

Schedule of Records - Garda Band

Requester Name:

File Re: FOI-000002-2020

Page No	Description of document	Deletions	Relevant Section of FOI Acts	Reason for decision	Decision Maker's decision
1	Audit Report- Garda Band 2019	Nil	N/A	N/A	Grant
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13 to 19	Appendix 2 - T eview Questionnaire	Nil	N/A	N/A	Grant
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REVIEW AUDIT REPORT



Garda Band

2019

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

This report represents the results of a review audit of the Garda Band. Garda Internal Audit Service (GIAS) carried out an audit of the Garda Band in 2018 comprising of eight visits to their premises at Garda Headquarters.

The objective of the audit was to review the effectiveness of the governance, risk management and control processes that are in place. The audit focused on the adequacy of the systems in place in terms of the utilisation of the Garda Band as a resource and the prevention of fraud.

The recommendations in this internal audit review report are designed to help the organisation achieve effective and efficient governance, risk and control processes associated with the objectives of An Garda Síochána.

1.2 Audit Opinion

Garda Internal Audit Service (GIAS) can provide **limited assurance** that the internal management and controls systems in place to manage the Garda Band are sufficient.

In relation to the specific audit review objectives;

1. We can provide **reasonable assurance** that systems are adequate to ensure that Timesheets (A85's) accurately reflect time worked, late attendance and annual / sick leave. This poses a **low risk**.
2. We can provide **reasonable assurance** that a strategy is in place for the future of the Garda Band. This poses a **low risk**.
3. We can provide **limited assurance** that there is a strong and suitable supervisory team in place that contributes to a positive work environment and enables employees to be and feel successful. This **medium risk**.
4. We can provide **limited assurance** that good management systems and processes are in place for tracking resource utilisation and make effective use of the bands resources for the objectives of the organisation. This represents **medium risk**.
5. We can provide **limited assurance** that Garda band costs are controlled, authorised and provide value for money. This represents **medium risk**.

1.4 Outstanding Priority 1 Recommendations:

1. GIAS recommends that the competition for Sergeant rank in for the Garda Band is progressed and finalised as soon as possible. The lack of supervisory Sergeant rank within the Garda Band poses a risk to the overall oversight and governance of the unit.
2. GIAS recommends that both the total annual performances and the number of performance days be used as key performance indicators for the band to highlight any emerging patterns and pro-actively prepare and allocate resources as efficiently as possible.
3. GIAS is still of the opinion that the Garda Band is more suited to sit under the Community Engagement and People Safety Bureau. Having the Garda Band in this Bureau will add value as it would promote the proactive engagement of the band with performances and workshops for disadvantaged and marginalised communities, local youth bands and schools.

We have categorised these findings by reference to the level of risk that we found to be attributed to each (See **Appendix 1** for the categorisation used).

2. Audit Report

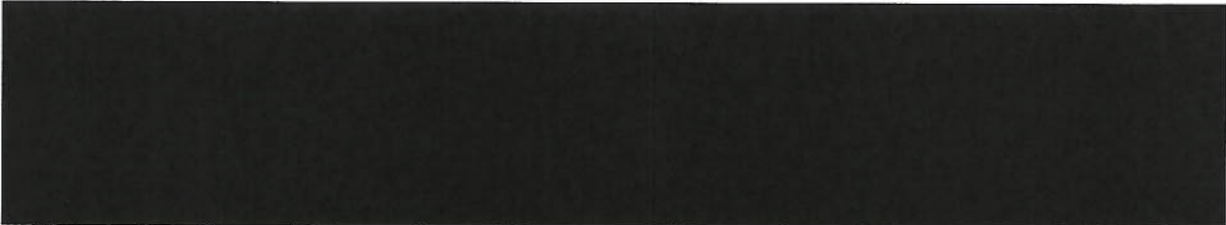
2.1 Background

The Garda Band was established shortly after the establishment of An Garda Síochána. However, in 1965 the then Minister for Justice dissolved the band.

