



AN TÚDARÁS PÓILÍNEACHTA
POLICING AUTHORITY

Minutes of Meeting of the Policing Authority

Date: 30 January 2025

Venue: The Richmond Education Centre

Part A – Authority Meeting

Attendance

Authority: Elaine Byrne (Chairperson), Deborah Donnelly, Paul Mageean, Donal de Buitléir, Anthony Harbinson.

Secretary: Aoife Clabby

Staff of the Authority: Helen Hall (Chief Executive), Margaret Tumelty, Karen Shelly, Shona Keeshan, Sophia Carey (item 8).

Garda Inspectorate Mark Toland (Chief Inspector) (items 4-12).

1. Meeting of Members in Private

The Authority exercised its option to have a meeting in private with the Chief Executive and Secretary in attendance.

2. Chairperson's Opening Remarks

The meeting agenda was approved, as drafted.

The Chairperson noted that the meeting would be the first meeting in public since September 2024, providing a welcome opportunity to engage with the Commissioner in public on a range of oversight matters.

The Chairperson declared a potential conflict of interest concerning a file that had been sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions in relation to the Moriarty Tribunal. Members agreed that in the unlikely event of the matter being raised for discussion by the Garda Commissioner, the briefing would be taken by the Chief Executive. In the context of the Chairperson's declaration of interest and the current number of Authority Members, matters relating to the quorum in the context of the legislative provisions, as set out in the Garda Síochána Act 2005, as amended, were discussed. It was agreed that clarity would be sought in relation to a query raised.

Members were provided with an overview of matters discussed at a recent meeting with the Commissioner, noting minor changes to the agenda arising from the engagement. Members were also updated on a number of recent discipline cases which had been the subject of media reportage. Members discussed the cultural challenge for the Garda Síochána where some senior Garda members were not taking behavioural standards as seriously as would be expected by the Commissioner or the Authority. This was in the context of a 2023 High Court case where proposals had been made by senior Garda members to retain a convicted drink driver in the organisation.

Members were advised that the Chief Information Officer of the Garda Síochána would be leaving the organisation at the end of February. Members noted the significant contribution of the Chief Information Officer to delivery of the Garda Síochána's Data and Technology vision and briefly discussed how the upcoming vacancy might be managed by the Garda Síochána.

The Chairperson highlighted a series of engagements which she and the Chief Executive had with a range of policing oversight and inspection agencies in Northern Ireland, noting the value of creating and maintaining connections with other oversight bodies.

Members considered a number of pieces of correspondence including:

- A letter to the Commissioner, seeking clarity on his intended approach to the submission of a three-year review of the efficiency and effectiveness of the management and deployment of resources available to the Garda Síochána for policing services, further to section 23 of the Act, for the period 2022-2024. Members noted that the previous iteration of the Report, covering the period 2019-2021 had not addressed the statutory requirements. As a consequence, that document had not been forwarded by the Authority to the Minister for Justice and no updated document had been received from the Commissioner. Members noted the Authority's statutory responsibility in relation to the submission of the report to the Minister. However, Members were also mindful of the impending commencement of the PSCS Act and the value of submitting such a report at this juncture. Following discussion, it was agreed that the matter would be raised with the Commissioner by the Chief Executive and that a letter would issue to the Minister for Justice, as appropriate.
- Letter of congratulations from the Chairperson to the new Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, Mr Jim O'Callaghan T.D. Members noted that contact had been made with the Minister's office to seek a meeting at an early date.
- Correspondence from the Department of Justice on the status of the consent of the Minister to the extension of the existing Policing Priorities and Policing Plan into 2025. The Authority noted that the Department did not propose to submit either revised document for Ministerial approval or consent. Members expressed concern that the proposed approach might not align with the statutory requirements as set out in the Garda Síochána Act 2005. It was agreed that correspondence would issue to the Department of Justice, highlighting the Authority's concerns and requesting Ministerial consent and approval for the Priorities and Policing Plan.
- Correspondence in relation to recent attacks in Limerick.
It was noted that the matters raised in the correspondence were already planned to be the subject of discussion with the Commissioner in both Part B and Part C of the meeting.

Members discussed proposed dates for meetings in public with the Commissioner in the context of his availability and the statutory requirements in respect of public meetings. The challenges of ensuring a quorum for meetings given the Authority's reduced membership was acknowledged. Following discussion around the Commissioner's and Members' availability in March and April, it was agreed that the next meeting in public would take place on Tuesday 29 April.

