to the Group. Every Garda District has an appointed Sergeant to help establish and maintain Community Alert Groups. Your local Garda Station can advise you of the name of that Sergeant

The geographical area to be covered by the Group will be defined and boundaries determined.

Stage 2: Public Meeting

It is important to ensure that all members of the public have a clear understanding of what Community Alert is and to know what the programme aims and objectives are. The inaugural public meeting of the Community Alert group will include representatives of local associations, people concerned about the safety of their families and property, and that of their neighbours, particularly those who are vulnerable. Existing community structures such as Community Councils and Community Associations, where applicable, will have a special role in establishing and maintaining groups and a Community Alert group volunteer will be appointed to establish a joined-up approach between local Community Alert groups and existing community structures.

The Community Alert Development Officer, Garda Community Relations/Crime Prevention Officer will explain the full concept of Community Alert and how it works and will outline the responsibilities of committee members. The Group will be encouraged to focus on their local area and the needs of

vulnerable people within that area. The Group must also consider ways in which the safety of the community can be improved and thereby improve the quality of life of all concerned. The Garda Community Relations/Crime Prevention Officer will discuss local problems regarding crime. She or he will also give advice on crime-prevention measures. Questions will be invited to highlight specific matters of concern.

The geographical area including boundaries to be covered by the Group will be finalised.

Those present will elect a committee to run the Community Alert Group. Insofar as it is possible the community members will represent each townland or other definable areas within the locality. A Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and Public Relations Officer will be elected. Representatives from each townland or other defined areas will be selected to be the Visitor/Contact in those areas.

A date, time and venue for the first meeting of the Committee will be arranged (preferably quite soon after the inaugural meeting) and arrangements for a Training Seminar will be decided.

Stage 3: Training Seminar

A Training Seminar will be arranged in conjunction with the Community Alert Development Officer to provide Committee members with the skill and knowledge necessary to run Community Alert effectively.

There will be inputs and discussion on the roles of Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Public Relations Officer and Visitor/Contact (discussed later in this section). A video entitled 'Crime Prevention in Rural Areas' will be shown by the Garda representative to raise awareness. Sources of funding for Community Alert Groups will also be outlined.

Stage 4: Getting the Community Alert Group Up and Running

Every Garda District will have a Sergeant appointed with specific responsibility for Community Alert, who will actively support the formal establishment and maintenance of groups. To make contact with your District Community Alert Sergeant contact your local Garda Station for his/her name, station and telephone number. The District Community Alert Sergeant will organise the first public meeting in consultation with the Community Alert Development Officer to present Community Alert to the community and help explain how it will operate. This Sergeant and the Community Alert Development Officer will also have a pivotal role in identifying non-active groups for re-establishment.

Community Alert adopts a practical joined-up problem solving approach to crime prevention, community safety and anti-social behaviour. Your group and participation can improve the quality of life for your community, your family and your neighbours. Each group is supported by a Liaison Garda who keeps in regular contact with Area Co-ordinators and provides timely feedback. Each Garda Division has a Crime Prevention Sergeant whose functions include supporting individual groups through providing advice and literature. Community Relations, Harcourt Square and Muintir na Tíre Head Office maintains a computerised database of all groups which includes details of each groups' name and location, number of households and the names of Co-ordinators, District Sergeant and Liaison Gardai. Completed forms on each Community Alert group will be sent on an annual basis by District Sergeants and Community Alert Development Officers to Superintendent, Community Relations, Harcourt Square and to Muintir na Tíre Head Office in order to keep the database up to date. Dates on which AGMs are held will in future be recorded on the database at Garda Community Relations and Muintir na Tíre Head Office.

The following activities should be undertaken as soon as is practicable:

- Within each townland or defined area, identify and compile a list of all older and vulnerable people, houses vacant during the day and holiday homes.
- The Garda Liaison Officer in conjunction with the Visitor/Contact for the area, will arrange to visit those people identified as vulnerable.
- Literature on security and crime prevention measures will be issued to each household. The Visitor/Contact will arrange to distribute this literature within his/her designated area.
- The community in general will be encouraged to be alert at all times to report any suspicious activities, vehicles etc. to the Gardai.
- A formal public launch of Community Alert will be arranged by the Committee to raise the awareness of the wider community to the presence of the programme and its goals in their area. This launch will also introduce the Committee to the community and encourage its cooperation. The Community Alert Group should invite the local Garda Superintendent, public representatives, and representatives of statutory and voluntary agencies working in the area.
- Fund-raising will be organised for the purchase of Community Alert road signs, property marking kits, smoke alarms and communicators for those who are vulnerable.
- Contact will be made with the Local Authority Area Engineer to agree the positioning of road signs. These signs will be erected in co-operation with the Local Authority.

Community Alert – Roles within the Group

Every Community Alert group needs to be properly organised and structured. The easiest approach is as follows: Elect / appoint a Committee who will represent the group and ensure that each area/townland has its own Area Co-ordinator. Everybody else in the group is a Community Alert member. Area Co-ordinators will be given training and advice on their role and responsibilities by the Community Alert Development Officer and Garda Liaison Officer. Each Community Alert group will meet on a monthly or bi-monthly (every second month) basis as appropriate. District and Divisional Community Alert Committees will be established by Garda managers.