The Commission on the Garda Síochána's report on remuneration and conditions of service¹ (Conroy Commission 1970) recommended the re-establishment of the Garda Band. This was partially on the grounds that as the previous iteration of the Garda Band's members performed policing duties in addition to their activities in the Garda Band no significant savings were made through the disbandment. The band was re-established by the Minister in July 1972, in time for celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of the force.

Prior to the abolition of the band in 1965, members devoted about half their time to ordinary police duties. Since its re-establishment, members are engaged full-time on band duty. Musicians recruited directly to the band after April 1990 are not entitled to transfer to other duties. Fully trained Garda Members can transfer in and out of the band through successful competitions.

The present band, which is a continuation of the reformed band of 1972, is a reflection of the changes that have taken place in the Garda Síochána over the last number of years. Operations are now on a national basis, with engagements extending to all parts of Ireland. The band has performed on a number of occasions in Northern Ireland, the UK and Europe. The nature of the engagements varies from official Garda functions, major sporting and music events to schools and community based initiatives.



The Acting Commissioner directed that an audit of all aspects of the allegation and work practices of the Garda Band be conducted by GIAS and GPSU in September 2017.

In June 2018 GIAS commenced an audit of the Garda Band following this correspondence. The recommendations and findings made in the audit report were reviewed approximately one year later.

¹ This was part of a process of modernising An Garda Síochána from conditions and structures that had been inherited from the RIC (see V Conway Policing Twentieth Century Ireland 2013). The Conroy Commission was established at a low point in the conditions of An Garda Síochána and in response to industrial unrest on the part of An Garda Síochána. The report itself is available at <http://opac.oireachtas.ie/AWDData/Library3/Library2/DL024380.pdf>

2.2 Review Audit Methodology and Scope

A review questionnaire was drafted, addressing the recommendations that were proposed in the Garda Band Audit report. The current state of affairs was established through the responses provided by the Acting Superintendent of the Garda Band, Director of Music. (See Appendix 2 for the questionnaire mentioned above).

HRM (Competitions Section) was consulted with regard to the Sergeant rank competition in the Garda Band.

2.3 Main Findings and Recommendations

2.3.1 Management of Attendance

Original Recommendations

Priority 1:

1. A formal instruction should issue to all Garda Band Members reminding them that when attendance is claimed and the duty is not performed, this is a breach of their responsibilities under the Code of Ethics and the Garda Code. It should include a note on the importance of maintaining accurate records of attendance as any breach is subject to Disciplinary Action. All Garda Band members should be reminded that the use of correction fluid on A85s is prohibited.
2. As the member in charge is not present at all times the 4 vacancies at sergeant rank should be filled to mitigate the risk that A85's and leave sheets are being signed and duty not being performed.
3. GIAS recommends that any further infringements should be dealt with through the disciplinary process.

Findings of Review Audit

1. Evidence was provided of instruction to Garda Band members to remind them of their pre-tour overtime responsibilities.
2. Interviews for the four Sergeant vacancies (HQ Directive 74/17) were inexplicably and indefinitely postponed in September 2018 and the matter is currently with the Policing Authority. In light of this, senior members of Garda rank have been accounting for timekeeping and leave whenever the Inspector in charge of the Garda Band is absent. While this situation is far from ideal, the Inspector is satisfied that their oversight has been conscientious and accurate. The Inspector is confident that A85s accurately reflect time worked, late attendance, annual and sick leave.
3. No further infringements came to light during the course of this review audit.

Conclusion

GIAS is confident that the Garda Band members have been sufficiently reminded of their responsibilities with regard to their A85s.

GIAS notes that the issue of promotion to Sergeant rank within the Garda Band has not been finalised, and would recommend that this competition is progressed and finalised as soon as possible. The lack of supervisory Sergeant rank within the Garda Band poses a risk to the overall oversight and governance of the unit.

GIAS notes that HQ Directive 74/17 (advertising Sergeant rank in the Garda Band) was first advertised on the 19th December 2017 with the competition ceasing on the 31st December 2018. As of July 2019 GIAS believes that interviews have not yet taken place.

2.3.2 Utilisation

Original Recommendations:

Priority 2:

It is advised that the Garda Band are utilised in full by An Garda Síochána. This will enhance the member's confidence and increase their profile in the organisation. It is recommended that the Band, when at full capacity, increase community engagement type activities.