The Chairperson reminded Members of the deadline for completion of disclosure of registrable interests for 2024 under the Ethics in Public Office Act 1995 and of Members' statutory obligations in this regard.

Members extended congratulations to Ms Karen Shelley on her recent appointment to the position of Director of Community Outreach and Engagement.

No.	Action point	By Date	By Whom
A_146_01	Liaise with the Commissioner and the Department of Justice, as appropriate, regarding the statutory three-year review report for period 2022-2024.	ASAP	Chief Executive
A_146_02	Seek legal advice on matters relating to the quorum in the context of legislative provisions, as set out in the Garda Síochána Act 2005.	ASAP	Chief Executive
A_146_03	Return statements for disclosure of registrable interests for 2024 to the Authority Secretary and SIPO, as appropriate.	ASAP	Authority Members
A_146_04	Write to Department of Justice to convey Authority concerns regarding the proposed approach to approving the extension of the Policing Priorities and Policing Plan into 2025.	ASAP	Authority Secretary

3. Consent Agenda Items

3.1. Minutes of Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meetings held on 28 November and 19 December were approved and cleared for publication.

3.2. Policing Authority and Garda Síochána Actions Logs

The Log of Actions was noted and proposals to specified actions were approved.

Members considered the action relating to the definition of a 'critical incident', noting that the recently received Event, Public Order and Public Safety Policy and Procedures provided the requisite clarity which the Authority had been seeking throughout 2024. Member were therefore satisfied to close the associated action.

Members discussed material received from the Garda Síochána providing an overview of processes and assurance mechanisms in place to manage and monitor juvenile diversions and adult cautions. Members agreed that the action could be closed. However, it was noted that matters relating to

juvenile diversion and adult caution would be considered at a future meeting of the Policing, Strategy and Performance Committee.

Members noted that one of the outstanding actions, relating to the independent advice of the Human Rights advisor in relation to the use of anti-spit hoods by the Garda Síochána was for consideration and decision under item 4, Chief Executive's Report.

4. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive's report was taken as read and further updates were provided to Members on a number of matters in the context of the report, including in relation to:

Statement from the CSO on the backlog of Section 19 referrals within the Garda National Economic Crime Bureau (GNECB): Members noted that following the emergence of the matter relating to the backlog of section 19 referrals within the Garda National Economic Crime Bureau (GNECB), the Central Statistics Office (CSO) had postponed the scheduled 19 December release of the Recorded Crime Statistics for Q3 2024, until 'early 2025'. A CSO advisory note was published on 19 December in place of the Recorded Crime Statistics. Members noted that economic crime and section 19 referrals would be addressed with the Commissioner in Part C of the meeting.

Audit and Risk Committee of the Garda Síochána: The Chief Executive referred to the notification received on 13 December 2024 from the Chairperson of the Garda Síochána Audit Committee, Professor Niamh Brennan, to advise that the Committee had held its last meeting in November 2024 and was standing down, with effect from 31 December 2024. This decision had been taken in light of the impending commencement of the new legislation and the forthcoming establishment of the Garda Síochána Board and a new audit framework. The Chief Executive advised that she had since spoken with Professor Brennan and that Committee members were not seeking any extension by the Authority to their terms of office, despite the delay in the commencement. Members noted the great strides made by the Garda Audit Committee under the stewardship of Professor Brennan. It was agreed that letters of thanks would issue to the Chairperson and Committee members, acknowledging their service and commitment.

Members then considered the statutory function for the Authority to appoint members of the Garda Síochána Audit Committee and to designate a Chairperson from among its membership. The risks arising from the absence of a functioning Committee, in the context of any further delays to commencement were considered. Members discussed whether any interim measures could be taken to mitigate the risks posed, in particular having regard to the transition provisions contained in the PSCS Act, that might allow for continuity in respect of a functioning audit Committee. It was agreed that the matter would be tabled for further consideration at the 27 February meeting.

What We Heard Report – Debrief with the Garda Síochána: Members were advised that a meeting had taken place on 20 December with Deputy Commissioner Security, Strategy and Governance and a number of the Assistant Commissioners to provide feedback on the Authority's engagements with organisations and groups from Dublin's north east inner city, which informed the What We Heard Report, published in April 2023. The meeting was described as positive and constructive and Members noted there had been a wide-ranging discussion regarding the types of negative interactions and instances of poor behaviour by some Garda members highlighted by the groups and

organisations in the north-east inner city. The Chief Executive advised that Garda representatives had requested that consideration be given to how high-level, anonymous information that the Authority becomes aware of could aid the Garda Síochána in investigating potential criminal behaviour by Garda members. The Chief Executive also advised that there had been a useful discussion in relation to the types of information provided to the Authority for the purposes or oversight, in addition to the nature of engagement between the Members and senior Garda representatives at meetings, in private and in public. Members noted that a meeting would be scheduled early in 2025 to give consideration to information reporting arrangements, in light of the forthcoming legislative changes.