Community Alert Committee – Role

- Communicate with and support Area Co-ordinator and Community Alert members.
- Encouraging residents to report crime, suspicious activities and anti-social behaviour.
- Encourage group participation at local level involving residents and people of all ages.
- Disseminate crime prevention information and literature to Community Alert Members.
- Support victims of crime.
- Provide regular feedback to Area Co-ordinators on group effectiveness.

Community Alert Area Co-ordinator – Role

The relationship between the Area Co-ordinator and the Liaison Garda will be of critical importance to the long-term success of each group. The Area Co-ordinator acts with the help and support of the group members to:

- Serve as the link between the Community Alert Liaison Garda and group members.
- Encourage group participation amongst the volunteers.
- Organise the overall group:- recruitment, meetings, newsletters, AGM etc with the active co-operation and participation of the Liaison Garda.
- Initiate activities which foster community interaction and crime prevention measures.
- Identify crime problems and work to achieve solutions with local Gardai.

- Represent the Community Alert group at Garda District Community Alert Committee meetings and Local Policing Fora meetings.
- Every Area Co-ordinator should seek the assistance and help of the community in the group's Activities.

Community Alert Member – Role

Community Alert will work successfully with the active input of all members. Your actions and support will ensure its success. Don't leave it to others.

- Make crime prevention a part of your life.
- Attend meetings of your Community Alert group.
- Take action if you are suspicious (Call the Gardai, in emergencies at 999 or 112).
- If you observe the occupants of a motor vehicle acting suspiciously in your area note the make, colour and registration number and report it to your local Gardai.
- Report all crime and anti-social behaviour to An Garda Síochána. Don't leave it to others.
- Take steps to create a caring and vibrant community – “Be a good neighbour”. Call in and visit, run an errand — it's the small things and the human contact that counts.
- Keep an eye on your property and that of your neighbours — help to prevent vandalism and theft.
- Keep a look out for Older and Vulnerable People in your community and respect their independence and get to know your neighbours.
- Working together in trust and confidence we will create a better and safer community.

Remember

- Leave the responsibility for apprehending criminals with An Garda Síochána
- Community Alert does not require frequent meetings
- You are not asked to take any personal risk
- Your community needs you and you have much to offer
- You must **NEVER EVER** challenge someone behaving in a suspicious manner or put your personal safety at risk.

Your community needs you— play your part.

If you live in a Community Alert Area make contact with your local Garda Station or Committee member and find out how you can help. If you have no Community Alert Group in your area, why not start one or contact your local Gardai or the Muintir na Tíre Community Alert Development Officer.

Be Active! Be Alert! Be Involved!**For further information, advice and service please contact:**

- Muintir na Tíre, Canon Hayes House, Tipperary Town, Telephone 062 51 163
Email muintirtipp@eircom.net or HYPERLINK “<http://www.muintir.ie>” www.muintir.ie
- Contact your local Garda Station or visit www.garda.ie

Community Alert – Insurance

It is strongly recommended that all Community Alert Groups cover their activities with adequate insurance. At a minimum all meetings of the Group should be covered by Public Liability Insurance.

Any organisation/group may be held legally liable for bodily injury to or illness to third parties and for damage to their property if such illness or damage happens in connection with the organisation/groups activities. A Public Liability policy will indemnify such organisation/groups in respect of these liabilities.

Community Alert Groups who affiliate to the national organisation of Muintir na Tíre can avail of a Group Insurance Scheme. Under this scheme, Community Alert Groups can have Public Liability cover for a premium of €101.50 For further details contact Muintir na Tíre, Canon Hayes House, Tipperary. Tel: 062 51163 or the Community Alert Development Officer for your area.

Community Alert – Signs

Community Alert Signs are usually made of 12g Aluminium panel of 600mm by 400 mm with a non-slip bracket to affix to a 75mm diameter pole. The text for the sign should read “Community Alert Area” or “Pobal ar Aire”. Signs should if at all possible be on a White Reflective background with blue lettering.

Some groups succeed in getting signs sponsored in which case the logo/name of the sponsor may have to be included on the sign. This is likely to increase the cost of the sign as is the option selected by some groups, of displaying the name of the village/area on the sign.

Permission from the Local Authority must be sought before signs maybe erected. As rules applied by each local authority vary, it is necessary to contact the local Area Engineer to discuss the erection of signs, their maintenance and insurance.

Some Commercial Sign Suppliers:

Cambewell Manufacturing Ltd., Tyone, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary.

Tel : 067 31711 Fax 067 31659 Contact Jim Meagher.

Signs each €25.00 + Vat, Poles €18.50 + Vat.each to Local Authority Specification(6 ft)

Eurotec Signs, Oranmore Industrial Park, Oranmore, Co. Galway.

Tel : 091 794673, Fax 091 790690 Contact Patrick Cusack.