Given the Garda Band's role within the organisation includes projecting the friendly face of An Garda Síochána to the public, consideration could be given to proactively engaging the band with performances for disadvantaged and marginalised communities and local youth bands and schools.

Findings of review audit

The Garda Band is still not at full capacity with no progress made in relation to the supervisory roles advertised in December 2017.

Although the Band remains to have supervisory vacancies it continues to spend time working with marginalised and disadvantaged communities. These include performances for DEIS schools, TAG programmes (teenagers and Gardaí), senior citizens, recovering drug addicts, immigrants, inner city and other disadvantaged areas.

Conclusion

GIAS is satisfied from the Management Response that the Garda Band is proactively involved in engaging with marginalised and disadvantaged communities.

2.3.3 Staffing / Workforce Planning

Original Recommendations:

Priority 1:

1. A strategy should be put in place that embeds the Garda Band into the future of An Garda Síochána. This should include a plan for recruitment, supervision and utilisation from a community relations point of view.
2. Consideration should be given to converting the Garda Band to a full civilianised band.
3. A review of the Bands working hours and terms and conditions should take place as they are not an operational unit. Garda Band members require certainty of the days they work in order to plan around their families. Steps should be taken to agree new terms and conditions with existing members where possible.

Priority 3:

Garda Band members should be provided with greater advance notice of when they will be working where possible.

Findings of review audit

As far as GIAS and the Director of Music in AGS are aware there is no tangible evidence of a potential strategy for the Garda Band.

Although the Director of Music supports this recommendation GIAS found that there has been no progress made to allow Garda Staff to perform in the Garda Band.

In response to the Garda Band output recommendation, the Band carried out an examination of the bands output and measured its improvement against the 2018 figures described in the original audit report. The examination of the band's output for the same 168-day period in 2019 reported that the 84 performance days accounted for 70% of all duty days (120), representing an increase of 40% on the output.

GIAS was notified that from the 30th August 2019 Garda Band Members will be issued their rosters 38 days in advance rather than 10 days. This is as a result of reviewing the notice periods with which external stakeholders request the services of the Band.

Conclusion

Again, GIAS recommends that a strategy be put in place that embeds the Garda Band into the future of An Garda Síochána. This should include a plan for recruitment, supervision and utilisation from a community relations point of view.

Again, GIAS recommends that consideration is taken, feasibility investigated and a decision made in relation to converting the Garda Band to a full civilianised band.

GIAS agrees that the band's output has improved and that this level of performance output can change depending on the type of engagement and rehearsal required.

GIAS recommends that both the total annual performances and the number of performance days be used as key performance indicators for the band to highlight any emerging patterns.

GIAS is satisfied that the members of the Band will be given sufficient notice of rosters to allow for a sustainable work-life balance.

2.3.4 Supervision

Original Recommendations:

Priority 1:

1. Consideration should be given to changing the reporting structure of the Garda Band. It is recommended that responsibility for the accountability of the Garda Band should be moved to the Community Relations Bureau to ensure the proactive engagement of the band with performances and workshops for disadvantaged and marginalised communities and local youth bands and schools. This will give the opportunity for senior management in the Community Relations Bureau to set the tone regarding the importance of internal controls including expected standards of conduct.
2. Management within the Band are required to reinforce these expectations. It is recommended that the supervisory positions that are currently vacant in the Garda Band are filled in the near future to ensure the adequate application of the internal controls and expected standards of conduct.

Priority 3:

Personal email addresses on the Garda HQ contact database need to be replaced with Garda email addresses.

Findings of Review Audit

The Garda Band continues to report to the Commissioner's Office.

The Garda Band is working with what little supervision it has but by appointing supervisors to the vacant roles this will ensure that there is sufficient management in place and that there is adequate application of internal controls and expected standards of conduct.

No more further incidents of personal emails being used for work related activities have been discovered since the audit took place in June 2018.

Conclusion

GIAS is still of the opinion that the Garda Band is more suited to sit under the Community Engagement and People Safety Bureau. GIAS's recommendation to amend the reporting structure remains.

