



AN TÚDARÁS PÓILÍNEACHTA  
POLICING AUTHORITY

## **Policing Authority oversight of new Garda powers**

**9 April 2020**

The Policing Authority held an additional meeting earlier this week at which there was considerable focus on the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on policing and the related challenge of adapting the discharge of the Authority's statutory oversight obligations to the new realities. The Policing Authority has been very impressed by the Garda Síochána response to issues relating to the COVID-19 crisis and has asked the Commissioner to convey the Authority's continued support and gratitude to all of his colleagues.

New situations require new responses and oversight of policing becomes even more relevant in these times when additional powers are given to the Garda Síochána. The Policing Authority remains in continuing contact with the Garda Commissioner and his colleagues to ensure that policing responses and any use of new powers are necessary, proportionate and carried out in a manner that respects human rights. The graduated policing response being taken by the organisation to ensure that individuals comply with the Government's temporary restrictions is welcomed, as are the Commissioner's assurances that enforcement of powers will be a last resort.

The Authority has also engaged with the Garda Síochána since the planned deployment of Anti-Spit Guards was announced and has been kept apprised of the planned training of members of the Garda Síochána in the use of these devices. In the ongoing interactions with the Commissioner, he and the Authority are of the one view that any use of Anti-Spit Guards should be the subject of public report. Both their use and the use of the new powers will be reported periodically to and monitored by the Authority. The Authority has outlined the detail it would wish to be included in such reports.

The Garda Síochána's ongoing response to the COVID-19 emergency will form a central part of the next meeting between the Policing Authority and the Garda Commissioner, which is scheduled to take place on 29 April 2020.