



GARDA
INSPECTORATE
PROMOTING EXCELLENCE & ACCOUNTABILITY

Report of the Garda
Síochána Inspectorate

Policing with Local Communities

Executive Summary

December 2018

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Introduction

This report is titled *Policing with Local Communities* because policing is a service delivered in partnership with communities, not something done to communities.

The report has four chapters that describe policing from the strategic perspective through to operational service delivery, from the organisational level to the local, with each pointing to the way forward. Many previous Inspectorate recommendations are relevant to this inspection, particularly from *Resource Allocation (2009)*, *Crime Investigation (2014)* and *Changing Policing in Ireland (2015)*. Many of these have not been progressed; others are not yet fully implemented. Where appropriate, they are referenced in the report and a summary of the key high-level recommendations is provided in Appendix 1.

Key Findings

This inspection found a police service that is well behind other comparable services. The Garda Síochána has a limited understanding of current and future demand, and the absence of an intelligence-led strategic planning process is a significant organisational weakness. As a result, decisions on the workforce plan and resource allocation model are not fully informed. The Inspectorate found that the roster and certain allowances are barriers to developing a more flexible and responsive service.

The Inspectorate found that there is an insufficient understanding of the skills and training needs of members and staff, as well as a deficit of training to address skills gaps. In spite of increased investment, opportunities to maximise front-line resources have been hindered by slow progress on civilianisation, the continual decline in the number of reserves, abstraction of members from key front-line policing roles and unnecessary bureaucracy. The Inspectorate is concerned about supervision levels, particularly given the inexperience of a large proportion of front-line members.

A further concern is the deployment of district detectives and detective assistants to incidents that require an armed response. This is a significant organisational risk, due to training and equipment issues and the absence of command and control protocols at divisional level.

Some key organisational strategies, such as the accommodation strategy, are outdated; others, such as the information and communications technology (ICT), community policing and the diversity strategies, were in draft at the time of this inspection and not available to the Inspectorate. There is no strategy or plan to improve visibility and accessibility.

Throughout this inspection, the district model was identified as being too small in scale, leading to inefficient and inconsistent practices. This has an adverse impact on the services provided to victims and citizens. The Inspectorate's divisional functionality model is put forward to address this.

Critical Actions

This report contains nine critical actions that in the Inspectorate's view are essential to ensuring that policing services in local communities are more effective, visible and responsive. Each action is accompanied by a number of activities that if addressed will support the implementation of the critical actions.

Some of the critical actions and activities identified to address the inspection findings relate to the essential building blocks of the organisation, such as developing a workforce plan that is informed by policing priorities and a clear understanding of demand, as well as developing an ICT strategy that integrates systems and supports the organisation's vision for policing including at the local level.

Some are strategic in nature, such as the full implementation of an intelligence-led planning process that uses strategic assessments of threat, risk and harm to inform decisions about policing priorities and resourcing.

Others are tactical, for example, timely and relevant training for detectives and community policing officers.

Some are necessary to mitigate organisational risks associated with arrangements for custody, front-line supervision and the deployment of detectives to firearms incidents. Others aim to bring consistency and corporacy to existing activity, such as national call allocation and investigation policies.

In some cases, the activities restate or update previous recommendations because of their importance to efficient and effective service delivery. These include procedures to deal with unsatisfactory performance and unsatisfactory attendance. The Inspectorate considers that a good way to develop these is to appoint a senior manager as strategic lead to own the issue on behalf of the organisation, develop the policy and lead on implementation.

This report contains a number of new activities aimed at improving the delivery of local policing services. These include:

- › Using tools such as strategic assessments, activity analysis, business process mapping, academic research and priority-based budgeting to develop a fit for purpose workforce plan;
- › Developing an organisational visibility and accessibility strategy;
- › Developing a new and wider definition of vulnerability, to ensure that policing responses match the needs of individuals;
- › Creating a national community engagement/reassurance strategy that includes the use of social media at local policing levels;
- › Creating a multi-agency rural crime prevention and reassurance partnership;
- › Appointing a strategic lead to develop rosters for the various garda units that put people on duty at the right times;
- › Reviewing the current system of allowances to improve flexibility in deployment of resources and reduce inefficiencies; and
- › Conducting an organisational review to determine firearms response requirements.

Also included is a complementary action to develop Joint Policing Committees and local community fora to provide enhanced accountability of and support to local policing. This action is for the Policing Authority with the assistance of the Department of Justice and Equality.

Chapter 1: Local Policing – The Strategic Perspective

Introduction

Key strategic decisions that affect service delivery include the organisation’s resource distribution model and its policing priorities, as well as its structure, strategies and arrangements for governance.

The chapter looks from a strategic perspective at how demand for policing services is understood, measured and managed. It examines the factors and information that influence the identification of the policing priorities. It also considers key strategies and plans that are in place to support the delivery of policing services, as well as the current structure of the organisation, including plans to move to a divisional model of policing.

When using the term “local policing services”, the Inspectorate is referring to the policing services currently delivered at divisional and district levels throughout Ireland.

Review Findings

A Changing Ireland

An understanding of demographics is critical to decision-making about service provision. Over the last two decades, Ireland has witnessed a population growth of over 31%, mainly focused on larger urban centres. Population is forecast to increase to between 5.2 and 5.6 million by 2031. Census 2016 shows that over 15% of the population had an ethnicity other than White Irish. The growth, dispersal and diversity of the population, as well as other global and environmental factors such as serious and organised crime, climate change and Brexit will all affect demand for policing services and influence the priorities for policing.

The Garda Síochána needs to assess the impact of these factors on policing and be sufficiently agile to be able to respond appropriately.

Importance of Understanding and Measuring Demand

The Garda Síochána is a large and growing organisation that is required to address the combined challenges of dealing with traditional types of crime, preventing harm and protecting vulnerable people, as well as tackling new and complex threats. To do this in an efficient and effective manner, it must understand the current demand for its services in order to determine its optimum size, composition and structure, as well as the workforce skills necessary to deal with that demand. It is also important that it looks ahead and assesses how demand for its services will change over time.

Understanding Demand

Policing demand can be described in three broad categories. The first is public demand and this consists of the calls for service received from other organisations or the public and includes reports of crimes and other incidents. The second category, known as protective demand, is the pre-emptive or proactive demand arising from work to improve public safety and prevent crimes and incidents from occurring. The third is internal demand, which is the self-generated demand that comprises internal processes, protocols, administrative tasks and bureaucracy.

Measuring Demand

Public demand is usually measured by counting the number of calls for service. The Garda Síochána's understanding of public demand is incomplete because it does not currently have a single national system for recording all calls for service. The computer aided dispatch² system, which operates in the Dublin Metropolitan Region and in a number of divisions outside Dublin, contains information on all calls for service in those divisions.

Divisions without a computer aided dispatch record calls for service on an electronic database, however, this was found to be used inconsistently. The PULSE system contains crime and incident data for the whole organisation, but this also does not provide a complete picture of public demand because not all calls for service are crime or incident related.

The Inspectorate was informed that a nationwide roll-out of the computer aided dispatch system is underway and is expected to be in place by the end of 2018. Provided it is accompanied by robust systems and standard processes to record information, it should result in all public demand being more accurately captured on one system and contribute to a better understanding of demand.

The Garda Síochána could make better use of data from the existing computer aided dispatch system. However, its capabilities are not well understood throughout the organisation and not used to best effect.

Intelligence-Led Policing

Protective demand is difficult to measure; however, using an intelligence-led policing model can provide an understanding of what proactive work is required. Intelligence-led policing is a forward-looking, proactive process that assists police managers to make evidence-based decisions about their operational policing priorities and how they will deal with them. It includes the preparation of a strategic assessment report that identifies the medium to long-term threats and risks in the police service's operating area. Once the priorities have been identified, control strategies setting out preventative, intelligence, enforcement and reassurance actions are developed for each priority. This approach ensures that by understanding and prioritising police activity, the types of demand that create the highest levels of threat, risk and harm can be reduced. The Garda Síochána does not have a strategic planning process at national or local level and does not task its analysts with preparing strategic assessments of threat, risk and harm.

² Computer aided dispatch is an electronic system that records the details of all emergency and non-emergency calls received from the public that require a police response.