Having the Garda Band in the Community Engagement and People Safety Bureau appears to be more appropriate / a better fit. This will add value as it would promote the proactive engagement of the band with performances within the community (e.g. workshops for disadvantaged and marginalised communities, local youth bands, schools, events at Croke Park, AVIVA and other major community events).

GIAS recommends that the above is seriously considered. GIAS notes that the governance and organisational structure of An Garda Síochána is being fully reviewed as per the recommendations of *'The Commission of the Future of Policing in Ireland'*, same being implemented by *'A Policing Service for the Future'*.

GIAS again, recommend that the supervisory roles are filled as soon as possible to ensure adequate management and governance of the Band.

GIAS is satisfied that personal email addresses are no longer being used by members of the Garda Band.

2.3.5 Garda Band Costs

Original Recommendations:

Priority 3:

A dedicated budget should be put in place as part of any strategy and multi-annual budget. This budget should be reviewed regularly by Garda Band management for submission to the Executive Director of Finance & Services.

1. The budget review should contain a current year forecast, a budget for the next year, and preliminary budgets for the following two years.
2. It should detail any expected non-public duty income.
3. A forecast of expected expenditure should also be provided.
4. Any variances from forecasted income and expenditure to actual income and expenditure should be explained.

Findings of Review Audit

At the time this review audit took place these recommendations were not implemented and no evidence was found to show any progress of same.

Conclusion

GIAS recommends that the dedicated budget as recommended in the original audit report is put into effect to ensure that there are financial controls in place for the Band.

3. Overall Conclusion

There are several recommendations that remain outstanding with the vacancies of the supervisory roles being of the upmost priority. In the absence of supervision band members can injure themselves in the workplace, leave the organisation for the private sector which may result in job dissatisfaction for those that choose to remain, high absenteeism, employee conflict and the opportunity for fraud to occur. Good supervision prevents problems, mistakes, accidents and injuries.

In order for these positions to be filled a strategy for the unit needs to be drawn up to allocate sufficient and necessary resources to the Band. This strategy should also address civilianisation within the Band and reporting to the Community Engagement and People Safety Bureau.

4. Acknowledgement

Garda Internal Audit Section would like to express our gratitude to Inspector Kenny and all the staff of the Garda Band for their courtesy, co-operation and assistance during the course of this audit.

Niall Kelly

Head of Internal Audit
Date: 08/10/19

APPENDIX 1 - Categorisation of Audit Findings

The findings in this report have been categorised using a formalised risk assessment process as follows;

High Risk:

Where both the impact of the risk on the operations of the Division and the likelihood of occurrence is considered to be high.

A high number of control deficiencies or business issues where the potential financial, operational or reputation risk exposure to An Garda Síochána is significant and management should address these issues immediately.

Medium Risk

Where either the impact of the risk on the operations of the Division or the likelihood of occurrence is considered to be medium or high.

Represents an assessment of an adequate control environment that broadly supports management's objectives but has further opportunities for development.

Low Risk:

Where both the impact of the risk on the operations of the Division and the likelihood of occurrence is considered to be low.

Represents an assessment of a control environment that is satisfactory and supports meeting management's objectives.

APPENDIX 2 – Review Questionnaire

Review Questionnaire of Garda Band Audit completed in 2018 (Part I)

Below is a questionnaire to establish if all/some of these recommendations have been implemented.

Recommendation 1 & 2 & 3 – Timesheets & Supervision

Timesheets (A85's) should accurately reflect time worked, late attendance and annual / sick leave.

A formal instruction should issue to all Garda Band Members reminding them that when attendance is claimed and the duty is not performed, this is a breach of their responsibilities under the Code of Ethics and the Garda Code. It should include a note on the importance of maintaining accurate records of attendance as any breach is subject to Disciplinary Action.

All Garda Band members should be reminded that the use of correction fluid on A85s is prohibited

There are serious concerns in terms of the controls in place for the recording of absences and attendance in the Garda Band. Members should be reminded of the importance of maintaining accurate records of attendance.

Supervisory positions should be put in place as soon as possible to mitigate the risk that A85's and leave sheets are being signed and duty not being performed.

