



AN TÚDARÁS PÓILÍNEACHTA  
POLICING AUTHORITY

## **Policing Authority publishes a Mid-Year Assessment on Policing Performance and the fifth report to the Minister on progress by the Garda Síochána in implementing the recommendations of the Garda Inspectorate Report '*Changing Policing in Ireland*'**

The Policing Authority today (8 August 2018) has published two significant reports which are available on the Authority's website. One is a report on the Authority's assessment of Garda Síochána Policing Performance so far in 2018. The other is the fifth in an ongoing series of reports to the Minister for Justice and Equality on progress by the Garda Síochána in implementing the recommendations of the Garda Inspectorate Report '*Changing Policing in Ireland*'.

Both documents report considerable activity in policing and modernising the organisation, but also find that Garda Síochána performance is missing targets in the Garda Commissioner's Policing Plan to a considerable extent, with common threads running through them, including:

- The Garda Síochána is growing, with a net increase of some 800 Gardaí and 300 civilian staff since 2016, and there is strong evidence of investment and activity in modernising the organisation. This has not been matched by a clear strategic focus on how to reap the benefits of this investment for example in terms of deployment and training;
- There has been considerable policing success in disrupting organised crime but detection rates are continuing to fall for the second year in a row;
- Crime is up in all crime groups except homicide. This may reflect increased confidence in reporting crime to the Gardaí which is to be welcomed, especially in the case of sexual crime. In particular, the reported increase in assaults over the past two years has been significant;
- A new website is up and running and Garda social media activity is very positive;
- Strong levels of trust and local support continue to be expressed in the Gardaí while confidence in the management of the organisation remains low;
- There is as yet no formal Garda response to the Crowe Horwath Report in relation to breath testing, and there is evidence of failure to conduct testing at serious and fatal road collisions in a significant proportion of cases with 42% of drivers not being tested in serious injury collisions and 22% of drivers not being tested in fatal collisions in the period from 2014 to 2016;
- Strategies in relation to Diversity & Inclusion, and the Garda Reserve are overdue in terms of the timelines set by the Commissioner;
- Progress is hampered by a lack of integrated and costed planning;

Speaking on publication of these reports, Policing Authority Chairperson Josephine Feehily said.

*"The primary purpose of the Policing Authority since 2016 has been to oversee the performance of the Garda Síochána and these reports bring further transparency to that oversight work. It is important to emphasise that these reports assess policing performance and progress on modernisation against plans and targets set by the Garda Commissioner. These are not box-ticking exercises, but speak directly to the delivery of an effective, visible and responsive policing service, with real world consequences for victims and for the communities the Garda Síochána serve.*

*I welcome the progress and the continued investment by Government in additional people and better technology for the Garda Síochána. More integrated planning and implementation is needed, however, to reap the benefit of this investment and of the considerable effort being put in by many women and men in the Garda organisation, which is why the Authority is now calling for an urgent refocusing and reworking of the Modernisation and Renewal Programme.*

*I, and my Authority colleagues, look forward to engaging on the matters raised in these reports with the incoming Garda Commissioner in September.*

While there is significant activity and positive progress across the organisation in both modernisation and policing initiatives, advancement is hampered by a lack of integrated and costed planning. The Garda Síochána planning process should, but doesn't, adequately plan for such enablers as accommodation, people, technology, training and very importantly communicating and embedding changes throughout the organisation. It is reassuring that the Authority's view on the importance of the Policing Plan being costed was echoed recently in the report of the Effectiveness and Renewal Group for the Department of Justice and Equality, which stated that *"it is not clear that the delivery, or not, of the objectives identified within the Policing Plan is thoroughly tested or has any material relationship with the level of funding provided..."*

## **Policing Authority Assessment on Policing Performance**

As part of its 2018 work programme the Policing Authority decided to publish a half-year and full-year report this year assessing the Garda Síochána's performance against the targets and commitments given in Garda Commissioner's 2018 Policing Plan. While not exhaustive, this half-year report does endeavour to give the reader a sense of the progress being made across the various areas of the Policing Plan and identify the key performance issues arising.

At the core of the report is the significance of the Policing Plan for the Garda Síochána. It is an articulation of the Garda Commissioner's commitments for the organisation against the Policing Priorities. The Authority's expectations are that these commitments should be ambitious but achievable, known and understood by the organisation and form the basis for the evaluation of performance at national and local level.

Positively, there has been significant progress by the Garda Síochána within the Policing Plan, including the ongoing disruption of organised crime, domestic abuse inspectors being selected and placed, recruitment of Garda members being on track to reach the annual target of 800 recruits and the Roads Policing Operations Plan for 2018 being developed. However, more than 60% of the commitments were behind schedule or had not commenced by the end of June. Key issues identified in this half-year assessment include the lack of progress being made to halt the decline in the detections across the majority of crime types, the increase in assaults over the past two years, the lack of an organisation-wide approach to community policing and delays in producing an action plan to address the recommendations of the Crowe Horwath report.

The Garda Síochána Public Attitudes survey is also considered and it provides a rich source of data. The Authority is encouraged to see respondents continuing to report strong levels of trust, of local satisfaction with service, and of various positive perceptions held concerning the way the organisation carries out its business. However, there is a need for significant improvement across certain targets, including for example perceptions about how the organisation is managed and Garda presence / visibility.

This report on Policing Performance has highlighted the level of performance achieved in the year to date but has also raised a number of significant questions for the Garda Síochána to consider around the primacy, content, resourcing and embedding of the Policing Plan for the remainder of 2018 and 2019.

## **Fifth report to the Minister on progress by the Garda Síochána in implementing the recommendations of the Garda Inspectorate Report 'Changing Policing in Ireland'**

In the Policing Authority's latest fifth report on Changing Policing in Ireland, a myriad of challenges to the Garda Síochána's reform agenda have been identified. There has been an increase of approximately 800 garda members and 300 Civilian members since the authority began its oversight in 2016, but there are fundamental unaddressed needs. These relate to deployment of people, physical working conditions, training, supervision, communication and leadership that are significantly impacting on the organisation's ability to operationalise the change envisioned in the Modernisation and Renewal Programme (MRP).

The Authority is therefore now calling for an urgent refocusing and reworking of the MRP - similarly to the Policing plan, progress on modernisation is hampered by a lack of integrated and costed planning. This fifth report sets out the context, rationale and evidence for this. In its previous reports, the Authority had expressed first disquiet and then frustration with the pace of implementation of the programme. However, through its engagement with the Garda Síochána in 2018, the Authority has grown increasingly concerned about the number and severity of barriers to its achievement.

The Authority firmly believes that the Garda Síochána needs at this juncture to pause briefly and reconsider in a determined and focused way the end to which its efforts and resources are being directed, as well as what key enablers and levers it needs to achieve that change. The continuation of the current activity and effort, however well intentioned, will not deliver the fundamental reform envisaged by the Garda inspectorate in *Changing Policing in Ireland* and in the Government's decision of July 2016. Neither will it deliver an improvement in the quality of working life for those within the Garda Síochána, or an effective, responsive, modern policing service for communities.