Process Mapping

Internal demand can be measured by conducting business process mapping. This defines what a business area does, who is responsible, and to what standard a business process should be completed. It is used to assist organisations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their processes and determine the resources necessary for them. The Garda Síochána has a large degree of control over its internal systems and processes. However, it does not fully understand the nature and scale of this demand and, although it is undertaking a significant change to its operating model, it has not conducted a systematic review of the relevant organisational processes. Tackling internal demand would save time, improve morale and change the behaviour of individuals, at the same time as increasing organisational productivity and changing the organisation's culture.

Activity Analysis

Activity analysis is another tool that can be used to obtain a more comprehensive understanding and measurement of demand. It involves capturing all activities that are carried out in the organisation, the time spent on them and by whom. To conduct an organisation-wide activity analysis in the absence of a modern human resources information system and duty management system would be challenging for the Garda Síochána. However, it would contribute to improved understanding of demand.

Academic Research

In other jurisdictions, police are collaborating with universities to undertake academic research to inform resourcing decisions, as well as identify effective crime reduction techniques and evaluate policing initiatives.

Determining Policing Priorities

Police services need to have strategic priorities in order to make evidence-based decisions about the allocation of their resources. In other jurisdictions, a wider range of information is used to identify policing priorities. This includes high-level government objectives for policing, stakeholder engagement and police assessments of threat, risk and harm.

The Policing Authority is responsible for determining the priorities and performance levels for the Garda Síochána in relation to its policing function in consultation with the Garda Commissioner. It consults widely on draft priorities, which take account of a number of policing objectives set out in *A Programme for Partnership Government*. In other jurisdictions, the strategic assessment of threat, risk and harm prepared by the police service would also be included in the process to determine policing priorities. The Garda Síochána does not fully operate an intelligence-led policing process. This is a significant organisational weakness. The introduction and routine use of the full suite of intelligence-led policing tools would result in a more complete set of information to identify policing priorities.

Critical Action 1 identifies how the Garda Síochána could better understand demand and identify its policing priorities.

Critical Action 1

To develop evidence-based methodologies and processes that enable the Garda Síochána to better understand its current and future demand and inform the identification of its policing priorities.

In support of this critical action, the Inspectorate considers that the following areas need to be addressed:

- Fully implement an intelligence-led policing process at national and local level, which includes the use of strategic assessments and control strategies;
- Undertake an organisation-wide activity analysis to provide a better understanding of demand;
- Carry out business process mapping of all relevant activities, starting with those used in divisions, to ensure they are fit for purpose and to eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy; and
- Increase collaboration with academia to develop evidence-based approaches to key policing issues.

Review Findings Continued

Organisational Structure

The structure of the Garda Síochána can be broadly broken down into three main components, namely operational divisions, national units and headquarters, with divisions providing the majority of policing services in local communities.

National and Headquarters Units

Most national units manage or co-ordinate the response to certain types of incidents because of their complexity, seriousness or national impact, while others provide strategic support to operational units. Headquarters provides management, human resources and logistical services for the organisation. This inspection found no evidence-based process for determining the number of staff allocated to these units and a lack of clarity about what aspects of demand they deal with.

Divisional Policing Model

The resources that deliver day-to-day policing services in local communities are organised in a geographical model comprising six regions, 28 divisions and 96 districts. This model gives each of the 96 district officers (superintendents) responsibility for a wide range of functions and the structure results in skills gaps, inconsistent decision-making, variable operational practices, unnecessary bureaucracy as well as multiple points of contact for Garda Headquarters and external partners. To improve efficiency and effectiveness, the Inspectorate previously recommended a leaner organisational model with fewer regions and divisions and a new divisional policing model in which senior management responsibilities are allocated on a functional divisional basis rather than a geographical district basis. The Garda Síochána accepted the recommendation to move to a divisional model but has not yet fully implemented it. Comparison between the Garda Síochána's proposed model and the one recommended by the Inspectorate shows that, although some functions will be managed on a divisional basis, the creation of multiple community engagement hubs perpetuates the current district model of policing.

The Inspectorate continues to be of the view that fewer regions and divisions, together with the implementation of a full divisional functionality policing model would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of local policing.

National Policing Plan

The *Garda Síochána Policing Plan 2017* contained 89 performance measures of which 48 were achieved, 14 were partially achieved and 27 were not achieved. The 2018 plan has 119 measures and it appears that many of these may not be achieved. The Inspectorate considers that the Garda Síochána should focus on fewer initiatives and associated measures, which reflect clearly identified strategic priorities, rather than making almost everything a priority and setting too many objectives, the totality of which may not be achievable. As previously recommended, the Garda Síochána also needs to adopt a process to cost its policing plans and link its resource allocation process to the strategic priorities.

Community Policing

The Garda Síochána regards being part of the community and working with the community as a major strength and in its *Modernisation and Renewal Programme 2016–2021*, it committed to enhancing its model of community policing. This inspection found several different community policing models in operation. Although the internationally recognised elements of community policing such as community engagement, problem solving and partnership working are included in these models, there was a lack of clarity about the purpose of community policing at all levels of the organisation and the key elements were not always well understood or consistently applied.

While communities have different policing needs and a one-size-fits-all model will not best serve those needs, there should be one clear strategy for community policing. This should set out the vision for and purpose of community policing, describe the essential elements of it, including engagement, problem solving and partnership working, and define the role and responsibilities of all those involved in community policing. The Garda Bureau of Community Engagement has an important role in the development of the strategy and an implementation framework, as

well as providing strategic support to divisions. The Inspectorate was told that a new community policing framework was being developed, but no implementation date was identified.

Information and Communications Technology Strategy

The Garda Síochána is well behind comparable police services in terms of its use of technology. This significantly limits its ability to provide the best possible policing service. The introduction of new ICT systems is critical to the modernisation of the Garda Síochána and the Government has provided €217m for technology improvements. However, at the time of writing, the Garda Síochána did not have a current strategy. The Inspectorate was provided with updates in relation to a number of organisational projects and notes that some progress is being made. However, there is an urgent need for an updated strategy that integrates with and supports the Garda Síochána's vision for policing. As well as ensuring that the essential strategic systems are in place, a key objective of the strategy should be to put in place technology solutions that support and enhance the delivery of local policing services. The strategy should not be just about digitising existing processes but should also be an opportunity to review, streamline and update processes to create efficiencies and reduce unnecessary bureaucracy.

Accommodation Strategy

In 2010, the Garda Síochána published a *Long Term Accommodation Strategy* and, although eight years old, many of the challenges identified at that time remain. The strategy needs to be refreshed in preparation for a bid to the 2022–2028 capital planning process and to assist the Garda Síochána in its modernisation programme. A refreshed strategy needs to identify future organisational requirements that take account of growth in the organisation, anticipated changes to the organisational structure and operating model, as well as changing demographics and population movements. The strategy should explore new types of facilities to meet the demands of 21st-century policing, which take account of new technology and new ways of working both within and outside the Garda Síochána.

Workforce Plan

Although the Garda Síochána has a workforce plan, it is unclear what the optimum number and mix of members, garda staff and reserves should be to police Ireland. The Garda Síochána's limited understanding of current and future demand for its services hinders the development of an effective workforce plan. Its draft plan sets out the "as is" allocation of garda members and staff and identifies the projected "to be" number of members and staff in each service area, based on the target of 15,000 garda members and 4,000 garda staff. The plan states that the "to be" model has been developed to reflect priorities agreed by the senior leadership team, including prioritisation of regular garda units and specialisation and professionalisation at regional/divisional level. The resulting "to be" numbers are described as high level and indicative. However, the plan does not contain any analysis of current demand, nor reflect a correlation between the organisation's policing priorities, as described in the strategy statement, and the resourcing levels.

As previously recommended, applying a priority-based budgeting process could further develop the workforce plan by critically assessing the deployment of current resources, redistributing them as necessary and by identifying where to deploy the additional resources currently being recruited.

Communicating Change

At a time of modernisation and reform within the Garda Síochána, it is vital that organisational changes are understood and embedded. This inspection identified limited awareness of organisational changes such as the roll-out of the divisional model. It is important therefore that change programmes are supported by engagement strategies and plans that are tailored to both internal and external audiences.

