



AN TÚDARÁS PÓILÍNEACHTA
POLICING AUTHORITY

Policing Authority publishes ‘Children’s Rights and Police Questioning: A Qualitative Study of Children’s Experiences of being interviewed by the Garda Síochána’

24 February 2021

The Policing Authority has today published [‘Children’s Rights and Police Questioning: A Qualitative Study of Children’s Experiences of being interviewed by the Garda Síochána’](#) by Professor Ursula Kilkelly and Dr Louise Forde, Centre for Children’s Rights and Family Law at the School of Law, University College Cork. This is the first of two pieces of research funded by the Policing Authority’s inaugural Research Bursary Scheme in 2019.

Policing Authority Chairperson, Bob Collins commented:

“The Authority welcomes this significant contribution to the knowledge of how children and young people experience interacting with the Garda Síochána. The study offers an important and original insight into children’s experiences of their rights during police questioning and offers recommendations for how these rights might be better protected. We hope that it will help inform policing service delivery into the future, for one of the most vulnerable group in society.”

This small scale qualitative study presents children’s views and experiences of their rights when being interviewed by the Garda Síochána. While the small number of participants should be taken into consideration, it is still clear from this study that the process of interviewing children in police custody is complex. Key concerns include access to information and legal advice; children’s treatment during questioning; the nature of the environment; children’s capacity and understanding; and the role of parents and others who support children during the process.

This research will be discussed at the next meeting in public between the Policing Authority and the Garda Commissioner, which take place on Thursday 25 February 2021. The meeting will be live-streamed on www.policingauthority.ie.

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Notes to Editors

Background on the Bursary

In 2019, the Policing Authority awarded two inaugural bursaries under a new Research Bursary Scheme. In accordance with the Policing Authority’s Statement of Strategy 2019-2021, the main objective of the Research Bursary Scheme was to promote continuous improvement in policing through creating relevant and robust research capacity in the policing field. It was hoped that the research results would enhance the Policing Authority’s familiarity with new evidence based

research on policing, and help promote public and stakeholder awareness of quality new research on policing.

Background on the Research

The qualitative research undertaken as part of this study involved a series of short, individual, semi-structured interviews with four groups of participants; children, members of the Garda Síochána, lawyers and parents. Twenty children, aged between 14-18 years, took part. In co-operation with the Garda Research Unit, nine members of the Garda Síochána participated; four lawyers (all solicitors), and three parents and adults acting in a supportive role for children were also interviewed. In total, 36 interviews were conducted. The children who took part in this study all had experience of being interviewed by members of the Garda Síochána, although the frequency of this contact varied between individuals.