Signs each €32.00 +Vat, Poles €37.22 + Vat.each to Local Authority Specification (11 ft)

Sign Craft, Michael St, Limerick.

Tel :061 315818, Fax 061 317921 Contact David Griffin

Signs each €87.50 +Vat, Signs with 8 ft Pole each €125.00 +Vat.

5 CRIME PREVENTION ADVICE

HOME SECURITY SURVEY

Burglars like easy opportunities. If they have to make a lot of noise, spend a lot of time or risk being seen, the chances are they won't bother. Complete this simple home security survey to determine how well your home is secured against burglars.

Remember, every NO answer is a threat to your home security.

Doors and Windows:

	Yes	No
1 Are all your external doors properly fitted and equipped with appropriate secure locking systems? i.e. 5-lever mortice locks for wooden doors, multi-point locking for uPVC doors etc	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2 Have you a wide-angled viewer in your front/main entrance doors?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3 Do you have a door chain / limiter fitted and do you use it?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4 Since moving into your home (where there may have been a previous occupier) have you had the locks changed?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5 Do you lock your external doors when away from home, no matter how short a time?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6 Do you lock the doors out of your view when working in the garden / yard?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7 Have you installed an additional lock(s) to your sliding glass / patio doors?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8 Can you close and lock your garage / outhouses' doors?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9 Do you close and lock your garage /outhouses' doors?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10 Are all your windows secure?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11 Do you check to see if all windows are secured when you leave the house?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Inside Security

	Yes	No
1 Do you ask for identification before allowing unknown servicemen / callers in to your home?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2 Do you avoid leaving cash at home?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3 Do you have automatic timers on some lights in your house when you are away?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4 Does your home always look like someone is at home?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5 Have you recorded serial numbers of your valuables?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 6 Have you, for identification purposes, photographed your valuables especially items for which you have no serial numbers such as jewellery, china, crystal, paintings, antiques etc? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7 Are your car / house keys kept in a location not visible from the outside? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Outside Security**Yes No**

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Is your house number visible from the street? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2 Is excessive vegetation obscuring a clear view of your home? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3 Have you trimmed all hedges and shrubs so they can't hide a burglar at work on the windows and doors? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4 Have you ever walked around your house looking for ways a burglar might be able to get in? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5 Do you keep tools or ladders etc. in places inaccessible to potential burglars? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6 Is your shed / garage secure? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Holiday Security**Yes No**

- | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Have you a reliable neighbour whom you can notify of your travel plans and give a key to, with a request for a periodic house check? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2 Do you have a neighbour pick up your mail or newspapers when you are away or do you avail of Mailminder from An Post? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3 Do you cancel all deliveries? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4 Do you have your neighbour park his / her extra car in your driveway when you are away for a few days? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5 Do you arrange to have the lawn mowed? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6 Do you notify the Gardai of prolonged absences from your home? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Electronic Security**Yes No**

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Do you have an intruder alarm system fitted? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2 Does it conform to EN 50131 standard (formerly IS 199)? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3 Is it maintained and serviced annually? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4 Do you use your alarm? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5 Have you appointed a keyholder(s)? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6 Do you have exterior security lighting? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

VEHICLE SECURITY SURVEY

After your home, your car or other vehicle is often your next most valuable asset. Complete this simple vehicle security survey to determine how well your vehicle is secured.

Remember, as before, every NO answer is a threat to your vehicle security.

Cars, vans, jeeps etc.**Yes No**

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Do you fully lock the doors, windows, boot and sunroof every time you leave the car, however briefly? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2 Do you always use your steering lock or any other fitted security device e.g. alarm? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3 Do you always remove the ignition key at locations such as filling stations etc. and even when parked in your own driveway or garage? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4 Do you leave valuables and other possessions on display in your car? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5 Do you, where possible, remove your radio / CD player when your car is parked? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6 Have you marked your radio / CD player with the car registration number and have you noted the serial number? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7 Have you had your registration number etched onto all glass surfaces? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8 Do you tuck in your wing mirrors and retract your aerial (where possible) to discourage vandalism? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9 Do you keep your car registration and owner documents (and/or other personal documents such as utility bills) in a secure location and not in your car? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10 Do you keep your car keys in a secure location, even at home? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Motorbikes and Bicycles**Yes No**

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Have you noted the serial number of your bicycle and kept it in a secure place? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2 Do you have a good quality secure lock for your motorbike or bicycle and do you always use it? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3 When parking, do you lock your motorbike or bicycle to a secure object e.g. a bike ramp, solid lamp post etc? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4 Do you lock or secure removable parts e.g. wheels? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Mobile Phones etc.

The use of mobile phones while driving in a public place is an offence and subject to a fixed penalty of €80 and 2 penalty points. Mobile phones may only be used while driving with the aid of a hands free device. It must be noted that use of mobiles includes texting.

You must always drive with due care and attention. Road safety is a social and personal responsibility. Each of us must be personally responsible and accountable for our own behaviour while using a motor vehicle on Irish roads. If you encounter dangerous or aggressive driving please call Traffic Watch 1890 205805 and report it. Dangerous driving is a criminal offence.

