



AN TÚDARÁS PÓILÍNEACHTA  
POLICING AUTHORITY

## **Policing Authority publishes report on policing performance by the Garda Síochána during the COVID-19 crisis**

8 May 2020

The Policing Authority has today published the second in a series of reports to the Minister for Justice and Equality on its assessment of policing performance by the Garda Síochána during the COVID-19 crisis. The report, which was submitted to the Minister yesterday, is available [here](#).

The report focuses on four key themes which inform the Authority's ongoing oversight in relation to the policing performance by the Garda Síochána during the current health emergency. These are use of powers and use of force; community engagement and service to vulnerable groups; wellbeing of Garda Members and Staff; and policing to protect and respect Human Rights. The report found that the new powers are being applied proportionately; that a reasonable approach is being taken at road checkpoints; and that the Garda Síochána engaged proactively with communities across the country to very positive effect.

The report highlights some concerns — such as the matter of priority COVID-19 testing for Garda personnel, policy on the presence of armed Gardaí at some checkpoints, and the policing approach to a number of public events — and the Authority will keep these and other identified issues under review in the coming weeks.

Policing Authority Chairperson, Bob Collins commented:

*“These are challenging times for the Garda Síochána as well as for the entire community. The new statutory measures confer powers on the Gardaí that could scarcely have been contemplated a matter of weeks ago. The Authority sees its continuing oversight engagement in this area as a particularly important exercise of its statutory role. Public understanding of the new powers and of how the Garda Síochána uses them contributes greatly to sustaining public confidence and to compliance with public health guidelines. The publication of these regular reports to the Minister will be an important source of public information and assurance during the COVID-19 crisis.”*

To inform this oversight work, the Authority has engaged with a range of statutory, voluntary and civil society organisations to gain a broadly based perspective on policing performance during this time. This has included statutory agencies, Joint Policing Committee chairpersons, family resource centres, civil society groups and NGOs who provide services and support to victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence and members of ethnic groups.

The Authority is also in continuing close contact with the Garda Commissioner and his colleagues including a meeting last week which was streamed live for the public. Much effort has been devoted

to identifying precisely what information is required in relation to the use of new powers and use of force, and how this can be made publicly available. In addition, a number of Operation Fanacht road checkpoints were attended and observed over the May Bank Holiday weekend.

The Policing Authority will continue to publish its reports to the Minister on its assessment of policing performance by the Garda Síochána during the COVID-19 crisis on a fortnightly basis.