Governance, Accountability and Risk Management at a Strategic Level

The Inspectorate was informed that the Garda Síochána's main governance tools are its policing plans, management meetings that are held within the Performance Accountability Framework and its risk management processes.

The Inspectorate reviewed the operation of the Garda Síochána's risk management processes and noted that previous recommendations for this area of business had been implemented. Several senior managers reported receiving good advice from the Garda Risk Management Unit and a number of managers identified themselves as "risk champions", with responsibility for driving and supporting the use of risk management practices in their area. The Inspectorate welcomes these positive developments; however, the policy of each district having a risk register, resulting in a total of 130 for the regions, divisions and districts, should be reviewed.

Critical Action 2 contains a number of organisational strategies and plans that could significantly support and enhance the delivery of local policing services.

Critical Action 2

To develop organisational structures, strategies and plans that enhance the delivery of local policing services.

In support of this critical action, the Inspectorate considers that the following areas need to be addressed:

- › Implement the full divisional functionality policing model previously recommended by the Inspectorate;
- › Develop and implement a single community policing strategy that includes a clear definition of the vision and purpose of community policing, outlines the operating framework and states the core role and responsibilities of all members and staff involved in community policing;
- › Ensure that a strategic principle of the new ICT strategy is to support the delivery of local policing services;
- › Develop the organisational workforce plan to ensure that it aligns resources to policing priorities and demand and takes account of the ongoing increase in human resources;
- › Develop an updated accommodation strategy that takes account of structural and workforce changes; and
- › To support such organisational changes, develop and implement an internal and external engagement strategy.

Chapter 2: Allocation, Availability and Utilisation of Resources

Introduction

This chapter examines how garda resources are allocated and used to provide an effective, visible and responsive service. It looks at how headquarters allocates human resources and how divisions further distribute and use those resources. It considers the extent of progress to implement previous Inspectorate recommendations that gardaí be released from non-operational roles to front-line policing duties. Visibility and accessibility of services are considered, including how garda staff, the Garda Reserve and the use of garda stations can enhance service delivery. Finally, it examines a number of areas that impact on the availability and utilisation of resources including abstraction from front-line policing duties, as well as the management of performance and attendance.

Review Findings

Allocation of Human Resources

Despite Inspectorate recommendations dating back to 2009, the Garda Síochána still does not have suitable human resource systems in place to support the effective allocation and management of people. Some data on staff location and skills is inaccurate and not all of the call data that is available is used by the Garda Síochána in its allocation formula. It is also unclear what areas of threat, risk and harm are managed by headquarters, national and local policing units. Headquarters and national unit resources are not allocated using a specific model and it appears that many decisions are based on historical factors, rather than on demand. These units play an important role in supporting local policing but in the absence of a formal allocation process, meaningful demand data and clarity about functions of the units, the Inspectorate is unable to determine if the allocation of resources is sufficient. There is also no resource allocation model in place for deciding on the levels of regional resources.

It is important for the Garda Síochána to critically assess all positions in headquarters, national units and local policing to identify efficiency and effectiveness opportunities which will enable the allocation of additional resources to areas of higher threat, risk, harm and vulnerability.

The Garda Síochána needs to incorporate all available data sets/demand analytics, including calls for service data, to develop a new resource allocation model.

Distribution of Resources to Divisions

The Garda Síochána is using a relatively new model called 'Cohort' to distribute gardaí who are available for local policing across the 28 divisions. Cohort takes into account a number of relevant factors including population levels, the number of stations in a division, as well as crime and non-crime incidents from PULSE over the previous five years. While it provides a fair system for the distribution of gardaí at divisional level (after headquarters and national unit numbers are excluded), it is not an evidence-based resource allocation model that has established how many gardaí each division actually needs. Analysis showed that according to the numbers set by Cohort, 12 divisions had a surplus, one had the exact number and 15 had a deficit. Numbers are mainly adjusted by the distribution of new probationers on completion of their training at the Garda College, as there are challenges in transferring members from one division to another. The Inspectorate also found that there is no correlation between the Cohort process and the numbers of garda staff assigned to each business unit.

Members in Non-Operational Roles

Examination of units from headquarters level down to district level shows that there is still a high number of members in non-operational posts. This is despite a recommendation in 2015 about increasing the proportion of members on the front line.

Distribution of Members to Districts

Following the distribution of gardaí by Cohort to divisions, the local divisional chief superintendent decides on how those members will be further distributed.

Analysis of the distribution of resources showed considerable variations in the assignment of members across divisions to various policing functions, with different assignment choices being made in rural and urban divisions. Many of these variations arise from the continued use of a district policing model. Some district officers informed the Inspectorate that they were not assigned an appropriate number of members to match policing demand. Assigning on a district basis is inefficient as it creates barriers to later reassignments. This process also perpetuates the duplication of units comprising small numbers of members, spread thinly across multiple districts. For example, there are several small district detective units instead of one larger divisional unit.

The decline in the number of members assigned to community policing duties was raised as a barrier to delivering more effective local policing services. In many divisions, the number of community policing members has reduced by up to 50% from their highest levels and some districts have no dedicated community policing members in place. To enhance local service delivery, the resource allocation model should take account of the needs of all communities.

Availability of Resources

This inspection found that there are often insufficient gardaí on duty at the right times to deal with local policing demands. Compared to urban areas, the Inspectorate found that there are often fewer gardaí available each day in more rural places and, as a result, communities in these areas often receive more limited services. This analysis confirms that when the number of overall members reduced, the Garda Síochána became a far more reactive police service. Many of the proactive units in operation such as crime task forces, drugs units and community policing units lost considerable numbers of gardaí. Despite recent increases in numbers, the strength of these units has not been replenished.

Other police services visited by the Inspectorate had leaner organisational structures and a good understanding of policing demand, particularly in relation to people and local communities who are at most risk of harm. They also had systems for ensuring minimum numbers of police officers are available.

With the implementation of the new divisional functionality model, the Inspectorate believes that the responsibilities of a human resource manager at divisional level should include leading on all local resource distribution processes and workforce succession planning.

Critical Action 3 is designed to ensure that resources are allocated through an evidence-based model, focused on areas of higher threat, risk, harm and vulnerability.

Critical Action 3

To develop an evidence-based resourcing model that allows the accurate allocation of resources at all levels of the organisation based on areas of higher threat, risk, harm and vulnerability.

In support of this critical action, the Inspectorate considers that the following areas need to be addressed:

- › Incorporate all available data sets/ demand analytics, including calls for service data to develop a new resource allocation model;
- › Establish what areas of risk/harm will be managed by headquarters, national and local policing units;
- › Ensure that a resource allocation model takes account of the needs of all communities; and
- › Support the resource allocation process with the development of a local policing workforce plan led by the divisional human resource manager.

Review Findings Continued

Visibility

Visibility, accessibility and reassurance are essential elements of policing and they are critically important to local communities, particularly to those most vulnerable. Visibility matters to local communities and providing a highly visible and accessible policing presence is a priority for most police services. Visibility is not solely about a physical presence; other activity such as a strong media and online presence can be very effective. Putting a uniform presence in specific hotspot areas at times when crime or public disorder is anticipated provides a visible presence and a physical deterrent.

The Garda Public Attitudes Survey measures visibility and in 2017 only 36% of adults reported that gardaí patrolled their area regularly (98% of which was in cars). Awareness of gardaí patrolling on foot was 12% and on bicycles 5%. The survey does not provide any analysis at divisional level and the Inspectorate views this as a lost opportunity for local feedback.

During visits it was raised that constant abstractions of gardaí from their core duties is a major contributory factor in the low number of members who are available for patrol and visibility. The absence of foot patrolling was evident in most regular and community policing units, where vehicles were often the default option for patrol. Many rural districts explained that the number of members on regular and community policing units was too low for foot patrols and with larger areas to cover, members generally patrolled in vehicles.

There are some new practices in place that have led to increased garda visibility, such as the call-back initiative to victims of crime. At divisional levels, the inspection found that the Garda Síochána had an understanding of the importance of visibility, but there was no associated strategy, plan or systemic approach to using all available resources for greater visibility.

Promoting garda good news stories and providing crime prevention advice at divisional level was identified during visits as something that should be improved.