Garda Resources: The Chief Executive provided Members with an update on a recent meeting of the Joint Working Group on Garda Resources (JRWG) held on 17 January. Members were advised that the Department of Justice had completed a review of the purpose and membership of the JRWG in December 2024 and had proposed to cease the JRWG after the 17 January meeting. It was noted that the revised group, 'the Garda Budgetary Oversight and Resources Group' once established, will not include the Policing and Community Safety Authority (PCSA) among its membership. Members considered the purpose of the Garda Budgetary Oversight and Resources Group in the context of the new statutory provisions, in particular having regard to the functions of the future Garda Board. While expressing some concerns in relation to the Department's proposed approach, in particular the risk of a duplication of resources and information, Members nonetheless agreed that the powers of the PCSA are sufficient in the Act to seek appropriate information at any time from the Garda Síochána to fulfil its oversight role. It was agreed that correspondence should issue to the Department of Justice, setting out the Authority's views on the matter.

Members noted that the Authority has, since its inception, considered the adequacy of the enabling functions of finance, HR, ICT and Estate as critical underpinnings in its ability to assess the policing service provided by the Garda Síochána to the public. As such, it was emphasised that the Authority and its PCSA successor will continue to work with colleagues in the Garda Síochána to enhance the quality and nature of information to enable effective oversight, in the public interest.

Garda Síochána Human Rights Strategy 2025-2027: Invitation for Submissions: The Authority considered a draft submission in response to the Invitation for Submissions from the Garda Síochána regarding its Human Rights Strategy 2025-2027. The draft response was approved, subject to minor amendments.

Data on matters related to Garda Conduct and Discipline: Members noted the receipt of data from the Garda Síochána covering the last quarter of 2024, including the provision, in full, of data in relation to bullying, harassment and sexual harassment for the first time. Members also noted, with concern, the extent to which cases of serious misconduct that go to Appeal Boards where the original decision of the Commissioner is either quashed or varied. In this regard, Members discussed the balance between the rights of an individual as an employee, the extraordinary powers vested in Garda members and the impact on public confidence and trust in the Garda Síochána. Members noted information provided on a recent Workplace Relations Commission finding relating to a Garda member. It was agreed that the matter of conduct and discipline would be returned to by the Authority at a future date.

Anti-Spit Guards/Hoods: Members gave detailed consideration to a document received from the Garda Síochána setting out human rights considerations given to the use of anti-spit guards/hoods and the resulting approach to their management and use by the organisation. Members noted that the document provided was in response to the Authority's request to provide a copy of the independent advice of the Human Rights advisor in relation to the use of anti-spit hoods by the Garda Síochána, which had been originally requested in March 2022. Members also discussed the context for the request, in particular the original rationale for the introduction of anti-spit hoods as a use of force during the COVID-19 pandemic and their subsequent retention.

While noting that the information, as requested, had not been provided, Members agreed that the document gave assurance in respect of the human rights considerations that had been given by the Garda Síochána in relation to the introduction, management and use of anti-spit hoods.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the Garda Síochána had agreed to make this information available in the public domain, which was welcomed by the Members, in particular in the context of the Garda Síochána's obligations under section 42 of the Human Rights Act. In this regard, it was agreed that it would be helpful if such documents could routinely be made available to the public, upon the introduction of different types of use of force.

In concluding discussions, Members noted that whilst serious concerns remained regarding the necessity for, and use of, anti-spit hoods, the response provided had sufficiently addressed the intent of the original request, and they agreed to close the associated Garda action.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Action point</i>	<i>By Date</i>	<i>By Whom</i>
A_146_05	Write to the Department of Justice to set out the Authority's position in relation to membership of the proposed Garda Budgetary Oversight and Resources Group.	ASAP	Chief Executive
A_146_06	Send letters of thanks to the Chairperson and Members of the Garda Síochána Audit Committee, following the completion of their term of office.	ASAP	Chief Executive
A_146_07	Table the matter of the Garda Síochána Audit Committee for consideration at the next Authority meeting.	February	Secretary
A_146_08	Write to the Commissioner in relation to the document received on the use of anti-spit hoods and the desirability of similar documents on use of force and human rights considerations being publicly available in future.	ASAP	Chief Executive

5. Risk Management report

The Authority considered the monthly risk report, provided in accordance with its Risk Management Policy. Members discussed the framing of a small number of risks, in the context of the PCSA's establishment and forthcoming changes to Garda leadership. It was agreed that this would be considered in the next risk management report.

