

# Independent Report for the Policing Authority

Update on the Examination of the Garda Síochána  
review of the closure, (including cancellation) of  
Computer Aided Dispatch incidents:  
Additional Call Listening

June 2023- Version 1.0 [FINAL]

Author

Derek Penman QPM LLB (Hons) FCMJ

## Introduction

This report provides an update to the Policing Authority on the outcome of the additional call listening activity conducted in January 2023 and May 2023. It relates to a small number of calls that were not included within the “Serious Cohort” of incidents provided by An Garda Síochána for the comprehensive Call Recording Sampling Phase conducted in May 2022.

## “Serious Cohort” Sample

The “Serious Cohort” was covered in my Interim Report to the Policing Authority<sup>1</sup> in November 2021:

*“The strategic oversight group was mindful at the outset of the CAD Review that some cancelled incidents may have resulted in serious risk or harm to individuals. Processes were put in place at the start of the review for members to identify any “high risk” incidents. These were collated and escalated to Divisions for urgent review. Members involved in the initial examination of CAD incidents identified a small number of high-risk incidents and other members at other stages did likewise. By August 2021, approximately 47 incidents had been identified within the DMR as potentially high risk and forwarded to divisions for review. Given the potential for these incidents to have resulted in serious risk or harm to individuals, it is recommended that all high-risk incidents identified across all regions during the CAD Review be independently reviewed. This will necessitate listening to the call and radio recordings as well as reviewing the CAD Review File and any victim engagement.”*

This recommendation led to the Call Recording Sampling Phase in May 2022. The methodology and call samples were agreed in advance by the Policing Authority and An Garda Síochána, and specified within the Prescriptive Guidance<sup>2</sup>:

*“To listen to a sample of incidents, selected by the expert consultant drawn from a list of all cancelled incidents across all four control rooms identified as high risk. The population of high risk calls presented to the expert consultant for sampling will include those assessed by the Garda Síochána as Red RAG ( “Red, Amber, Green”) status and including a sub category of all cancelled incidents identified at an early stage in their review by the Garda Síochána strategic oversight group as comprising a “serious cohort” and having the potential to have resulted in serious risk or harm to individuals, which were collated and escalated to Divisions for urgent review”*

An Garda Síochána provided a sample of 2,932 “high risk” incidents, including 83 Incidents it identified as the “serious cohort”. All 83 calls were listened to as part of the Call Recording Sampling Phase in May 2022 and provided evidence for my Final Report<sup>3</sup> in September 2022.

Given the narrative in my Interim Update Report and the definition within the Prescriptive Guidance, I assumed that all incidents subject to early escalation during the CAD Review had been included in the sample of 83 “Serious Cohort” incidents provided by An Garda Síochána. However, following a reconciliation of the “serious cohort” with a number of CAD URN’s contained within

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<sup>1</sup> [Interim Update on the Preliminary Examination of the Garda Síochána review of the closure, \(including cancellation\) of Computer Aided Dispatch incidents](#) - November 2021 @ Page 16

<sup>2</sup> [Prescriptive Guidance on the processing of Personal Data and Special Category Data \(May 22\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Final Report on the Examination of the Garda Síochána review of the closure, \(including cancellation\) of Computer Aided Dispatch incidents](#) – September 2022

copy emails requested from An Garda Síochána during my initial fieldwork, I identified 8 Incidents subject to early escalation had not been included.

An Garda Síochána subsequently confirmed these 8 incidents formed part of the Stage 1 CAD Review examination process and were elevated for early review as part of a risk escalation process. All 8 incidents were subject to further examination by the Stage 5 review team, including examination of the CAD incident, downloading of 999 calls and TETRA Recordings as appropriate. An Garda Síochána examined PULSE to identify if a service had been provided on the day of the call, and if a victim could be identified that would enable victim engagement. In all 8 incidents An Garda Síochána found evidence of a unit being dispatched. An Garda Síochána assessed there was no indication in any of these 8 incidents of a victim requiring immediate victim engagement or that a victim had suffered death or serious harm.

During the CAD Review, a decision was taken by An Garda Síochána to focus on four incident types assessed as “High Risk”, namely DVSA, HEALTH, MISP and TECSOS incidents that were cancelled or changed to INFO. None of these 8 Incidents came within the scope of this re-prioritisation as they did not use these initial incident types. As a consequence of not being classified as “High Risk” in the CAD Review Dataset, they fell out with the scope for the 2,932 “High Risk” and “Serious Cohort” incidents provided to me by GGAS for the Call Recording Sampling Phase.

Having discussed this with An Garda Síochána Chief Information Officer, I was satisfied these 8 calls were not included in the sample due to their incident type classification and the methodology used by GCAS to create the CAD Review Dataset of “High Risk” and “Serious Cohort” incidents. Given the assurances from An Garda Síochána that all 8 incidents had been subject to early escalation and review as part of the CAD Review, I considered it unlikely that further scrutiny would identify new issues or materially change the outcome, findings or recommendations of my Final report.

