



AN TÚDARÁS PÓILÍNEACHTA
POLICING AUTHORITY

Policing Authority publishes 12th report on policing performance by the Garda Síochána during the COVID-19 crisis

16 March 2021

The Policing Authority has today published [the 12th in a series of reports on its assessment of policing performance by the Garda Síochána during the COVID-19 crisis](#), which was submitted to the Minister for Justice yesterday.

The Garda Síochána has remained responsive in the face of changing restrictions and rising cases, and the workforce is maintaining high levels of resilience so that it can continue to deliver an effective service.

The protests which took place on 27 February 2021 in the Grafton Street area of Dublin marked a low point in the policing of the public health emergency, and the violence which ensued resulted in injuries to Garda members. The Authority condemns the actions of individuals who committed these assaults on members of the Garda Síochána and such assaults can never be justified. From an organisational perspective, there are potential learnings from these events for the Garda Síochána. The Authority understands that an internal Garda review is currently underway and will continue to engage with the Garda Commissioner on this topic.

Policing Authority Chairperson, Bob Collins commented:

“The Authority has consistently expressed its concern for those in the Garda Síochána whose work and family lives have been so affected by the pandemic. The nature of policing work requires close contact with members of the public, very often in uncontrolled circumstances where social distancing is not possible, and this carries risk. The wellbeing of all who serve in the organisation has been a regular subject of discussion between the Authority and the Garda Commissioner.”

The Authority’s engagement with statutory, voluntary and community organisations has continued throughout the public health crisis. There are clear indications that the level of compliance is somewhat fraying and this has consequences for policing. Organisations working with young people in a number of disadvantaged urban areas spoke of what they believe to be a deterioration in relations between young people in their area and the Garda Síochána during the current lockdown. Community organisations spoke of what they perceive to be the damaging effects of increased random stop and search on these relations. It was reported that drug use has increased amongst the young people in these communities, with a resulting accumulation of drug debt and vulnerability to drugs related intimidation. The Authority also engaged with student representatives, who reported that the manner in which policing was presented was experienced as intimidating and negative. Those aged 18 to 25 received the highest number of fines in the period up to 11 March, accounting for 53% of all fines issued.

The Authority will continue to engage with the Commissioner and his senior colleagues on a range of matters, including at its next meeting on Thursday 25 March.