6. Draft Business Plan 2025

Members were presented with the draft Business Plan for 2025. It was noted that the plan focuses on current statutory requirements, in addition to work required to ensure that new statutory functions under the PSCS Act can be appropriately met, once commenced. Members also noted that work to transition to the PCSA remained a key priority, in addition to focussing on key oversight areas and 'business as usual', activity undertaken across all organisational functions. The Chief Executive highlighted the ways in which current Garda Inspectorate staff who are to be seconded to the PCSA are already working across several projects in conjunction with Policing Authority colleagues. Following discussion, Members were satisfied to approve the Business Plan, as set out. Members noted that the Executive would proceed to develop more detailed operational plans and would provide the usual periodic updates to the Authority on the overall plan's achievement across the year.

7. Assessment of Policing Performance 2024- proposed approach

Members considered and approved the proposed approach to the Annual Assessment of Policing Performance 2024, including the proposed thematic focus. Members noted the timeframes for the report's development and that an advanced drafted would be provided to the Authority for its consideration at the April meeting.

No.	Action point	By Date	By Whom
A_146_09	Table the Assessment of Policing Performance 2024 for consideration by the Authority at its April meeting.	April	Secretary

8. Report to the Minister for Justice on Child Sexual Abuse

Members were provided with a detailed overview in relation to the outcomes of oversight of the implementation of the Garda Inspectorate's recommendations in its report 'Responding to Child Sexual Abuse.' Members noted areas progress made over the course of 2024, in addition to areas requiring further attention. Members had a detailed and wide-ranging discussion in relation to the draft report to the Minister, including in relation to:

- **Interagency working:** While noting that the Authority had welcomed the signing of a data sharing agreement between Tusla and the Garda Síochána in 2023, Members were disappointed to note that the agreement remains to be implemented and is awaiting the approval of a Data Protection Impact Assessment by the Garda Síochána. Concern was expressed about the failure to progress the agreement, giving the criticality of data sharing to ensure that child sexual abuse investigations are conducted in a timely and effective manner. While noting some improvements in interagency working generally, potential issues in relation to consistency of practice across the Garda organisation were highlighted with a view to exploring the matter further in 2025.
- **Further development of the Barnahus model:** Members recalled that the Authority previously welcomed the Barnahus model, which brings together forensic, child protection, medical, therapeutic and policing services in a child-centred way, when sexual abuse is alleged to have occurred. Whilst progress has been made, Members noted that there is currently only one physical location where the model is fully up and running. Members noted that that Barnahus South had commenced operation in May 2024, albeit virtually, and that work continues on developing the planned physical location. Members discussed the recommendation of the Oireachtas Committee on Children regarding the desired number of Barnahus facilities, noting the significant inter-agency collaboration and investment involved in their establishment.
- **Interviewing victims of child sexual abuse:** Members were reminded that as outlined by the Garda Síochána Inspectorate, a single joint-agency interview conducted by a trained social worker and a Garda member is widely recognised as the most effective way to conduct child interviews. Members considered the current challenges to giving effect to joint interviews, in particular the absence of sufficient numbers of social workers trained as child specialist interviewers to allow joint interviews. Members noted that in general, outside the Barnahus model, joint specialist interviews of children do not take place. Members discussed the time lag between the reporting of an incident and the interview of a child, which had been the subject of previous engagement with the Garda Síochána at the PSP Committee. It was unclear as to the extent to which timeframes were being monitored either by Tusla or the Garda Síochána and it was agreed that this matter would be engaged on with the Commissioner in Part C of the meeting.
- **Governance of child protection and welfare notifications:** The importance of oversight of the notifications process was highlighted, and it was noted that whilst there has been considerable progress to date, there remain some areas of concern. It was agreed that further focused attention by the Authority in 2025 would be required, with the aim of seeking assurances that the benefits in regard to governance, as described by the Garda Síochána are sustained and consistent across the whole organisation.

