

## Communications Strategy

The Policing Authority has a statutory role to promote public awareness of matters relating to policing services. It has also committed in its Statement of Strategy to improving public awareness of policing matters. It will do this by proactively communicating the Authority's functions and decisions as well as engaging and encouraging interaction with its broad range of stakeholders, through a variety of means.

The purpose of this document is to set out both the Authority's communications objectives and what underpins the organisation's approach to communications. It also identifies the Authority's stakeholders and sets out the organisational roles and responsibilities with regard to the implementation of the strategy. This Strategy will be given effect by the underlying specific activities and commitments set out in the Annual Corporate priorities.

### Objectives

The Authority's communications strategy has the following key objectives:

1. To generate awareness and enhance public understanding of the role, functions, responsibilities and work of the Authority;
2. To communicate clearly to facilitate effective engagement with the public, our stakeholders and the media; and
3. To promote public awareness of matters relating to policing services, to include the performance of the Garda Síochána.

### Approach to external communications

The Strategy recognises that all events organised and attended by the Authority are communications opportunities. In undertaking any communications activity the Policing Authority will be guided by its strategic values, all of which underpin its work, but two of which are of particular relevance to this strategy.

The value of 'Transparency' informs the Authority's approach to its communications activities. The Authority will:

- Make as much information and documentation as possible publicly available to highlight and increase knowledge of its work and public understanding of its role. This includes the minutes of its meetings, which will be available on our website and Twitter feed, and the recordings of public meetings, which will be available on Youtube.;
- Conduct a minimum of four of its meetings with the Garda Commissioner in public each year. These meetings are open to the public to attend and streamed live online. These public meetings are a consistent opportunity for all stakeholders to observe elements of the Authority's oversight work.
- Issue public statements on the outcomes of its oversight activities as and when appropriate. Statements will be available on our website and through our Twitter feed;
- Publish any relevant research or reports undertaken or commissioned that inform its work;
- Aim to provide its material in a manner that is accessible. All relevant documentation and reports will be available on our website and through our Twitter feed.

'Listening' is one of the Authority's strategic values. The Authority is motivated by the public interest and values the views of the public and all of its stakeholders. The Authority will, on an ongoing basis, create opportunities to listen through a range of activities and attend events hosted by our stakeholders that will raise the profile of the Policing Authority and promote our strategic values and oversight role to the public. These include:

- engagement with individual stakeholders groups in relation to specific Authority functions, for example the establishment of performance targets for the Garda Síochána;
- Consultation processes to elicit the views of its stakeholders, for example with Joint Policing Committees in the determination of the Policing Priorities;
- Meeting with specific stakeholders that hold data or experience that can complement the information available to the Authority and further enhance its ability to assess the performance of the Garda Síochána; and
- Provide opportunities to the media to seek clarification and information through interviews and briefings, when necessary and/or appropriate, to inform public commentary and analysis.

The Authority will incrementally enhance its social media presence and aim to ensure that the Policing Authority brand is associated with its values as set out in its Statement of Strategy. This will be achieved through the strategic use of branding across all events, publications, and presentations.

## Roles and Responsibilities

As part of its approval of the development of its Annual Corporate priorities, the Authority will agree on key communications and engagement activities planned for the year with corresponding performance indicators.

The Authority's Press Office is the key point of contact for media enquiries. In dealing with communications queries, the Authority will respond in as timely and comprehensive manner as possible. The Press Office will also commit to monitoring relevant media across print, radio, television and social media.

It is the responsibility of the Authority's Communications team to recognise that any events organised or attended by the Authority are branding opportunities and to maximise the communications opportunities. The Authority Chairperson and Chief Executive are the spokespeople for the Authority and they will oversee the issuing of press statements and releases.

## Stakeholders / Audiences

The Authority has a diverse range of stakeholders and audiences, which include:

The general public	Public understanding of the Authority's role and the outcomes of its work is important. It contributes to public awareness of policing matters and public confidence in the Garda Síochána
The Garda Síochána	It is important that the Garda Síochána understands the Authority's role and functions. The Authority seeks to communicate its approach to oversight in a way that creates clear expectations and that is consistent and transparent.
Journalists and the Media	The media plays an important role in presenting commentary and analysis to the public on issues pertinent to the role and function of the Authority and as such is an important conduit by which the Authority communicates to the public
The Department of Justice and Equality	The Department of Justice and Equality is an important stakeholder in terms of the Authority's accountability for its oversight role. The Authority also has a number of statutory roles – for example in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>informing the Minister of matters relevant to the accountability of the Government to the Houses of the Oireachtas;</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• keeping the Minister informed of developments in respect of matters relating to policing services and making recommendations to assist the Minister in coordinating and developing policy in that regard;</li> <li>• providing information and advice to the Minister with regard to matters relating to policing services; and</li> <li>• Providing advice to the Minister with regard to best policing practice.</li> </ul>
The Oireachtas and the wider political sector	The Oireachtas and the wider political sector are important stakeholders in terms of representing citizens and in relation to the Authority's accountability. The Authority also seeks to be influential in communicating on the future of policing and in highlighting the need for change in legislation, where it believes it is needed.
Other statutory and representative bodies	There are a range of statutory and representative bodies whose roles and functions intersect with the Authority or with whom sharing knowledge and exchanging views is important.
Civil Society	Policing performance impacts on all areas of society and as such the Authority's work is of relevance to groups and organisations which represent the breadth of Irish society. The Authority's engagement with NGOs and organisations is an activity that informs its work and will continue to develop over time.