



AN TÚDARÁS PÓILÍNEACHTA
POLICING AUTHORITY

Policing Authority welcomes publication of the Garda Síochána Public Attitudes Survey for 2019

14 October 2020

The Policing Authority welcomes the publication of the Garda Síochána Public Attitudes Survey 2019. The survey presents the public's perceptions of crime in Ireland and its perceptions of the Garda Síochána. The survey of 6,000 people, representative of the population, was carried out from January to December 2019.

Public confidence is critical for an effective policing service. The Public Attitudes Survey is an important way of gauging the levels of trust and support that exist within the community for its police service. The outcomes of the survey are used as key measures by which the Garda Síochána and the Policing Authority assess policing performance.

There were many positives in the survey outcomes – levels of trust remain high with 91% reporting medium to high trust; the numbers who felt that the Garda Síochána was 'well-managed' increased, from 39% in 2018 to 49% in 2019; and a reduced fear of crime.

Victim satisfaction remained low in 2019 with just 61% of victims describing themselves as very or quite satisfied with the service provided by the Garda Síochána, compared with 63% in 2018. This concerns the Authority, as how victims of crime are treated and responded to is a key indicator by which a policing service can be judged. The Garda Síochána has obligations under the Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act 2017, and the Public Attitudes Survey is a key measure of performance in relation to this. The experience of policing for victims of crime is an important consideration for the Authority and it will publish two reports before the end of the year on research it is carrying out in this area.

The Authority uses the information from the Public Attitude Survey to inform its work in a number of ways. The survey outcomes are used to inform the Authority's engagement with the Garda Síochána on a range of topics, for example at meetings in public with the Garda Commissioner. They will also be taken into consideration by the Authority as it establishes targets for the 2021 Policing Plan. The Authority encourages the Garda Síochána to proactively use this survey data to inform specific actions to improve its policing service.

Due to the COVID-19 public health crisis, the Public Attitudes Survey fieldwork for 2020 has been disrupted. The survey is now being assessed for its suitability to move online which will result in a break in series, meaning that 2020 data will not be directly comparable to that of earlier years.

Policing Authority Chairperson, Bob Collins commented:

"The Authority sees the Public Attitudes Survey as a vital tool in its assessment of policing performance. It is therefore essential that this survey continues, albeit in reduced scope in the short term, and it is vital that the full scope and depth of the survey is restored at the earliest opportunity."

Meanwhile, the Authority has sought feedback through other engagement to augment the range of views available to us during this period.”