Publicising garda activity is a good way of providing a visible presence and offering practical crime prevention advice can make people feel safer. Many divisions have developed good relationships with radio stations and use this to communicate with local people. Social media also provides an excellent platform for the Garda Síochána to communicate important messages in real time to much wider audiences.

To increase visibility, divisions can take immediate action without additional resources. This includes the creation of local patrol plans that maximise the use of foot and cycle patrols, overlap shifts and reserve members for patrol and visibility. Using an intelligence-led policing approach would assist in identifying locations and times where visible policing can have the greatest impact. Expediting the roll-out of mobile technology would reduce the need for front-line units to return to stations.

Measuring the time spent outside of a station on foot, cycle or vehicle patrol is important to establish the visibility of patrol units. In 2014, the Inspectorate made a recommendation to enhance garda visibility by increasing the amount of time that gardaí spend out of stations. This area has not been progressed and apart from the Public Attitudes Survey, there are no systems or indicators used to measure visibility. The Garda Síochána has access to GPS technology in radios and vehicles that can track and locate individuals or vehicles but the Inspectorate did not find one division that was using this technology to monitor patrols and visibility.

Garda Stations and Accessibility

Police stations have traditionally provided public office counter services and a place to access services or report a crime. Symbolically, police stations provide a physical presence in a particular area and communities and individuals often feel much safer in the knowledge that there is a station nearby. Stations have become an issue of much public debate and many communities are still concerned about the closure of their station, especially if alternative service arrangements were not put in place. It was interesting to note that the 2017 Public Attitudes Survey revealed no notable differences in public perceptions of national crime and local crime and how far respondents lived from a station.

Not everyone wants to go to a station and the development of the sustainable use of garda clinics, kiosks or shopfronts, particularly in locations of high footfall would bring services to local communities. There are also great opportunities to extend the use of online garda services to provide people with alternative ways of reporting crime and other incidents as well providing access to information on local issues such as the provision of crime mapping. Using new and innovative ways of delivering services away from garda stations takes policing to the public.

In deciding on the appropriate number of stations and the reopening of previously closed stations, the Inspectorate believes that the Garda Síochána needs to look at least five to ten years ahead and decide where it needs facilities. The Inspectorate believes that all decisions about the number of stations, the type of stations and where they should be located are operational decisions for the Garda Commissioner. There are a number of principles that need to be considered. These include service criteria, response times, mobility of resources and visibility. The location of a station should be related to its purpose and the population it serves; it should also be accessible to users, be highly visible to the public and support efficient policing services.

Choices regarding the location of stations and other buildings have long-term implications. Many police services have moved away from building new large police stations to acquiring more flexible arrangements, such as leasing or sharing accommodation with other local services. It is also important to conduct cost benefit analysis exercises as to whether it provides value for money to invest funds and assign resources in existing stations that are seldom used.

Between 2011 and 2013, 139 garda stations were closed; some on the basis that they were already out of service while others were intended to release members for patrol duties. However, no formal public engagement was carried out at the time of closing most stations and there was no structured plan in place to ensure that the Garda Síochána maintained a physical presence in the areas affected.

The move to a divisional functionality model provides an excellent opportunity for the Garda Síochána to develop local accommodation plans that would enable divisions to establish how facilities can be used more effectively into the future. Additionally, key decisions need to be made about the opening hours of stations.

The Inspectorate believes that the Garda Síochána needs to make it clear to the public how it intends to deliver policing services. Closing a station is not a decision that should be taken lightly and communities should not be left feeling that they have lost their local policing service. In this regard, the Inspectorate believes that the Garda Síochána must improve a community's understanding of these types of policing decisions as well as ensuring a policing presence in affected areas.

Custody Facilities

Another area for consideration is the use of custody facilities. Across the Garda Síochána, 139 stations are used as places of detention. This is a large number of facilities to operate from. This inspection found that many lacked necessary equipment and most were not secure areas. Also, the Inspectorate continues to have serious concerns about the use of garda members in the management of detained persons. Having fewer purpose-built facilities, appropriately staffed and with the full range of equipment would provide much better use of resources. Many police services have moved to national or service-wide approaches to the management of detained persons. This has removed the management and operational responsibilities for detained persons and custody facilities from divisions. The Inspectorate believes that the Garda Síochána should develop a national approach to the provision of custody services.

Availability and Utilisation of Garda Staff

The Government has committed to provide an additional 2,000 garda staff and this is reflected in a draft garda workforce plan. During this inspection it was evident that at many levels of the Garda Síochána, civilianisation is not accepted or embraced and many of the suggestions provided by senior garda managers for using more garda staff centred on clerical support and lacked imagination.

There was a general absence of acknowledgement of the benefits of high-level management, technical skills and qualifications that garda staff could bring. Without immediate action, the Inspectorate believes that the Garda Síochána will be unable to meet its 2021 recruitment target. An increase in garda staff would facilitate the release of members back to front-line duties. During inspection visits to eight divisions, the Inspectorate found limited examples of the reassignment of gardaí from non-operational roles.

This report highlights a number of functions that should be performed by garda staff, such as in public offices, control rooms and custody suites. To utilise garda staff for these functions would require the recruitment of a critical mass of people and would expedite the process of releasing large numbers of members from station duties.

An issue that still needs to be resolved is the absence of defined reporting lines between garda members and garda staff. A recommendation in this regard was made in the 2015 report and the lack of clarity is a major obstacle to the integration of garda staff into the Garda Síochána.

This whole area requires the appointment of a senior manager as a strategic lead to help the Garda Síochána to achieve its 2021 target and to ensure that garda staff feel that they are an equally valued part of the workforce.

Garda Reserve

The Garda Reserve is an important element of the garda workforce and, with the right leadership and support in place, it can deliver an additional and important uniformed presence in local communities. In order to address the 50% decline in the number of reserves since December 2014, the Garda Síochána should complete its Garda Reserve strategy and address the retention of existing reserves, as well as barriers to the recruitment of new members. The Inspectorate believes this requires the appointment of a senior manager as a strategic lead to help the Garda Síochána to achieve its 2021 target and to ensure that reserves feel they are an equally valued part of the workforce.

Abstractions

Abstractions of front-line members for court cases, court security and summons serving are a daily occurrence. Following the opening of a new court house in Cork City in May 2018, an additional two sergeants and nine gardaí are now required on a daily basis for prisoner management and building security. No additional resources were provided resulting in daily abstractions from core policing roles. This greatly impacts on the availability of resources for local policing. Often, those most affected by abstractions are victim of crimes and local communities. This inspection has identified that in most divisions/districts, regular units have insufficient resources assigned to withstand the current level of abstractions. Outside of the main urban areas and into rural parts of Ireland, the impact can often be greater.

It has previously been recommended that options for divestiture and outsourcing in relation to these kinds of issues as well as reducing unnecessary and repeated court appearances for witnesses be developed. This is an area that requires the appointment of a strategic lead at senior management level to resolve some of these issues, working with other agencies, with the aim of releasing significant numbers of gardaí back to front-line policing duties.

The Inspectorate was informed that the Department of Justice and Equality established a Criminal Justice Strategic Committee in March 2015 to drive enhanced co-operation and collaborative change across the criminal justice sector and that it has made some progress. In December 2018, a Value for Money Review of prison escorts supported the Inspectorate's view that escorting remand prisoners to and from courts is not a core Garda Síochána function.

National Ports

The Inspectorate visited several divisions with national immigration responsibilities. Most senior garda managers who met with the Inspectorate in these divisions felt that immigration was a national function that should come under the umbrella of the Garda National Immigration Bureau.

At present, and particularly with the possibility of significant changes to border controls as a result of Brexit, the management of ports of entry and immigration services by districts does not appear to the Inspectorate to be the most effective and efficient method of managing a national function.

Mobility

In local divisions and districts, members and garda staff are assigned to a specific location and transferring them for operational or other business reasons can sometimes be challenging, if the individual concerned does not agree to move. This is a barrier to the effective use of resources and needs to be addressed.