- **Vulnerable children in State care at risk of sexual exploitation:** Members briefly discussed the matter of the inter-agency response to the issue of vulnerable children in State care at risk of sexual exploitation, and noted the importance of monitoring the outcomes of the ongoing review of Operation Cosnaím. It was agreed that this issue would merit a separate agenda item at a future meeting, to consider the efficacy of joint governance and management structures in place with Tusla to protect this very vulnerable cohort of children. It was also agreed that there would be merit in meeting with HIQA in this regard. .
- **Health and wellbeing of Garda personnel:** Members highlighted the emotional and psychological impact that investigating the crime of child sexual abuse can have on Garda personnel. They considered the sufficiency of current measures in place including technical solutions, psychological supports and rotation of personnel and agreed to discuss this with the Commissioner in Part C of the meeting

Members discussed generally the available resources for the Garda Síochána to deliver service to victims of child sexual abuse. In this regard, Members considered the potential impact of the report of the scoping inquiry of historical cases of sexual abuse in schools run by religious orders, noting the extent of contacts to the Garda Síochána to date, as previously discussed with the Commissioner. Members also considered the potential role for the Garda National Protective Services Bureau and the Garda Síochána Analysis Service in responding to the Commission of Inquiry, once it is established.

In concluding discussion, the Authority was satisfied that the outcomes of oversight of this area, as discussed, would form the basis of the Authority's letter to the Minister in continuing fulfilment of the request made under section 117(a)(2). It was also agreed that the summary of oversight should be developed into a paper for publication.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Action point</i>	<i>By Date</i>	<i>By Whom</i>
A_146_10	Letter to the Minister in continuing fulfilment of the request made under section 117(a)(2) to be drafted and sent.	ASAP	Chief Executive
A_146_11	Summary of oversight of the response to Child Sexual Abuse to be developed into a paper for publication.	ASAP	Chief Executive

9. Garda Síochána Annual Report 2024 - Authority direction

Members considered and approved the proposed direction to be provided to the Commissioner on the form of the Garda Síochána 2024 Annual Report. It was noted that the direction would issue to the Commissioner on the matter.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Action point</i>	<i>By Date</i>	<i>By Whom</i>
A_146_12	Provide direction to the Commissioner on the approach to the Garda Síochána 2024 Annual Report.	ASAP	Chief Executive

10. PSCS implementation update

An update on work ongoing on the PSCS Act implementation was provided to Members including updates on meetings of the PSCS Act Implementation Programme Board on 15 January and the PSCS Act Implementation Steering Group 14 January. Members noted that the Executive is working towards the current commencement date but that there remain a number of potential obstacles which may cause a further delay to this proposed date.

The Chief Executive confirmed that engagement with all parties is continuing on a regular basis to work through any issues highlighted, noting that any potential delays are outside of the control of the Policing Authority.

- **Garda Appointments**

Members had a detailed and wide-ranging discussion in relation to the implications of delays to commencement, in particular having regard to the Authority's current statutory function in respect of appointments to the senior ranks in the Garda Síochána. The function has effectively been on hold throughout 2024 pending the commencement of the Act and the transfer of the function to the Garda Síochána and publicjobs. In particular, Members noted that the process of incrementally changing the planned commencement date adopted by the Department of Justice has precluded the Authority from commencing and concluding competitions at the senior ranks, as a clear window of sufficient time is required to undertake any competition under a single statutory regime.

Members considered the current vacancies at the senior ranks, including at Chief Superintendent and Assistant Commissioner levels. Members noted that the promotion panel at the rank of Superintendent was exhausted and the panel at Chief Superintendent was due shortly to expire. Members noted that any further delays to commencement would inevitably result in multiple gaps within the Garda Síochána leadership as a natural consequence of retirements or otherwise. Members agreed that this presented significant risk to the effective functioning of the Garda Síochána and to the efficacy of the oversight relationship with the Authority.

The Authority also noted the forthcoming conclusion of the Commissioner's term of office and were apprised of the timeframes associated with any new selection competition. Absent any ability to progress competitions under the current statutory provisions, Members expressed serious concern in relation the implications for senior leadership of the organisation, in particular at the rank of Commissioner, at a time of significant change. Members noted that the Authority's concerns in this regard had been outlined by the Chairperson in correspondence to the Minister for Justice in December 2024.

It was agreed that the matter of Garda Appointments would be returned to by the Authority at its next meeting.

11. Appointments

Members considered and approved a request received to appoint a candidate to the position of Principal Officer in the Garda Síochána Analysis Service (GSAS).

Members considered and approved a request to appoint a candidate to the position of Principal Officer, Head of Technical Architecture (ICT) in the Garda Síochána.