Never drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. You must always wear a seat belt while driving. Passengers must also wear seat belts. It is an offence to travel in a motor car without wearing a seat belt. Remember SPEED KILLS. Slowdown and reach your destination in safety. ARRIVE ALIVE.

Personal Security:

The following guidelines are provided to give brief basic advice on issues of personal security. The advice can be pertinent to either or both sexes and all ages. Further and more comprehensive guidelines are available on the Garda website [HYPERLINK "http://www.garda.ie" www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie).

Out and About

- Do not carry large amounts of cash or valuables in your handbag.
- Minimise the wearing of jewellery or other valuables. Alternatively, consider spreading your valuables around your person e.g. your house keys in your bag, your mobile phone in your jacket and your cash/credit cards in your trouser pocket etc.
- If possible, always carry a mobile phone.
- Walk facing traffic, so that vehicles cannot approach from behind without you being aware of their presence.
- When alone, avoid dark and empty streets and roadways. Arrange a lift if you are travelling at night, or hire a taxi and preferably get the taxi to collect you at home.
- Ascertain the taxi driver's name and ask him to wait until you have entered your destination.
- If you think you are being followed go straight to the nearest place where there are people, even a private house. Then phone for the Gardai.
- When walking or jogging, and especially when cycling, you should not listen to a personal stereo through headphones, so you can stay more alert to your surroundings.

Driving

- Get into the habit of locking your doors when driving or waiting in the car.
- Do not pick up hitchhikers or strangers, even if they appear to have broken down; you can always phone the Gardai.
- Never leave valuables within view.
- Park in well-lit places, preferably with lots of people around.
- Keep your car in good condition, with enough fuel for your journey. Know where you are travelling to and plan your route in advance.

Child protection

6 ADVICE FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

Community Alert is a crime prevention programme for all persons living in the community. However, it should be recognised that older persons may feel vulnerable and have increased levels of fear about crime. Community Alert seeks to support the independence of older persons living in their community and to provide assistance and support in reducing their vulnerability.

Many older persons know their communities intimately and frequently were the people who established and maintained community structures in local neighbourhoods. With changing lifestyles they are frequently the only people available to continue the active operation of Community Alert Schemes during the day when other residents are at school and work. Protecting communities is about identifying the strengths that can be utilised in operating Community Alert and older persons are well placed to contribute.

What practical steps can be taken to reduce your vulnerability?

Handling Cash

- Cash should not be held unnecessarily or hoarded in the home. Only as much cash as is necessary for immediate needs should be held.
- Cash required for immediate use should be carried in an inside pocket.
- All cash surplus to requirements should be lodged in a financial institution.
- Advice on money matters is available free of charge from financial institutions.

Securing Property

- Advice will be provided to older persons on marking and recording details of their property.
- Identification numbers of expensive items and photographs of unique and valuable items should be taken and stored safely.
- The standard property mark is initials and date of birth eg (PC240460).

Callers to the Home

- Older persons should give careful attention to callers to their homes and check out callers before they answer the door.
- No person should be admitted to the home until they are known.
- Front and rear doors should be kept locked, day and night.
- Callers to the door should be checked to see if you recognise them. If you do not recognise them look for identification and keep the door closed unless you are satisfied with their identity.
- Adequate lighting should be installed at the front and rear doors of the home for safety and security reasons.
- Door viewers, chains and limiters should be fitted to all external doors.
- Where persons are let into the home they should never be left alone.
- Money, documents or other possessions should not be parted with until the individual is satisfied that the caller is genuine.

Preventing Criminal Activities

- Offers of cheap goods, services or repairs such as painting, roofing etc., from door to door salespeople should not be entered into without checking the services with other neighbours first.
- Check the identity and contact details of door to door salespeople and workmen before agreeing to any purchase.
- Be wary of companies and individuals purporting to inform you of having won prizes etc. Do not divulge personal details or forward money until authenticity of caller is verified.
- Be conscious when answering the door if the caller has a genuine reason for being there or if they are simply distracting the person answering the door. If in doubt be firm and keep your door locked.

If you are ever in any doubt then contact An Garda Síochaná at 999 or 112

Community Alert and Elderly Residents

One of the best means of crime prevention is through good neighbours. They can keep an eye on each others property and call by to check that everything is okay. Make an enquiry with your local Garda Station and see if there is a Community Alert Scheme operating in your area. If there isn't then ask if it is possible to start one.

If there is a Community Alert Scheme operating then make sure you know the name and telephone number of the Community Alert Committee. The Garda can advice you and your neighbours of crime prevention products and practice.

An Garda Síochaná is committed to establishing and maintaining Community Alert.

At all times remember that property can be replaced so don't put your safety at risk. If you are suspicious about a situation or are the subject of a criminal incident then contact An Garda Síochaná immediately (Tel: 999 or 112).

Abuse of Elderly People

A number of high profile cases involving abuse of elderly people have come to public attention in recent times. Abuse of elderly persons is WRONG.