Financial Management

At local policing levels, the financial responsibilities of divisions and districts is restricted to budgets for overtime, travel and subsistence and local purchases. Divisions have no control over pay costs and are not responsible for paying utility bills. However, they are responsible for managing the overtime budget. During visits, the Inspectorate identified a common correlation between the proactivity of the Garda Síochána at local policing levels and the use of overtime. It was also found that while many districts were already well overspent, there were no plans or actions in place to address this. Garda overtime spending is considerably higher than in comparable police services and this inspection has found limited accountability measures and systems in place to ensure that overtime is only incurred when absolutely necessary. Senior finance managers need to be in place at divisional level to provide business support to operational policing and to address factors that impact on the availability and management of financial resources such as overtime and allowances.

Critical Action 4 contains a number of strategies and actions that could significantly increase garda visibility and enhance accessibility to local policing services.

Critical Action 4

To develop an organisational visibility and accessibility strategy, supported by divisional implementation plans, to enhance public confidence and take policing to the public.

In support of this critical action, the Inspectorate considers that the following areas need to be addressed:

Visibility and Accessibility

- › The strategy and divisional implementation plans should include:
 - Local communication plans that use a range of media channels to publicise police activity, crime prevention advice and good news messages;
 - Intelligence-led patrol plans including foot and cycle patrols and the use of overlap shifts to enhance visibility;
 - Deployment of reserve members to provide high visibility patrols;
 - Proactive responses to feedback from the Public Attitudes Survey;
 - Increased capacity for patrol time by allocating mobile technology to front-line units;
 - Use of technology to measure levels of daily patrols and implement actions to increase out of station time; and
 - Development and promotion of new methods of accessing policing services and information, such as online services and local crime mapping.

Garda Stations and Local Services

- Create divisional station and accommodation plans following public consultation that determine the availability and use of garda stations and other local facilities. Plans should include the following activities:
 - Review the location and function of all available garda stations/ accommodation;
 - Complete a cost benefit analysis as to whether investment of funds and resources in stations that are seldom used represents value for money;
 - Engage with other public services and other service providers to explore opportunities for sharing or using accommodation to provide a range of public services;
 - Develop the sustainable use of garda clinics, kiosks or shopfronts, particularly in public locations with high footfall levels;
 - Explore opportunities for the use of mobile stations;
 - Conduct a review of station opening times and ensure that operating hours are published.

Custody Services

- Develop a national approach to the provision of custody services.

Civilianisation/Garda Reserve

- Appoint senior managers as strategic leads to promote civilianisation and the Garda Reserve;
- Maximise the release of garda members from support roles to enhance visibility; and
- Create a strategy/ plan for civilianisation and Garda Reserve recruitment that is ambitious and imaginative to deliver the Government targets by 2021.

Availability of resources

- Appoint senior managers as strategic leads to:
 - Reduce abstractions from front-line roles;
 - Seek opportunities for outsourcing or divestiture of non-core policing functions;
 - Develop a national ports policing approach;
 - Increase staff mobility within divisions; and
 - Review resourcing requirements associated with courts, including security, prisoner management, presenting and attendance of police witnesses.

Financial Management

- Appoint and empower finance managers at a local policing level to address factors that impact on the availability and management of financial resources such as overtime and allowances.

Review Findings Continued

Unsatisfactory Performance

Underperformance of members featured strongly in most interviews and people at all ranks estimated that a significant proportion of members are underperforming. The Performance, Accountability and Learning Framework (PALF) performance management system being rolled out has no ultimate sanction of dismissal for those members who are not subject to disciplinary proceedings but who still fail to reach the required standard. The Inspectorate believes that the Garda Síochána needs to develop unsatisfactory performance procedures to deal with low productivity, failure to meet standards, negative or apathetic attitude and breaches of the Code of Ethics.

Sickness Absence and Light Duties

This inspection examined sickness levels as well as arrangements for those members on light duties who are not available for the full range of duties or hours. Like other police services, the Garda Síochána sometimes struggles with the challenge of managing sickness absence and people on light duties while maintaining sufficient numbers of people on operational units. Analysis of sickness and light duties showed that the highest combined levels were all in rural divisions. To more effectively manage sickness absence and light duties, the Inspectorate believes that the Garda Síochána needs to develop attendance management policies and procedures.

Human Resource Managers

The Inspectorate welcomes the decision to appoint divisional human resource managers, but stresses that they must be empowered to lead on key human resources areas such as workforce planning, wellness of staff, sickness, training and selection processes.

Critical Action 5 contains a number of strategies and actions that could significantly increase the availability and utilisation of all garda resources and deliver more effective policing services to local communities.

Critical Action 5

To maximise the availability of human resources at a local policing level.

In support of this critical action, the Inspectorate considers that the following areas need to be addressed:

- › Develop unsatisfactory performance procedures;
- › Develop attendance management procedures; and
- › Appoint and empower human resource managers at a local policing level to address factors that impact on the availability of resources such as sickness absence and light duties.

Chapter 3: Deployment and Capabilities of Local Resources

Introduction

The everyday policing needs of a community are varied and require the provision of a wide range of policing services, including responding to calls for service, investigating crime and incidents, protecting the community from harm and improving public safety through community policing.

This chapter assesses how the Garda Síochána identifies demand at a local level and how it makes decisions to deploy resources to deliver a visible, effective and responsive local policing service. The chapter considers specific issues including understanding and managing demand at the local level, briefing and tasking of staff, management of resources, training and professional development, front-line supervision and technological capability.

Review Findings

Matching Resources to Demand

To ensure that there are sufficient resources on duty to deal with calls for service, local senior managers need readily available and accurate demand data to make informed decisions on the number of resources required on different days and at different times of the day. In designing response policing services, it is important that the Garda Síochána builds in resilience both in terms of the number of resources on duty and their skills so that local units are able to deal with the majority of incidents that can occur. Barriers to better resource planning and management of demand include poor quality data and the district level approach to dealing with calls for service. For example, call and PULSE data examined by the Inspectorate noted poor recording of domestic incidents on PULSE, an area previously identified by the Inspectorate. The results of this analysis require further examination by the Garda Síochána to ensure that incidents of this nature are always recorded on PULSE. The Garda Síochána needs to take a more holistic and divisional level approach to managing calls for service.

This would facilitate easier identification of trends and patterns to determine the allocation of resources to better match demand for services.

Intelligence-Led Policing

Key to effectively managing protective demand is the use of an intelligence-led policing process at a local policing level. This process uses strategic assessments of threat, risk and harm to identify policing priorities and control strategies. It helps inform the deployment and tasking of resources to prevent harm, increase public safety and reduce demand for services. The Garda Síochána uses some components of this process, such as tactical assessments, however, the whole process is not embedded into local policing. An embedded process would help local senior managers to develop formal systems including tactical tasking and co-ordinating meetings that can be used to determine what proactive policing activity is required and assign specific tasks to operational units. The Garda Síochána needs to implement fully an intelligence-led policing process at divisional level. To support the process, it should allocate garda analysts to each division to work alongside criminal intelligence officers. This would create the basis for divisional intelligence units.

Briefing, Tasking and Debriefing

In 2016, following a Labour Court recommendation in the context of a garda pay dispute, a payment was introduced for parade briefing in the form of 15 minutes' overtime per member per shift. Every garda member up to inspector rank receives this overtime payment at the start of a tour of duty as briefing time whether they are actually briefed or not. All operational units should be formally briefed and tasked by a supervisor at the commencement of each tour of duty. The purpose is to assign roles and policing tasks for the day, as well as providing relevant intelligence and information on new legislation or policies. Each operational unit should also be debriefed at the end of duty to ensure tasks have been completed, records updated and relevant information passed to the oncoming unit. Some examples of good practice were identified during this inspection, however, structured briefing, tasking and debriefing of units was generally absent.

As a result, the maximum policing benefit is not being realised from the significant cost of paying 15 minutes' briefing time to gardaí, sergeants and inspectors. The Garda Síochána needs to derive more value from unit briefings, which should be structured and supported with analytical products produced by local intelligence units.

Duty Planning

The Garda Síochána needs to manage its resources proactively to ensure that there are sufficient numbers on duty to deal with predicted demand, while also managing absences and abstractions. Most comparable police services have divisional duty planning units and use electronic resource and duty planning systems to ensure that sufficient resources with the right skills are on duty. In the Garda Síochána, duty planning is paper based and managed on a district-by-district basis. While technology is in pilot phase in one division, there are no immediate plans to roll it out. This technology is critically important and it should be operating nationally as soon as possible.