Q 1.1 Is the Acting Superintendent satisfied that A85's now accurately reflect, time worked late attendance and annual/sick leave? Have supervisory posts been filled to ensure controls are in place for the recording of absences and attendance in the Garda Band. Members?

Interviews for the four sergeant vacancies were inexplicably and indefinitely postponed in September 2018 and the matter is currently with the Policing Authority. In light of this, senior members of garda rank have been accounting for timekeeping and leave whenever I am absent. While this situation is far from ideal, I am satisfied that their oversight has been conscientious and accurate. I am therefore confident that this unit's A85s accurately reflect time worked, late attendance and annual and sick leave.

Q 1.2 Has the Acting Superintendent issued a formal instruction to Garda Band Members reminding them that when attendance is claimed and duty is not performed, it is a breach of their responsibilities under the Code of Ethics and Garda Code, noting the importance of maintaining accurate records of attendance as any breach is subject to Disciplinary Action? Can you provide evidence of any instruction that was sent out in relation to this?

The attached circular was distributed by me on 7 November 2018 to each member individually. I also addressed the contents therein at a meeting of band members. Additionally, the following text has been added to the foot of all rosters issued to Garda Band members since 18 January 2019:

All members must parade 15 minutes before roster time to claim the pre-tour overtime

I attach copies of both above referenced documents.

Q 1.3 Has the Acting Superintendent reminded Garda Band Members that the use of correction fluid prohibited and if so, has this practice ceased? Can you provide evidence of any instruction that was sent out in relation to this?

The above referenced circular (Q.1.2) also covers the issue of correction fluid on A85s.

Recommendation 4 – Value for Money

For the rosters examined it is apparent the Garda Band spend 50% of their rostered duty in a performance or community relations function. This is not value for money and efforts should be made to increase public duty performed and less time should be spent in the Band Room. At this point in time GIAS are of the view that it would not be cost effective from a community relations point of view to disband the Garda Band.

Q 4.1 Is the Acting Superintendent satisfied that Public Duty performances has increased? If there has not been an increase in Public Duty performed can the Divisional Officer explain as to why this has not increased?

Examination of the band's output for the same 168-day period in 2019 as that audited in 2018, shows that performance days (84) accounted for 70% of all duty days (120). This represents an increase of 40% on the output reported in 2018 audit period (50%). However, it should be noted that this level of performance output can change depending on the type of engagement and rehearsal required.

Recommendation 5 – Reporting Structure

The reporting structure of the Garda Band should be reviewed.

Due to the Community Relations role the band plays it would be beneficial to have the band report to the Community Relations Bureau instead of the Commissioner's Office where it will be low priority.

Management response:

The position of Director of Music entails a management and leadership role, rather than a supervisory one. This is recognised in all professional ensembles.

I disagree with the reasons advanced for having the Garda Band report to community relations and to the author's assertion that the band is given low priority by the Commissioner's Office. As mentioned, proactive engagement of the band with the activities suggested already takes place and in any case, would not be conditional upon the band reporting to one section over another. While reporting to the Commissioner's Office, the band has always been most accommodating with requests from all sections of the organisation, especially Community Relations

Q 5.1 Has the reporting structure been reviewed?

It remains my considered opinion that the Commissioner's Office is the appropriate section to which the Garda Band should report. While the Garda Band has always supported the Community Relations section in their excellent community relations events, I do not believe there is any particular benefit in the band reporting there. More requests for the band are made through the Commissioner's Office than through Community Relations. Appearances by the Garda Band have always been by permission of the Garda Commissioner and it is most fitting that it should remain within the direct ambit of his or her office. However, I believe that this is ultimately a decision best left to the Garda Commissioner.

Review Questionnaire of Garda Band Audit completed in 2018 (Part II)

Below is a questionnaire to establish if all/some of these recommendations have been implemented.

Priority 1: Recommendation 1, 2 (Future of the Garda Band)

4. A strategy should be put in place that embeds the Garda Band into the future of An Garda Síochána. This should include a plan for recruitment, supervision and utilisation from a community relations point of view.
5. Consideration should be given to converting the Garda Band to a full-civilianised band.