No one has the right to abuse an elderly person

No one has the right to permit the abuse of an elderly person

No one has the right to conceal the abuse of an elderly person

Report the abuse of elderly people to the Health Service Executive or to An Garda Síochána. (Garda Confidential number 1800 666 111).

7 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

A major issue interfering with quality of life in modern residential and urban Ireland is Anti-Social Behaviour. While it is accepted that people have a right to lead different and varying lifestyles, it is unacceptable if their lifestyle interferes with the rights and freedoms of their neighbours. It is important not to equate anti-social behaviour with youth culture.

What is anti-social behaviour?

Anti-Social behaviour is when a person acts in a way that causes or, in the circumstances, is likely to cause someone harassment, significant or persistent alarm, distress, fear or intimidation, or impairs their use or enjoyment of their property in a significant or persistent way.

It does not apply if the person acting anti-socially is from the same household as the person affected by the behaviour (Criminal Justice Act 2006 - Parts 11 and 13).

When a Garda becomes aware of anti-social behaviour which s/he thinks warrants this response, the Garda may issue a **Behaviour Warning** to the person involved. A behaviour warning lasts for 3 months. A behaviour warning can be issued verbally by a Garda and later committed to writing.

In the case of a child between the ages of 12 and 18 years of age who does not obey the warning the next step may be a good **Behaviour Contract**. If the contract is broken or if the Garda Superintendent doesn't think that it is working, s/he may reconvene a meeting and renew the contract, s/he can refer the young person to the Garda Juvenile Diversion Programme or s/he can apply to the Children's Court for a **Behaviour Order**.

In the case of a person over 18 years of age failure to obey a warning can result in an application by the Gardai to the District Court for a **Behaviour Order**.

A Superintendent can then apply to the courts by way of a civil procedure for a **Behaviour Order** prohibiting certain behaviour by a person. These behaviour order last for 2 years.

Abuse of Elderly People

A number of high profile cases involving abuse of elderly people have come to public attention in recent times. **Abuse of older persons is WRONG.**

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No one has the right to permit the abuse of an older person.

No one has the right to conceal the abuse of an older person.

Report the abuse of older people to the Health Service Executive or to An Garda Síochána. (Garda Confidential number 1800 666 111).

Enforcement

An Garda Síochána rely on criminal legislation to deal with persistent anti-social behaviour offenders. The current offence of 'Breach of the Peace' prescribed under the Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act, 1994 is utilised in many cases to arrest and prosecute offenders. There are a number of interventions appropriate to young offenders. The Garda Juvenile Diversion Programme has a legislative framework under part IV of the Children Act, 2001. The Act, inter alia, allows for an informal caution to be administered by specially trained Garda Juvenile Liaison Officers and formal cautions to be administered by Garda Superintendents. These officers can refer young offenders to GYDPs where youth work practices are engaged to elicit positive behavioural changes.

An Garda Síochána has a proactive enforcement policy in respect of people who persistently engage in anti-social behaviour to the detriment of their neighbours and the wider community. Parents and / or young people who persistently engage in anti-social behaviour must understand that they will be investigated and prosecuted where necessary. There is a range of specific criminal legislation in place that can and has been used to prosecute perpetrators including:

1. The Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act, 1994
2. The Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act, 1997
3. The Criminal Damage Act, 1991
4. The Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act, 1989

If you or your neighbours are the victim / victims of anti-social behaviour, don't suffer in silence report it to An Garda Síochána. You will be treated with courtesy, consideration, understanding and respect. Working together in partnership through Community Alert your contribution can and will make a difference. Additionally a series of Joint Policing Committee's are being established, and will run on a pilot basis in selected areas, and it is anticipated that this structure will focus on such problems allowing a greater degree of co-ordination in dealing with anti-social behaviour.

Remember An Garda Síochána has a proactive enforcement policy in respect of people who persistently engage in anti-social behaviour to the detriment of their neighbours.

8 CHILD PROTECTION ADVICE

Our children, whom we dearly love and cherish, need our constant care and protection and we must do everything in our power to ensure that they have safe and happy lives. All statutory and voluntary/community organisations providing services to children should produce a child protection policy tailored to their specific needs. The following guidelines are provided to give brief basic advice on issues of child protection. Further and more comprehensive guidelines are available on the Garda website www.garda.ie.

Children at Play

Where children are at play, they are generally beyond our immediate supervision and they should be advised that –

- They are always safer playing in groups rather than alone.
- They should not play in secluded or dark places.
- They should always tell you where they are playing and play only in that place.
- They should not involve unknown adults in their play / game.

Children in Sport

Most children are involved in some form of sporting activity and there are numerous clubs and associations that cater for their sporting needs.

The Irish Sports Council and the Sports Council for Northern Ireland have worked together to produce the publication "Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland". This publication is for the benefit of everyone involved in children's sport and to ensure that sport in the island of Ireland is as safe as possible for children. It can be downloaded from the website of the Irish Sports Council at www.irishsportsCouncil.ie.