Garda Roster

The current one-size-fits-all garda roster does not make the best use of finite resources and, while popular with members, it does not effectively support the delivery of local policing services. The roster has built-in overlaps that provide additional staff at certain set times. Overlaps are opportunities for proactive or high-visibility policing, but were found to be widely used for administration and completion of investigation files. The Garda Síochána needs to develop multiple rosters that are more closely aligned to a unit's core policing function and which put resources on duty when they are needed. A senior manager should be appointed as a strategic lead to progress this issue.

Impact of Allowances

The availability of certain allowances hinders more effective use of resources and results in inefficient practices. There is a clear connection between the roster and some allowances, which combined, reduces flexibility in matching resources to policing demand and puts people on duty at times when they are not needed.

The Inspectorate understands the complexities of the roster and allowance provisions, but considers the current arrangements to be major inhibitors to more effective deployment of garda resources. A review of the current system of allowances is required.

Call Allocation

Matching the most appropriate resource to deal with an incident or a call for service is key to delivering a high quality service to victims and the public. There is currently no national policy to determine how different types of calls for service should be allocated. As a result, there is a lack of clarity about the types of calls that specific units should respond to and there are inconsistent practices. A national call allocation policy would ensure that calls are correctly graded; it should also consider risk and the vulnerability of callers and result in more effective deployment of resources to calls for service. A national call allocation policy, based on a risk assessment framework, should be developed and implemented in all control rooms.

Allocation of Investigations

There is no national or local policy to determine the assignment of crimes for investigation and there remains an unsatisfactory practice that the first person assigned to deal with an incident will usually investigate it. There is a lack of clarity about the types of crimes that specific units should investigate and there are inconsistent practices across districts and divisions. A national investigation policy should be developed and implemented to provide clarity, consistency of approach and deliver a better service to victims of crime.

Identifying Vulnerable People

Garda policy narrowly aligns vulnerability with certain types of incidents and provides for additional support to be given to a victim who meets the vulnerability criteria. However, the unique needs of a vulnerable person do not necessarily influence the nature of the first response to a call for assistance. Vulnerability arising from repeat victimisation is not easily identifiable.

As the identification of those who are vulnerable is an important aspect of local policing services, the Garda Síochána should develop a new and wider definition of vulnerability and embed it within call management and investigation policies. It should also introduce technology to identify repeat callers for services and repeat victims of crime to ensure the most appropriate policing response is provided.

Previous Recommendations

In previous Inspectorate reports, a number of recommendations were made to improve the deployment and management of resources that have not been fully implemented. These included the introduction of a resource management and duty planning system and ensuring that senior garda managers use available data to understand and manage calls for service.

Critical Action 6 contains a number of actions that could significantly improve the deployment of resources and deliver more effective policing services to local communities.

Critical Action 6

To develop policies, processes and systems to ensure the effective deployment of resources at a local level.

In support of this critical action, the Inspectorate considers that the following areas need to be addressed:

- › Collate and analyse available data at divisional level to inform deployment decisions with the objective of ensuring that there are sufficient resources in place to match calls for service demand;
- › Improve the management of resources through the introduction of duty planning units and an electronic resource management system;
- › Appoint a senior manager as a strategic lead to develop multiple rosters for garda units that put people on duty at the right times;
- › Review the current system of allowances to improve flexibility in deployment of resources and to reduce inefficiencies;

- › Develop an intelligence-led policing process at divisional level to identify policing and community issues and direct resources in a way that will prevent harm and reduce demand;
- › Allocate garda analysts to each division and combine these resources with criminal intelligence officers to create divisional intelligence units;
- › Extract more value from unit briefings, which should be supported with analytical products produced by the local intelligence units;
- › Develop a National Call Allocation Policy based on a risk assessment framework, which should be incorporated into existing and new control rooms;
- › Develop a National Policy for Investigations that is consistent with a national call allocation policy and which outlines the investigative roles of all units, particularly response, community policing and detective units;
- › Develop a new and wider definition of vulnerability that should be used to ensure the level of policing response matches the needs of the individual; and
- › Introduce technology that identifies repeat callers for services and repeat victims of crime and informs the appropriate policing response.

Review Findings Continued

Developing Workforce Skills and Knowledge

The complexity of policing requires a broad range of skills and professional knowledge that need to be regularly updated. However, there is no electronic human resource system that holds staff training records, and a training needs analysis has not been conducted to identify local requirements. As a result, there is a poor understanding of the training needed to ensure divisions have sufficient levels of the skills necessary to deliver a high quality local service.

Some districts are individually trying to ensure they have all the skills in place to manage the full range of incidents they could deal with, up to and including homicides, even though they may never need these skills or may only use them infrequently. In contrast, core operational skills required to deliver local policing services such as first aid and officer safety training are not being adequately addressed. There is no training programme for community policing members and those performing this role are often untrained in important aspects, such as partnership working and problem solving.

Each division needs to conduct a training needs analysis and create a training and development strategy to address the identified training requirements for its members, garda staff and reserves. This should include induction training for all new staff and continuous professional development of all ranks and grades. Training and development should not be limited to classroom-based methods and could include e-learning and video conferencing to minimise abstraction time and travel costs. A divisional human resource manager should lead this work.

Driver Training

During this inspection, many divisions raised concerns about the low number of front-line members who are qualified to drive police vehicles using warning lights and sirens. The current driver training programme is struggling to provide sufficient numbers of courses to keep pace with the demand. The Garda Síochána needs to take immediate action to develop a plan that delivers sufficient driving skills for local policing.

District Detective Capability

The development of investigative skills for district detectives is unstructured and unlike other jurisdictions, there is no professional development programme in place for detectives. Detective assistants are also assigned to detective units and in general, they investigate the same types of cases as appointed detectives. However, they do not receive detective training. The Inspectorate found concerns amongst investigators that a lack of training had left them ill equipped to investigate crimes such as fraud and cybercrime.

Mandatory, timely and accredited detective training would enhance operational capability and improve the service provided to victims of crime.

District Firearms Response

District detectives and some detective assistants are trained and authorised to carry firearms on duty and are required to respond to firearms or other life threatening incidents. However, they do not have the same equipment or level of training as the Armed Support Units and, outside the Dublin region, command and control protocols for the deployment of armed officers are weak. This arrangement creates an organisational risk. To address this, the Garda Síochána needs to review any current strategic assessment of the firearms threat in the State and from that, to determine the necessary firearms response requirements. This would inform decisions to train detectives and detective assistants in the use of firearms.

Front-Line Supervision

Effective front-line supervision is vital for the successful delivery of local policing services. Sergeants should be visible leaders, available to their teams and play a key role in reinforcing ethical standards, as well as providing technical guidance. This inspection found that front-line supervision has been disproportionately affected by decisions on the assignment of sergeants in recent years. No organisational priority has been given to assigning sergeants to local policing and, within local policing, priority has not been given to assigning sergeants to front-line units. This has resulted in significant gaps in front-line supervision, which are magnified by the fact that front-line resources include almost 2,000 gardaí with less than four years' service. This is an organisational risk which requires immediate mitigating action including the need for patrol sergeants and an inspector to be on duty on a 24/7 basis across all divisions. This inspection also found that unnecessary administrative bureaucracy reduces supervisory capacity and needs to be systematically identified and removed.

Technology to Support Front-Line Policing

The Garda Síochána needs to develop further its use of technology to be more agile in dealing with local policing demand, more effective in preventing harm and more responsive to public expectations. It has the opportunity to learn from the experience of other police services which have trialled systems that could enhance policing in Ireland. The use of mobile technology can provide real-time access to police systems, increase visibility by reducing the need for members to return to stations and has the potential to enhance both capacity and capability. The pilot underway in Limerick Division should be evaluated as a priority. A renewed and ambitious strategy for the use of automatic number plate recognition technology is required to maximise the intelligence and investigative opportunities the system presents. Research has shown that the use of body worn video cameras has many potential benefits for police services, the criminal justice system and victims of crime. This is an area that the Garda Síochána should actively explore.

Previous Recommendations

This part of the chapter has highlighted a number of previous Inspectorate recommendations that are not yet implemented. This includes the prioritisation of front-line supervision and the training of new probationers in response driving.