## Additional Call Listening

Following discussions with the Policing Authority in December 2022, it was agreed for the sake of completeness and to provide assurance to the Policing Authority, that these 8 calls would be subject to call listening. An Addendum to the Prescriptive Guidance was agreed by An Garda Síochána and the Policing Authority on 27 January 2023.

The call listening was conducted at Garda Síochána offices in Dublin on 30 January 2023 and followed the same methodology as the Call Recording Sampling Phase undertaken in May 2022. The process was tightly controlled in accordance with the Prescriptive Guidance, with supervised access to the 8 call recordings and associated TETRA recordings. No access was given to operational Garda Síochána information systems, and all CAD, PULSE and other relevant data was provided as hard copy in accordance with the prescriptive guidance.

A detailed examination of these 8 calls highlighted some evidence of the same shortcomings identified in the Call Recording Sampling Phase undertaken in May 2022 and reported in detail in my Final Report in September 2022. There were examples of good call handling practice, and 7 incidents were attended to by An Garda Síochána members. The only incident not to be attended was where it cancelled by the ambulance service. There were no new issues identified and nothing to materially change the outcome, the findings or the recommendations of my Final report. None of the 8 incidents identified serious harm to any individual.

On 20 February 2023, I requested that An Garda Síochána provide confirmation that all incidents subject to early escalation during the CAD Review Process had been identified and included in either the 83 “serious cohort” or the 8 additional incidents. On 6 April 2023 An Garda Síochána advised it had identified a further 4 additional incidents that had not been included in either sample. These all related to incidents within the DMR that had been subject to early escalation as part of the CAD Review process.

The Chief Information Officer confirmed that An Garda Síochána original sample of 2932 “High Risk” and “Serious Cohort” incidents for the Call Recording Sampling Phase were identified from a top-down exercise to identify cancelled CAD incidents of concern undertaken in Quarter 2 of 2021. A separate bottom-up process to identify incidents of concern had started earlier in 2021 but was superseded by the top-down process. In response to my request for confirmation that all incidents subject to early escalation had been identified, An Garda Síochána completed several reconciliations of records kept of the bottom up process against the top down list. An Garda Síochána also re-checked with DMR control room supervisors and confirmed there were no other records of bottom up incident reviews. The Chief Information Officer confirmed there is no evidence of any other lists or that any incidents were missed from the 2932 other than the 12 additional incidents subsequently identified.

An Garda Síochána position is that the final number of “High Risk” and “Serious Cohort” incidents is 2944. This comprises the initial sample of 2932 provided for May 2022, the additional 8 incidents listened to in January 2023 and the final 4 incidents identified in April 2023.

Following discussions with the Policing Authority in April 2022, it was agreed to provide final assurance to the Policing Authority and listen to these 4 additional incidents. A second Addendum to the Prescriptive Guidance was agreed by An Garda Síochána and the Policing Authority on 12 May 2023.

The call listening was conducted at An Garda Síochána offices in Dublin on 18 May 2023 and followed the same methodology as before. The process was tightly controlled in accordance with the Prescriptive Guidance, with supervised access to the 4 call recordings. No access was given to operational Garda Síochána information systems, and all CAD, PULSE and other relevant data was provided as hard copy in accordance with the prescriptive guidance.

A detailed examination of these 4 calls again highlighted some evidence of the same shortcomings identified in the Call Recording Sampling Phase undertaken in May 2022 and reported in detail in my Final Report in September 2022. As before, there were examples of good call handling practice, and all incidents were attended by An Garda Síochána members. There were no new issues identified and nothing to materially change the outcome, the findings or the recommendations of my Final report. None of the 4 incidents identified serious harm to any individual.

Within the documentation provided by An Garda Síochána for these 4 calls, I recovered an email dated 22 August 2021 with an attached print from a spreadsheet. This listed 46 CAD Incidents that had been identified as “high priority” for escalation during the early CAD Review process and highlighted a further 5 such incidents. It seems likely these incidents were the same as the those referred to in my Interim report, when I noted that *“by August 2021, approximately 47 incidents had been identified within the DMR as potentially high risk and forwarded to divisions for review.”* Having secured a copy of these documents on 30 May 2023, I reconciled the 51 CAD URNs listed on the spreadsheet and confirmed that all had been included in the call listening activity. 49 had

been included in the initial “serious cohort” of 83 Incidents and 2 had been included in the final sample of 4 incidents.

## Conclusion

On the basis of my engagement with Deputy Commissioner and the Chief Information Officer, I am content with the assurances from An Garda Síochána that it has now provided the Policing Authority with details of all CAD incidents that were subject to early escalation.

These 12 additional incidents have all been subject to independent call listening by me, supported by officers from the Policing Authority. I am satisfied that no new issues were identified from listening to these additional calls to materially change the outcome, findings or recommendations of my Final report published in September 2022.

This update report discharges Recommendation 9 from my Interim Report that the Policing Authority should request an independent review of all incidents that were identified as “high risk” by An Garda Síochána during the CAD Review.

Derek Penman QPM LLB(Hons).

June 2023