Children with Adults

While we often talk of the dangers of strangers, many abusers are actually known to their victims. Before entrusting children into the care of adults, assure yourself that they are trustworthy and reliable. The overwhelming majority of children never come to any harm at the hands of adults. The intention here is not to instill fear but to raise awareness.

- Use recommended babysitters whenever possible.
- Be alert to danger signs, for example, their behaviour to the presence of a particular adult.
- Warn children against talking to adults they do not know.
- Children should be cautioned against going off with adults without their parent's permission, even when known to them.
- Teach your children to "**say no**" to strangers who endeavour to befriend them.

Child Safety on the Internet

The internet has become an important means for accessing information, communication, shopping and entertainment. Like adults, more and more children are using the internet – at home, in school, at friends' houses, in internet cafes and via mobile phones.

While the vast majority of children using the internet will be perfectly safe, there is also, unfortunately, material on the internet that is not suitable for children e.g. adult pornography, violence and illegal material such as child pornography. Consequently, there is a need to take sensible precautions and protect our children and families from harm.

Amongst the main dangers to children using the internet are coming across such illegal, unsuitable or offensive / pornographic material and adults who try to exploit or entrap them by making contact via the internet.

Illegal and harmful material on the internet can be reported via www.hotline.ie. This service was launched in November 1999 to provide an anonymous reporting service to members of the public who accidentally uncover child pornography on the internet. Further information can be found on the hotline website or on the website of the Internet Advisory Board at www.iab.ie.

The following points should be considered –

- The best way to ensure your child's safety is to surf the net with them. Of course, that is not always possible, so try and monitor their internet use as much as possible.
- Place the internet computer in a location that allows easy monitoring e.g. kitchen, family room etc. Internet computers should not be located in a child's bedroom. Young children should never be allowed to surf the net alone.
- Consider the use of filtering software, but understand that the use of filtering software may not block everything that you do not want your child to see.
- Discuss with your children **rules** for using the internet e.g.
 - never go on the internet without your permission,
 - never reveal or use, anywhere on the internet, their name, address, telephone numbers, passwords etc. without first discussing with you and getting your permission,
 - never stray from the public area of a chat room,
 - never reveal personal details that would allow someone make contact outside of a chat room,
 - never arrange to go alone to meet anyone they have met over the internet,
 - never reply to messages that make them feel uncomfortable or scared and always tell you if they come across any such message or material,
 - never send pictures of themselves or other family members etc. without your permission.
- Teach your children that not everything they see or hear on the internet may be true.
- Ensure that they understand that a person on-line may not necessarily be who they claim to be.
- Get to know their on-line 'friends' as you do with their school and neighbourhood friends and talk to them about these on-line 'friends'.
- Emphasise that when talking to someone in a chat room, they are talking to a stranger and not a friend.

Talk to your children and let them know they can always come to you if they come across something that makes them feel scared or uncomfortable.

9 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Introduction

Domestic Violence has, over the years, often been viewed as a "private family matter", with ninety per cent of cases involving the male as the aggressor or perpetrator of the violence. In recent times attitudes have changed dramatically; the perpetrators of domestic violence have broadened, and we have become more aware of the impact this crime has on children, family members, employees in the workplace and society in general.

The vast majority of cases coming to the notice of An Garda Síochána involve the male as the perpetrator with the female as the victim. However, there is a significant increase in males reporting violence and if you are subjected to violence of any kind, no matter who you are, you should contact the Gardai for immediate help and advice. It is the duty of Gardai to investigate fully all incidents of domestic violence, including reports of violence received from a third party.

What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic Violence, which is not defined in legislation, is best described as the physical, sexual, emotional or mental abuse of one partner by the other partner in a relationship which may or may not be one of marriage or cohabitation and includes abuse by any family member against whom a safety order or a barring order may be obtained by another family member. These people may be husband and wife, partners in a relationship, family members living together, or others living in some other partnership.

The Three Phases of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence tends to follow three phases –

- A Tension Building phase,
- An Acute Battering phase, and
- A Reconciliation phase.

It is important to remember that once violence has begun, it not only continues, but also over time increases in both frequency and severity. As the violence continues, the three-phase cycle begins to change for the worst – the tension building phase becomes shorter and more intense, the acute battering incidents become more frequent and severe and the reconciliation periods become far shorter.

If You are subjected to Domestic Violence

It is important for you to know that no one has the right to assault you and, if you suffer from domestic violence, Gardai will give you immediate protection and advice. The Gardai can also put you in contact with other organisations that can give you counselling, advice or refuge.

When reporting domestic violence, the victim should realise that the Gardai involved will no doubt have heard it all before and will not be shocked by what they are told. For female victims, a female Garda can be available to help and support you throughout your traumatic experience. Male victims should not be afraid of ridicule and will be afforded the same protection as females in domestic

violence situations. The Gardai will be in a position to advise on protection orders from the courts, and will be further able to advise on medical help or where refuge or temporary accommodation is available. In the event of children being put at risk the Gardai will have the power to remove them to a place of safety.