Critical Action 7 contains a number of strategies and actions that could significantly improve the skills of the local workforce and enable the Garda Síochána to deliver more effective local policing services.

Critical Action 7

To develop the capability of the local policing workforce through the provision of relevant training programmes, better supervision, and the use of new technologies.

In support of this critical action, the Inspectorate considers that the following areas need to be addressed:

- › Divisional human resource managers should be tasked to conduct a local training needs analysis to identify gaps in skills and to create a divisional training strategy to address training and development needs;
- › Embed continuous professional development as a practice within local policing;
- › Ensure that detective training is mandatory, delivered in a timely fashion and current in its content;
- › Conduct an organisational review / strategic assessment to determine firearms response requirements;
- › Develop a national training programme for all community policing members (all ranks);
- › Develop a strategy / plan that delivers sufficient driving skills for local policing;
- › Prioritise the allocation of supervisors to operational front-line units; and
 - Ensure dedicated patrol sergeants are deployed on every shift, with a focus on leading operational service delivery;
 - Identify and remove unnecessary bureaucracy that hinders the ability of sergeants to provide front-line supervision;
- › Expedite the allocation of new technology to front-line units to enable more efficient and effective delivery of local policing services.

Chapter 4: Delivering Local Policing Services

Introduction

This chapter examines how the Garda Síochána engages with communities and stakeholders, responds to communities in the delivery of services at local level and explores how trust and confidence can be enhanced. It also discusses the Inspectorate's preferred management model for divisional policing.

Review Findings

Role of Headquarters and National Units

While this inspection identified some positive activity to involve local communities in policing and to make places safer, much of the action taken is unco-ordinated at a national level and there are inconsistencies in local approaches. Headquarters and national units have an important role to play in creating strategies, policies and procedures for critical areas, such as crime reduction and community engagement that should lead to the delivery of more consistent local services, within a national framework.

Local Policing Plans

It is important that local policing plans are not just a rebranding of the national plan, but reflect the concerns and needs of local communities. Evidence was found of some public consultation in relation to the plans. However, there are underdeveloped opportunities to adopt a more interactive and collaborative approach that achieves positive outcomes on things that matter to communities. Plans generally contain a number of actions, but often have no defined outcomes. It is unclear if divisions and districts have sufficient resources in the right places to deliver the many objectives and initiatives in the plans and, as with the national policing plan, the local plans are not costed. The Garda Síochána should ensure that local plans reflect local concerns and have outcome focused performance indicators.

The Inspectorate considers that the 96 district plans create unnecessary bureaucracy and that there should be one divisional policing plan, supported by a number of micro level plans created in smaller community policing areas or aligned to community fora areas. Local plans and performance updates should be accessible to the public.

Public Attitudes Surveys

The Public Attitudes Survey provides important feedback about the Garda Síochána, with results available at national and provincial level. There is merit in extending the survey to enable analysis to be conducted at divisional level, although it is acknowledged that this would increase costs. It would also be beneficial to enhance the representativeness of respondents to measure the impact of policing on people living in rural and urban areas as well as those from minority groups. Developing the survey and acting on the results from it demonstrates responsiveness to public feedback, helps divisions to identify areas for improvement and contributes to improving trust and confidence.

Victim and Customer Services

It is positive to note that a number of recommendations made to improve practices and procedures in relation to dealing with victims, witnesses and customers have been implemented. These include the introduction of Garda Victim Services Offices in all divisions and changes to PULSE to record victim contact. However, many aspects of those recommendations have not yet been implemented, such as creating a policy and process for identifying and supporting repeat victims of crime. The Garda Síochána needs to appoint a senior manager to conduct a strategic review of the progress made to implement the victim and customer service recommendations contained in the *Crime Investigation (2014)* and *Changing Policing in Ireland (2015)* reports.

Crime Prevention

Preventing crime is a core function of policing and must be at the forefront of everyone's mind. The Inspectorate welcomes the publication by the Garda Síochána of a *Crime Prevention & Reduction Strategy*, but was disappointed to find a very limited awareness of its existence and use to drive activity to reduce crime and prevent harm. The strategy should be reviewed to ensure that it is operationally relevant and its implementation should be monitored and evaluated. New opportunities for crime arise through new technology developments and products entering the market and criminals are quick to change the way that they operate. It is therefore important that police services influence manufacturers and planners to design systems, products, public spaces and buildings that reduce offending opportunities for criminals.

Rural Crime and the Fear of Crime

During this inspection, a number of local people and organisations representing communities raised the issue of rural crime and the high fear of crime experienced by some people. Geography and rural isolation present challenges for the Garda Síochána in terms of visibility and providing reassurance. Additionally some rural areas have experienced the closure of local stations and seen reductions in the number of community policing gardaí. Recognising the concerns about crime in rural communities, the Inspectorate believes that a multi-agency rural crime prevention and reassurance partnership should be developed to tackle crime and the fear of crime in rural communities.

Community Engagement

Community engagement is important to identify local priorities, maintain regular contact with communities as well as provide information and feedback on police activity. While it is vital that all engagement is positive and meaningful and every member of staff has a significant role to play, there are important engagement activities that need to be supported with the assignment of specialist resources at a local level.

This inspection identified an absence of national or local community engagement and reassurance strategies, resulting in varying degrees of ad hoc engagement and limited understanding of local communities' needs or concerns. Despite a strong community ethos, many aspects of garda engagement activities are unstructured and unco-ordinated. There should be a national community engagement and reassurance strategy based on clear objectives supported by an operating framework and guidance for all staff. In particular, this needs to include engagement and reassurance activity with minority and emerging communities.

Community Policing

Community policing is a critical area of service delivery and where garda community policing units were sufficiently staffed and able to undertake their role appropriately, it had led to some positive local initiatives. In urban divisions, although the numbers of gardaí assigned to community policing have reduced, they have still maintained sufficient numbers to deliver community policing services. However, in rural areas, large reductions in the numbers of gardaí in community policing roles and the use of a hybrid model have had a significant impact on the delivery of local policing services. At present, there is a risk of the Garda Síochána delivering an inconsistent community policing service across the 28 divisions, depending on whether the division is in an urban or in a rural location.

Feedback from service users, partners and external stakeholders was generally very complimentary about the work of community policing gardaí and highlighted some positive local initiatives to solve problems, often in partnership with other agencies. Identifying and implementing long-term solutions to endemic problems is essential to preventing harm and is a core element of community policing. Adopting a problem-solving approach can address the root cause of an issue affecting a local community and remove the need for gardaí to continue to deal with similar incidents in the future. Some good examples of problem solving were found during this inspection but, in general, it was poorly understood and infrequently used.

It was also the case that most community policing members had not received any problem-solving training. Effective problem solving requires time and specialist skills, which can be best achieved through dedicated community policing units. The Garda Síochána should develop specialist community policing units in all divisions with sufficient resources to identify and tackle the issues that are important to local communities.

Partnership Working

In most other similar jurisdictions, there is a statutory requirement for agencies to work together. The Inspectorate believes that tackling crime and making places safer requires more formal arrangements to ensure that agencies work more closely together, agree shared priorities, co-locate resources where appropriate and facilitate the effective sharing of information. While the Inspectorate believes that partnership working should be more formalised, it does not stop the development of shared objectives, joint activity and agreed protocols to facilitate more effective partnership working. In previous Inspectorate reports a number of recommendations were made to improve local partnership working that have not been progressed. These included convening partnership groups at a divisional level to improve criminal justice processes and to develop clear protocols and guidelines as necessary to support information sharing. The divisional model provides an excellent opportunity for the newly formed garda management team to develop much stronger partnerships at a local level and a strategic lead should be appointed to take this forward.

Managing Offenders

There are inconsistent approaches to the management of adult offenders by the Garda Síochána. Managing offenders who are on bail, wanted on warrant or named on summonses is critical in order to prevent reoffending. While a variety of different units can assist with the monitoring and targeting of such offenders, the Inspectorate believes that these types of functions should be managed and led at a divisional level and could be enhanced by a multi-agency approach. This will ensure consistency in practice and co-ordination of activity to reduce the risk of reoffending.

Critical Action 8 contains a number of strategies and actions that could significantly support and enhance the delivery of local policing services.

Critical Action 8

To develop strategies, processes and action plans to improve the delivery of local policing services.