No.	Action point	By Date	By Whom
A_146_13	Notify the ED, HR&PD of the appointment of a Principal Officer, Garda Síochána Analysis Service (GSAS) and notify the candidate of their appointment.	Immediate	Chief Executive
A_146_14	Notify the ED, HR&PD of the appointment of a Principal Officer, Head of Technical Architecture (ICT) and notify the candidate of their appointment.	Immediate	Chief Executive

12. Preparation for meeting with the Garda Commissioner

Members discussed the agenda for the meeting and agreed the matters to be discussed with the Commissioner and his team.

Documents for Noting by the Authority – January 2025

There were no documents for review under this agenda item.

Part B – Authority Meeting with the Garda Commissioner in private

Attendance

Authority and Executive: Elaine Byrne (Chairperson), Deborah Donnelly, Anthony Harbinson, Donal de Buitléir, Helen Hall (Chief Executive), Aoife Clabby (Secretary), Margaret Tumelty, Karen Shelly, Shona Keeshan.

Garda Síochána: Drew Harris (Commissioner), Shawna Coxon (Deputy Commissioner), Siobhan Toale (Chief Corporate Officer), Justin Kelly (Deputy Commissioner), Andrew O’Sullivan (Chief Information Officer), Angela Willis (Assistant Commissioner), Niamh O’Hara (Assistant Principal)

13. Violence against women, including recent femicide cases

The Authority expressed its considerable disquiet at the extent of violence against women, noting that there had been 61,000 reported domestic abuse incidents in 2024, and five women and one girl killed since the start of December. Members engaged with the Commissioner on the extent to which any risks had been previously identified in any of the six homicides. The Commissioner advised that he would revert to the Authority with a short report on the matter. The Commissioner also highlighted his concerns in respect of attacks that go unreported and of an undercurrent of severe violence against women, some of which is linked to domestic abuse, but some which also relates to attacks on sex workers.

Members engaged with the Commissioner on the 20% rise in domestic abuse incidents and asked whether the occurrence of such abuse was getting worse or was in fact linked to increased reporting. The Commissioner outlined possible factors in relation to the increase in incidents, advising that it was difficult to be definitive, in particular in the context of this type of crime being under-reported. The Commissioner welcomed the establishment of Cuan, the domestic, sexual and gender-based violence agency and expressed his hope that the implementation of the third government strategy in this area expressed will have a positive effect over time. However, the Commissioner expressed concern about the ready availability of pornography that depicts extreme violence. He highlighted the drift effect that this is having in terms of the severity of attacks that are being enacted in actual crimes and coming to the attention of the Garda Síochána. Members noted that the proliferation of such pornography can lead to difficulties in some perpetrators’ understanding of where boundaries lie. The Commissioner emphasised the importance of men being engaged in the conversation around sexual violence.

The Authority discussed the governance arrangements in place for monitoring the rate of victim call backs with the Commissioner and his senior colleagues. Members noted that there is daily and weekly reporting on call back rates and that governance monitoring extends to the level of Deputy Commissioner. Members were provided with a brief overview of the measures in place to prioritise calls, to identify persons at high risk and the escalation procedures in place to refer cases to the Divisional Protective Services Unit. The fact that Garda members are aware that all pertinent information may not be provided at first contact with a victim of domestic abuse, and that follow up is required was also highlighted.

The Authority also engaged with senior Garda representatives on the extent of their assurance in relation to the quality of the call backs to victims. A range of measures were outlined including use of the Risk Assessment Tool to identify potential cases of domestic abuse, the coordination of call backs, the role of the Victim's Office and the degree of training received by all Garda members. Members noted the extent of supervision, incident tracking and trend prediction of domestic abuse incidents at local, divisional and regional levels. The Authority was advised that whilst the Risk Assessment Tool is currently paper based, an app to enable real time use and categorisation is in development and will be available over the coming months.

Members discussed the prevalence of reporting and the development of non-detection outcomes for domestic abuse and sexual assault cases. Improvements in data quality and granularity were highlighted, in particular having regard to the ability to track and monitor high risk cases. Members were informed that the Garda Analysis Service is currently in the process of finalising a crime outcomes report due for release in the coming weeks. Members noted that the report will provide a breakdown of data by divisions, enabling the organisation to gain insights and leverage good practice.

Members noted good practice in terms of some recent successes in achieving prosecution through the courts, where victims were proactively supported through the process.

Recent attacks on sex workers which had been reported in the media, and the importance of people from vulnerable backgrounds feeling able to come forward and be supported was discussed with the Commissioner.

In the context of information recently provided to the Authority on conduct and discipline the Commissioner advised that the first part of a piece of work to identify and record Garda personnel who were the subject of protection orders had recently been completed and would be shared with the Authority in due course.