The Law

Domestic Violence is legislated for in the main under the following Acts:

- The Domestic Violence Act, 1996 and the Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act 2002.
- The Non Fatal Offences Against the Person Act, 1997. (This also deals with assaults and threats of assaults or to threats to kill someone – Section 10 deals with harassment under the Act).
- The Criminal Law Act, 1997.

Under the Domestic Violence Act 1996, as amended, the Court can make a number of orders to protect the applicant. Where an Order is in force, the investigating Garda will always arrest the respondent where the member has reasonable cause for believing that the Order has been contravened and a complaint has been received from or on behalf of the applicant.

Please also be aware that you do not have to have an order in force to report incidents of domestic violence to the Gardai.

The Gardai can advise you on agencies that can support and counsel you in seeking a Protection / Barring Order etc. from the District Court. If you are not married and are the subject of violence by your partner, you can still apply for Court Order to prevent further abuse.

Remember – the decision is Yours

If you have been subjected to domestic violence, you should have no hesitation at all about reporting it to the Gardai. Remember the priority is to look after YOU. A decision about applying for a Court Order comes later **and that decision is yours.**

Always get the medical attention you need after any attack and it is always best to tell the doctors and nurses exactly what happened to you. Do not make excuses to protect your abuser as this will only serve to empower your abuser and exacerbate your situation.

Victims of Crime

The Garda Charter for victims of crime has been revised to take account of current victim support expectations and new developments in our victim support services and networks. It is published in nine languages on the Garda website www.garda.ie The revised Garda Charter for victims of crime sets out the services and service delivery standards which An Garda Siochana is committed to delivering to all victims. All victims will be treated in a courteous, helpful, respectful, and professional manner by every member of An Garda Siochana.

“A victim means any person or group of people who individually or collectively, directly or indirectly, suffer harm as a result of a crime or other traumatic incident which requires a Garda response.”

Henceforth, the Gardai will refer victims of crime to the:

National Crime Victims Helpline..... 1850 211 407

Victims of crime who are tourists will be referred to the:

Irish Tourist Assistance Service (ITAS) 01-4785295

The National Family Liasion Officer..... 01-6663805

Muintir na Tíre:

presides a victim support service to older victims of crime..... 062-51163

Help Agencies

It is important to remember that help, both statutory and voluntary, is available to you and the following list, though not exhaustive, may be of assistance –

	Telephone	Website
Gardai	999 / 112	www.garda.ie
Ambulance – Fire Service	999 / 112	
Women’s Aid National Help Line	1800 341900	www.womensaid.ie
Childline	1800 666666	www.ispc.ie
Rape Crisis Network Ireland	091-563676	www.rcni.ie
Samaritans	1850 609090	
Crimestoppers	1800 250025	
National Network of Women Refuges Land Support Services	064-49049	
AMEN (for male victims)	046-9023718	
FLAC (free legal advice)	01-8745690	
Crime Victims Help Line	1850 211407	

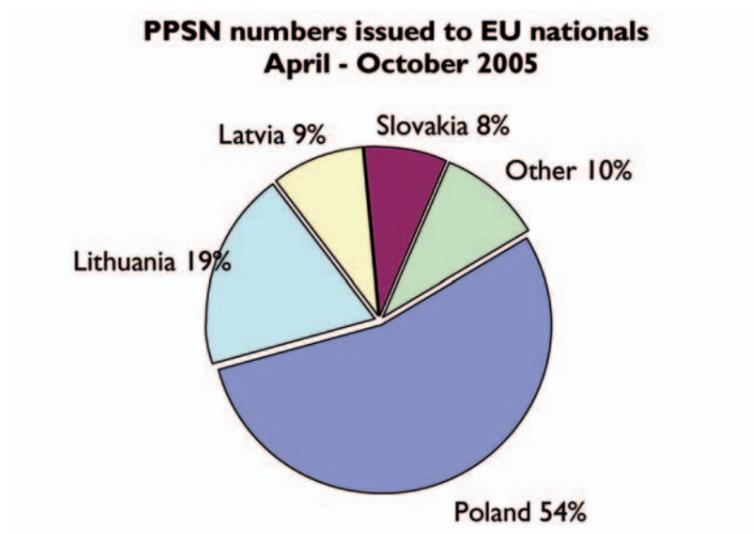
The National Steering Committee on Violence against Women has issued the National Directory, “Services for Women who have experienced violence or the threat of violence” which is available for consultation and reading at every Garda Station. It contains details of all front line support services, refuges, statutory services together with a regional listing index.

10 INTERCULTURAL IRELAND

Introduction

Recent years have seen a dramatic increase in diversity in Ireland. The 2002 Census estimates that there are a total of 240,000 people that identify their nationality as non-Irish living in Ireland, accounting for 5.8% of the overall population. According to the latest CSO population and migration estimates, covering the period to April 2005, one in ten people living in Ireland will soon be a foreign national.

With the economic success of recent years, Ireland itself changed fundamentally from being a country of net emigration to one of net inward migration.



There has been significant Inward migration from the new EU States into Ireland since May 2004. 150,000 Personal Public Service Numbers (PPSN) have been given to EU nationals in the period between May 2004 and December 2005. There is no sign of inward migration slowing down with an average of 11,000 PPSN numbers issued *monthly* in 2005, compared with an average of 7,000 in 2004. As Chart 1 indicates, four countries (Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Slovakia accounted for most of them.