Management Response

In my view, the Garda Band has always been integral to An Garda Síochána and I believe that continuing thus into the future will be of considerable benefit both to the organisation and the state. Clearly, recruitment and the filling of supervisory vacancies is an urgent concern. The current utilisation of the band, which has always been heavily geared towards community relations, can be greatly enhanced once these HR deficiencies are rectified.

The appointment of civilian instrumentalists to the band is the most appropriate means of filling vacancies. However, securing the identity of the band as a Garda band, staffed by Garda members both sworn and unsworn, all wearing Garda uniform, is absolutely essential to our community relations impact. I believe that with imagination and ingenuity, civilianisation can be successfully introduced without changing the essential character and identity of the Garda Band. I recommend that this be approached carefully and in accordance with the recommendations set out in the recruitment business case, which I submitted to the Commissioner's office in July 2018.

Q. 1 Is there a strategy in place committing to the growth of the Garda Band?

Answer:

Despite several appeals by me to HRM, both for the restarting of the garda-to-sergeant promotion competition and for recruitment of Garda staff, there is no tangible evidence of a strategy for the growth of the Garda Band.

Due to the unique nature of the Garda Band among HQ sections, civilian appointments imply certain complications, which have not arisen in the civilianisation of other units, not least its publicly uniformed nature. While I am aware that HRM have given some consideration to the mechanics of recruitment of Garda staff with these complications in mind, I understand they have not yet arrived at a detailed plan. It remains my view that with imagination and ingenuity, civilianisation can be successfully introduced without changing the essential character and identity of the Garda Band.

Q. 2 Are there any competitions taking place to recruit band members?

Answer:

No recruitment competition is currently in place.

Q. 3 Has the recommendation of considering Garda Staff to fill vacancies in the Garda Band progressed since the audit report was published in 2018?

Answer:

While I understand some exploratory work has been done by HRM, no practical progress can be reported.

Priority 2: Recommendation 1, 2, 3, 4 (Work-Life balance)

1. A review of the Bands working hours and terms and conditions should take place, as they are not an operational unit. Garda Band members require certainty of the days they work in order to plan around their families. Steps should be taken to agree new terms and conditions with existing members where possible.

2. It is advised that the Garda Band be utilised in full by An Garda Síochána. This will enhance the member's confidence and increase their profile in the organisation. It is recommended that the Band, when at full capacity, increase community engagement type activities.
3. Given the Garda Band's role within the organisation includes projecting the friendly face of An Garda Síochána to the public, consideration could be given to proactively engaging the band with performances for disadvantaged and marginalised communities and local youth bands and schools.
4. Garda Band members should be provided with greater advance notice of when they will be working where possible.

Management response

Predictability of duty tours in the medium to long range must be balanced against flexibility requirements. As with any ensemble, the varied requests for the band entail varied times and days of the week, many of which are deemed unsociable. To deliver value, any ensemble must stand ready to meet these requests within a reasonable notice period, which unavoidably implies less predictability than that enjoyed by operational colleagues. Moreover, certain engagements, mainly for the state, can arise at short notice and the band is compelled to complete these if possible, either through a roster change (outside of 14 days) or compulsory overtime. The band is by no means unique among Garda units in this regard.

Work-life balance among band members has been enhanced somewhat with the application of the European Working Time Agreement. However, I believe significant improvements can be made by issuing rosters and/or fixing rest weekends further in advance than heretofore. I will explore these options in consultation with band members.

I am in complete agreement that the Garda Band should be utilised to the full extent allowed by its strength, but only with due regard for sufficient rehearsal and while allowing for the seasonal ebb and flow of demand. I as Acting Superintendent intend to measure total annual performances rather than performance days and to set a level that allows adequate rehearsal time throughout the year.

Performances for disadvantaged and marginalised communities have always been core to the band's output and in 2017, represented over 30% of engagements. These include performances for DEIS schools, TAG programmes (teenagers and Gardai), senior citizens, recovering drug addicts, immigrants, inner city and other disadvantaged areas. Many of these events are organised in conjunction with local Community Policing personnel. During the academic year, schools already account for a significant proportion of output (72 performances over 26 days in 2017) and are mostly initiated by the director of music and his staff. It should be noted that throughout the year, the band performs with youth bands throughout the country, some from disadvantaged areas. These events have always proved very successful as they have the added advantage of musical experience for the young people involved.