In concluding the discussion on this agenda item, it was agreed that the matters raised would be considered in more detail during Part C of the meeting.

No.	Action point	By Date	By Whom
A_146_15	Provide the Authority with a short written report on any indicators or previous interactions in the case of six women who were murdered since 1 December.	ASAP	Garda Síochána
A_146_16	Provide the Authority with an overview report of the number of Garda personal who are subject to protection orders in 2024, including information about repeat offenders.	ASAP	Garda Síochána

14. Garda Síochána Public Attitudes Survey

Whilst acknowledging the continuing high levels of trust in the Garda Síochána expressed by the public, as measured in the Garda Síochána Public Attitudes Survey, the Authority noted that for those who have come into contact with the Garda Síochána, the degree of confidence and trust is lower. Members asked the Commissioner how the survey results are used by the Garda Síochána. Members were informed that a more detailed report is available for the Senior Leadership Team to look at result correlation, especially in the context of victims of crime.

It was acknowledged that there has been a gradual decline in this trust figure and that there is a strong correlation between dissatisfaction rates and rates of trust in the Garda Síochána. Members were advised that this gradual decline had been a driver to develop and implement the Outcomes project and to gain insight into the lower levels of satisfaction expressed by victims of crime. Members also discussed survey responses relating to the provision of information to victims, noting that the type of contact primarily valued by victims was by phone or in person, with minimal value placed upon an online portal for crime feedback.

Members were advised that the procurement process for the Public Attitudes Survey had been concluded and a contract awarded. Members were also advised that in response to the Authority's correspondence regarding the inclusion of questions regarding experiences of unacceptable behaviour, a number of questions were now proposed for inclusion. It was agreed that the matter would be further engaged with at Executive level. It was also agreed that the Public Attitudes Survey would be the subject of more detailed discussion at the March meeting of the PSP Committee.

Other Business

The Authority briefly discussed the issue of Section 19 referrals by banking institutions with the Commissioner. The Commissioner characterised the level of internet fraud as being at an industrial scale, including labour exploitation for the purpose of engaging in fraud.

The importance of encouraging victims to report internet fraud was discussed and it was agreed that this appeal would be reiterated in Part C of the meeting.

Part C– Meeting with the Garda Commissioner (in public) 15.00 to 17:00

Attendance

Authority and Executive: Elaine Byrne (Chairperson), Donal de Buitleir, Anthony Harbinson, Debbie Donnelly, Paul Mageean, Helen Hall (Chief Executive),

Garda Síochána: Drew Harris (Commissioner), Shawna Coxon (Deputy Commissioner), Siobhan Toale (Chief Corporate Officer), Justin Kelly (Deputy Commissioner), Paula Hilman (Assistant Commissioner), Angela Willis (Assistant Commissioner), Michael McElgunn (Assistant Commissioner),

This meeting with the Garda Commissioner and his team was live streamed. In accordance with the Authority's Standing Orders, the official record of the meeting is the recording which is available to view at <https://www.policingauthority.ie/en/authority-meetings>

At the outset of the meeting, the Chairperson commended the first responders after Storm Eowyn and thanked Garda members on behalf of the public. The Chairperson also extended her best wishes to Mr Jim O'Callaghan T.D. upon his recent appointment as Minister of Justice. The receipt of data on conduct and discipline was acknowledged and the Chairperson stated that this topic would be returned to at a future meeting.

The Garda Commissioner then spoke about the upcoming recruitment campaign for Garda trainees. The Garda Síochána want to encourage, in particular, women and people from underrepresented groups to apply. The Commissioner outlined the benefits of joining the Garda Síochána, including a rewarding and meaningful career, educational attainment and opportunities for lifelong learning and attractive rates of remuneration. The complexity and variety of the work in the Garda Síochána was also highlighted by the Commissioner.