Changes in the cultural and ethnic profile of a community or workplace, including visible manifestations of diversity may be something that some people may find difficult to understand and accept. It must be acknowledged that for some people such change can be a difficult process and requires a holistic approach to combating racism in all its forms and manifestations. Developing policies that promote awareness, education, understanding, respect and opportunities for interaction and equality of opportunity is absolutely imperative.

For many people from cultural and ethnic minorities, the experience of living in Ireland is by and large a positive one. However, it is also sadly the case that there have been incidents involving public insults and on occasions harassment, damage to property and assaults. These can involve incidents where racism was the main motivation factor, or as a consequence of an unrelated incident developing a racist dimension.

An Garda Síochána has a central role to play in providing protection against racism, including policing responses to racist incidents, potential cases of incitement to hatred and the more general challenges for policing in a multi ethnic society. Building on the significant progress that has been made to date, the role and capacity of the Gardai to provide protection against racism is being enhanced. The emerging interculturalism in Irish society has the capacity and potential to enrich all our communities and enhance social cohesion. Community Alert is a partnership initiative between An Garda Síochána and local communities where diversity is embraced and valued.

The information presented in this chapter will enable those involved in Community Alert to:

- Understand the concept of Racism.
- Provide the information for recording and investigating racially motivated incidents.
- Identify the principles underlying Racial and Intercultural Issues for Community Alert schemes in Ireland.
- Adhere to the general guide on the use of inclusive language when including minorities in Community Alert
- Understand the role of the Garda Ethnic Liaison Officers

Explanation of Racism

“Racism is a specific form of discrimination and exclusion faced by cultural and ethnic minorities. It is based on the false belief that some ‘races’ are inherently superior to others because of their cultural or ethnic background, different skin colour and nationality. Racism denies people their basic human rights, dignity and respect.” (Planning for Diversity The National Action Plan Against Racism 2005 – 2008)

Information on Recording and Investigating Racially Motivated Incidents

An Garda Síochána defines a racially motivated incident in the following way

“Any incident perceived to be racially motivated by:

- The victim
- A Garda
- A witness to the incident
- A person acting on behalf of the victim.”

An incident may be declassified as a racist incident on completion of the investigation if the available evidence clearly supports this course of action.

This is a working definition of a racist incident to act as a guideline for the public generally and members of An Garda Síochána.

An Garda Síochána will respond to racist incidents at the following six levels:

- Prevention
- Recording
- Prompt investigation
- Detection and prosecution
- Support for victims
- Feedback to victims on the progress of investigations and prosecutions

Principles Underlying Racial and Intercultural Issues for Community Alert Schemes in Ireland.

- Inclusion and integration of minority ethnic groups by design in community crime prevention programmes
- Social cohesion – Community Alert seeks to create an awareness of crime prevention and good neighbourliness within communities to develop an ethos of community safety in local communities.
- Equality of opportunity – The participants in Community Alert schemes have an opportunity to involve all members of the community in preventing and reducing incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Legislation – The Equal Status Act 2000/2004 sets out the nine grounds under which individuals can be discriminated against by individuals or organisations.

Finding the right words is important

Finding the right words is important. The use of inappropriate language is often unintentional, however it may cause hurt or offence to individuals and members of minority ethnic groups.

Community Alert is an ideal forum to promote awareness, interaction and mutual understanding at community level. Inclusive and sensitive language will help to ensure communities involved in Community Alert are mindful of diversity in publications, community consultations, and relationships with diverse groups. Using inclusive language will help avoid offending individuals.

Inclusive Language

We advise the following:

Minority Ethnic Groups: This terminology is widely acceptable has replaced the increasingly dated use of the term 'race', although the term 'race' continues to be used in a legal context (i.e. it is one of the grounds of discrimination under the Equality Legislation. The terms 'Black' and 'minority ethnic people' are also widely acceptable

Travellers: Terminology such as 'itinerants' or 'gypsies' is no longer acceptable. The term 'knackers' is extremely offensive and equates to abusive language that can be directed against travellers.

Black People: The use of the term 'Black people' is widely acceptable. The use of the terms 'coloured people' or 'half caste' are not and will cause offence

Role of Garda Ethnic Liaison Officers

The Garda Commissioner has appointed 145 Garda Ethnic Liaison officers to act as a point of contact for the leaders of minority ethnic groups. The liaison officer role is to inform and assure ethnic minority communities of the Garda services available to them. These officers can be contacted through the local Garda Station. Minority ethnic communities are assured of a caring, sympathetic and supportive response.

Community Alert is a partnership programme between An Garda Síochána and all communities. The programme provides an opportunity to embrace and value our diverse communities at all levels in society.

NOTE

While every effort is made to ensure that the information given in this booklet is accurate, it is not a legal document. Responsibility cannot be accepted for any liability incurred or loss suffered as a consequence of relying on any matter published herein.

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