Predictability of duty tours in the medium to long range must be balanced against flexibility requirements. As with any ensemble, the varied requests for the band entail varied times and days of the week, many of which are deemed unsociable. To deliver value, any ensemble must stand ready to meet these requests within a reasonable notice period, which unavoidably implies less predictability than that enjoyed by operational colleagues. Moreover, certain engagements, mainly for the state, can arise at short notice and the band is compelled to complete these if possible, through either a roster change (outside of 14 days) or compulsory overtime. The band is by no means unique among Garda units in this regard.

Work-life balance among band members has been enhanced somewhat with the application of the European Working Time Agreement. However, I believe significant improvements can be made by issuing rosters and/or fixing rest weekends further in advance than heretofore. I will explore these options in consultation with band members.

Q. 4 Has there been any improvements made to help improve the Garda band member's work life balance since the audit report was published in 2018? E.g. issuing rosters and/or fixing rest weekends further in advance

Answer:

Following a recent review of the required notice periods with which external stakeholders request the services of the band, I believe it is now possible to issue rosters 38 days in advance of commencement, rather than the current 10 days, without negatively affecting productivity. This is naturally subject to the ability of managers to change rostered duty days with 14 days notice without the use of overtime as per the Garda Code. This will be implemented on 30 August 2019, the due date of the next roster.

Priority 3: Recommendation 1 (Communication)

Personal email addresses on the Garda HQ contact database need to be replaced with Garda email addresses.

Management response

Although a single e-mail from a unit of 26 suggested that the band is deficient in this regard, I do not share this view and I do not believe that it is widely held among band members. However, with the required human resources investment in the band, there is wide scope for enhancing these activities.

It is regrettable that one member failed to cooperate with the GIAS audit but I feel this too is a symptom of the lack of supervision over such a long period.

One member was found to have used a personal e-mail address in the Garda HQ contacts database. This has now been corrected and members have been reminded of their obligations in this regard via the attached circular.

Q. 5 Has there been anymore incidents of personal emails being used as a point of contact in AGS?

Answer:

No records in the Garda HQ Contacts Database, where the "place of work" field is set to "Garda Band", contain any e-mail addresses outside of the garda.ie domain.

Priority 3: Recommendation 2 (Budgeting and accounting)

A dedicated budget should be put in place as part of any strategy and multi-annual budget. Garda Band management for submission to the Executive Director of Finance & Services should review this budget regularly.

5. The budget review should contain a current year forecast, a budget for the next year, and preliminary budgets for the following two years.

6. It should detail any expected non-public duty income.
7. A forecast of expected expenditure should also be provided.
8. Any variances from forecasted income and expenditure to actual income and expenditure should be explained.

Management response

I agree with the author's assessment of the approach heretofore taken towards funding of the band's running expenses. Prior to the financial crash, the band was adequately funded. Over recent years, the band has operated under a small, fixed budget, which is often not officially allocated until well into the year. This funding lack has led to end-of-life instruments being repaired, and replacement cases being purchased, often at considerable cost. Some members have resorted to purchasing instruments from their own funds, rather than persevere with their allocated instrument. It should be noted that in spite of these difficulties, the Director of Music has kept within budgets allocated.

Current funding levels should clearly be increased to a level more appropriate to the proper equipping of the band. Additionally, recruitment of new members will necessitate a commensurate increase in capital budgeting.

In advance of a structured budgeting system being put in place, I recommend that instrument and equipment deficiencies, which have built up over the years, be addressed with an immediate, once-off funding allocation.

The author's recommendations regarding structured budgeting and accounting thereof are well reasoned and I agree that they should be put into effect.

Q. 6 Have the recommendations regarding the structured budgeting and accounting been taken into effect?

Answer:

The above recommendations have not been put into effect.

Pat Kenny A/Supt
Director of Music