The following matters were then discussed during the meeting:

Item Number	Agenda Item	Principal matters discussed
15	Violence against women, including recent femicide cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion regarding steps being taken to deal with the ongoing increases in domestic abuse cases.• Consideration given to what an individual should do should they be aware of someone who is in an abusive situation.• Discussion in relation to individuals' fears that they won't be taken seriously should they make a report to the Garda, and assurance provided by the Commissioner in this regard.• Consideration of the spike in domestic abuse incidents reported over the Christmas and New Year period and upward trends in comparison to previous data.• Engagement on the increase in reporting of domestic abuses incidents, and measures being taken by the Garda Síochána

Item Number	Agenda Item	Principal matters discussed
		<p>to ensure that the perpetrators in these cases are being brought to Justice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on recent, severe attacks on sex workers, and what assurances can be given to potentially vulnerable victims that they can report such incidents to the Garda without fear of being prosecuted themselves. • Consideration of the nature of violent crimes against women and how it has changed over the years. The ready availability of extreme violence in pornography and its effect over time on the types of violent incidents now being seen in cases was highlighted. • Outline provided on the number of domestic abuse victims that have Protection Orders issued.
16	Economic Crime-Section 19 referrals by banking institutions to the Garda Síochána	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation provided of Section 19 referrals at the outset of the discussion. • An assessment of the seriousness of the issue was provided, in addition to an outline of how it will be managed by the Garda Síochána. • Consideration was given to the possibility of a downgrading of Ireland's rating at the next Financial Action Task Force (FATF). • Outline provided of discussions and engagements between the Garda Síochána and financial institutions. • Discussion on romance fraud, with particular focus on the under reporting of this crime type. • Overview of the value of money that has been recovered on behalf of victims of fraud, including the importance of early reporting of the crime.
17(a)	Policing Services for Children and Young People - Progress to develop a Young Persons Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview provided of what is hoped to be achieved through the development of a Young Persons Plan including. • Discussion on the extent of involvement of the Juvenile Liaison and Youth Diversion Officers and others in the development of the Plan. • Overview of the Plan's key themes and the likely timeframes for the Plan's finalisation and implementation provided. • Engagement on how consistency of the implementation of the Juvenile Diversion Programme across Divisions is achieved. The development of dashboards to assist

Item Number	Agenda Item	Principal matters discussed
		governance and assurance was highlighted a key achievement.
17(b)	Progress in responding to the crime of child sexual abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on progress to implement Inspectorate recommendations • Engagement on the issue of the delay in implementing the signed data sharing agreement between the Garda Síochána and Tusla. • Overview provided of the Barnahus Model, and why it is considered to be the 'gold standard' when dealing with cases of child sexual abuse. Discussion on the roll-out of the model and when can further centres be expected to be in operation. • Discussion on the use of specialist interviewers, and challenges to the progression of training for Tusla interviewers. Noted that the optimal situation is for victims of child sexual abuse to be interviewed jointly by a Tusla social worker and a Garda Síochána member. • Engagement on waiting times for interviewing victims and any plans in place for their reduction. • Consideration of the new multi-agency protocols which aim to have a turnaround of one year from point of report to disposal by the court, for cases of rape and murder involving children. • Discussion in relation to the number of ongoing investigations in relation to sexual abuse of children in care.
17(c)	Data retention regarding children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement on the creation of intelligence records for children, in the context of a Garda Inspectorate post implementation review. • Overview of the rationale for a child having an intelligence record were outlined, and confirmation that case numbers are very low. • Consideration of the degree of assurance that the Garda organisation has that intelligence records being created are not based on any racial profiling.
18(a)	Policing Performance - Reflection on policing service delivery in 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview provided by the Commissioner of key areas of policing success in 2024, in addition to the challenges that have been faced in delivering the Policing Plan. • Outline of additional resources and equipment obtained over the past year, most notably in the area of Public Order.

Item Number	Agenda Item	Principal matters discussed
18(b)	Policing Plan 2025: commitments to the public and to Garda personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline provided of anticipated policing service delivery over the course of 2025, including the desire to achieve a tangible growth in Garda numbers, re-emphasis on operational duty and measures to increase visibility, linked to community safety, and focus on drugs and drugs intimidation. • Discussion in relation to the recruitment of Garda members, current capacity and service delivery. • Engagement on technological advances that support policing activity and human decision processes. • Acknowledgement of the need to invest in corporate systems, in particular in the areas of finance and human resources to better support management decision making. • The EU Presidency in the latter half of 2026 and the related policing requirements were noted.

No.	Action point	By Date	By Whom
A_146_17	Provide the Authority with an overview of the number or % of cases of child sexual abuse that benefit from using the Barnahus model	ASAP	Garda Síochána
A_146_18	Provide the Authority with a summary of the number of victims of child sexual abuse who are children in care and how such vulnerable child are monitored	ASAP	Garda Síochána
A_146_19	Provide the Authority with a summary report on the audit being carried out regarding intelligence records on children	ASAP	Garda Síochána
A_146_20	Provide the Authority with confirmation when the policy on the data sharing agreement with Tusla has been finalised and is in effect	ASAP	Garda Síochána