In support of this critical action, the Inspectorate considers that the following areas need to be addressed:

Local Policing Plans

- › Develop a single divisional policing plan that is informed by a divisional strategic assessment and interactive consultation with stakeholders and community representatives followed by the publication of regular progress updates on performance.

Victim and Customer Services

- › Appoint a senior manager to conduct a strategic review of the progress made to implement the victim and customer service recommendations contained in the *Crime Investigation (2014)* and *Changing Policing in Ireland (2015)* reports.

Engagement and Reassurance

- › Develop a national community engagement/reassurance strategy that includes the use of social media at local policing levels;
- › Develop a multi-agency Rural Crime Prevention and Reassurance Partnership; and
- › Develop the Public Attitudes Survey to provide local divisional feedback and enhance the representativeness of respondents to measure the impact of policing on people living in rural and urban areas as well as those from minority groups.

Crime Prevention

- › Ensure that the Crime Prevention & Reduction Strategy is operationally relevant and that it drives local crime prevention activity.

Community Policing

- › Develop specialist community policing units in all divisions focused on the critical policing elements as outlined in this chapter. This requires the assignment of sufficient levels of resources to effectively deliver local community policing services.

Partnership Working

- › Appoint a strategic lead to develop much stronger partnerships at a local level.

Complementary Action

Delivery of and accountability for local policing services could be enhanced through the further development of Joint Policing Committees and local community fora. There should be a stronger relationship between local policing plans and Joint Policing Committees' plans. The composition of Joint Policing Committees should change to have much wider representation from community members, while committees would benefit from having independent chairs. The move to a new divisional model of policing presents an excellent opportunity to develop local policing fora to help identify more localised policing priorities, hold the Garda Síochána to account and provide more support to the overall work of Joint Policing Committees.

Joint Policing Committees and local fora need to be fully supported with guidance, training and funding and new legislation may be required.

The Policing Authority should lead this area with the assistance of the Department of Justice and Equality.

Complementary Action 8A

Develop new guidance and training and provide funding for Joint Policing Committees and local community fora to provide enhanced accountability for and support to local policing.

Review Findings Continued

Garda Síochána Divisional Model

As outlined in Chapter 1, the Inspectorate considers that the implementation of a full divisional functionality model of policing would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of local policing and facilitate the redeployment of gardaí and garda staff to areas of policing where there are higher levels of threat, risk, harm and vulnerability. Despite resistance to change, the Garda Síochána has committed to move from a district model to a divisional model. However, the most recent version is not a full functionality model as it retains a geographical and district-based model, albeit with a different title.

The four pilot divisions and the Divisional Policing Team at headquarters have invested a significant amount of time and effort to prepare for the implementation of the model. However, enthusiasm for the roll-out has lost its initial impetus and progress to date is very slow. While delays persist, the benefits of a divisional model are not being realised.

Impact on Stakeholders

In most places visited by the Inspectorate, there was limited knowledge of how a divisional functionality model would work. Even in the pilot divisions, knowledge and understanding was poor and little engagement had taken place with staff or local stakeholders. There was limited awareness of the benefits of the Inspectorate's model such as improvements in services to victims of crime, to local communities and to other stakeholders. For stakeholders such as local authorities, this model provides a single point of contact and a consistent approach to how a division interacts with its partners, as well as ensuring that those accessing garda services receive a consistent standard of service irrespective of where an incident occurs. The Garda Síochána believes that removing a district superintendent will be very unpopular with key stakeholders and will adversely affect community confidence. The Inspectorate's model provides a full-time superintendent as a strategic lead for communities supported by inspectors, sergeants and gardaí. It is therefore important that local communities and other stakeholders understand that partnership working will be enhanced and not diminished.

Management Levels

Senior garda managers informed the Inspectorate that additional superintendents would be required to operate the garda model. The Inspectorate's model allows for different management models depending on the size, complexity and risk associated with policing a division. While the Inspectorate saw opportunities to reduce the number of superintendents required nationally, the decision to have multiple community engagement hubs is likely to require an increase in superintendent numbers. Since completing inspection visits, divisions are reassessing the number of community engagement hubs with a view to reducing the number of superintendents required.

Responsibilities of Senior Managers

The Inspectorate's model reduces the broad scope of the current responsibilities of superintendents and assigns them to portfolios with fewer but specific divisional responsibilities. Superintendents will become more expert in a defined field of responsibility and the model will facilitate greater consistency in decision-making and operational deployment practices. In the Inspectorate's model, the garda staff business manager would be responsible for key support functions such as human resources, finance and training, as well as providing expertise in a number of important business areas.

Achieving Policing Priorities

In the Inspectorate's model, all senior managers should be focused on achieving overall divisional policing priorities rather than superintendents concentrating on their own district/hub performance, sometimes to the detriment of the overall performance of the division. Removing geographical responsibilities from superintendents and doing away with district policing plans will create a more collegiate, collaborative and consistent approach by senior managers to tackling local policing issues. A single divisional policing plan, a single divisional risk register and a single divisional Performance Accountability Framework meeting should accompany a move to this model.

Improving Local Services

The Inspectorate's model is intended to improve deployment practices and response times by placing all regular units in a division under the leadership of one superintendent. It is also intended to enhance the timeliness and quality of investigations by assigning certain cases to new investigation units staffed by people who have the skills to conduct investigations thoroughly and expeditiously. In the garda model, regular units will continue to be part of each community engagement hub and will continue to investigate a wide range of different crime types. This will negatively impact on their availability to perform their core role of responding to calls for service. To support the change, the roles and responsibilities for all functions within the divisional structure need to be defined.

Impact on the Workforce

The implementation of a full divisional functionality model will have an overall impact on the workforce, but it will not necessarily result in a change of role for individuals or in a change in the location where they work. However, the model provides a number of benefits for all staff including clarity of role for individuals and units, fairer distribution of workloads and better duty management to ensure that sufficient levels of resources are available at peak demand times.

Policing Rural and Urban Areas

The Inspectorate believes that its model is sufficiently flexible to cater for both urban and rural policing environments and will support the growth of the Garda Síochána now and into 2021. It creates the opportunity to review the availability and use of garda stations on a divisional basis. The pilot divisions in Cork City and Dublin Metropolitan Region South Central do not have the geographical challenges faced in Galway and Mayo and provide excellent opportunities to design more effective and efficient policing services that improve service to the public.

Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland

The Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland recommended that garda divisions should be self-sufficient and envisaged that for most policing purposes, a division should be a mini police service in its own right. The Inspectorate supports the empowerment of divisions and the delegation of authority to the lowest and most appropriate level. However, it is concerned about the creation of mini police services at this level. The Commission also recommended a new district policing model, positioning front-line district police as the core of the organisation. Both the Commission and the Inspectorate are consistent in highlighting the importance of designing and delivering efficient and effective local policing services. While there are differences in the language used to describe the structure, the Inspectorate considers that the Commission's approach, which could involve fewer larger districts and fewer divisions, may not be incompatible with its full divisional functionality policing model.

Interim Actions

In the interim of a national roll-out, the Inspectorate believes that actions, such as developing an internal/external consultation and communication plan and appointing divisional human resource managers, could be taken now to realise some of the intended benefits of the model and support its full implementation across all divisions.

Critical Action 9 contains a number of areas that could significantly support the transition to a divisional model and enhance the delivery of local policing services.

Critical Action 9

To implement a full divisional functionality policing model

In support of this critical action, the Inspectorate considers that the following areas need to be addressed:

- › Take account of the Inspectorate's model, particularly the assignment of specific functions under the leadership of individual senior managers;
- › Develop an internal/external consultation and communication plan for the divisional model;
- › Create roles and responsibilities for all divisional functions, including the role of supervisors;
- › Appoint a senior manager to conduct a strategic review of the partnership recommendations made in the *Crime Investigation (2014)* and *Changing Policing in Ireland (2015)* reports with a view to developing much stronger partnerships at a local level;
- › As outlined in Critical Action 4, create divisional accommodation plans that review the availability and use of garda stations and other local facilities as part of the divisional model implementation process; and
- › As outlined in Critical Action 8, develop a single divisional policing plan, a single divisional Performance Accountability Framework meeting and a single divisional risk register.