

Garda Síochána Inspectorate

Publication of Garda Inspectorate Report on Crime Investigation

Tuesday 11th November 2014: The Garda Inspectorate welcomes the publication today by the Minister for Justice and Equality of the Inspectorate's report, *Crime Investigation*. The report, presented to the Minister by Chief Inspector Robert K. Olson, is the result of a detailed two-year examination by the Inspectorate of crime investigation in the Garda Síochána.

The Inspectorate examined the policies, practices and procedures used in the prevention and investigation of crime. The inspection also included a review of the allocation of Garda resources, the use of technology, the management of caseloads, and monitored the progress of individual investigations.

The comprehensive report makes more than 200 recommendations for change to be implemented on a short, medium and long term basis. It runs to more than 500 pages and contains eleven parts dealing with every aspect of crime investigation, from crime prevention, crime recording, the experience of victims, through to crime detection, and final prosecution. It includes an addendum dealing with issues previously identified in the Guerin Report. The Inspectorate references best international practice throughout to inform our national standards and to ensure consistency in victim care and crime investigation practices.

“This Report should be viewed as a watershed opportunity,” said Garda Inspectorate Chief Inspector, Robert K. Olson. “We have made more than 200 significant recommendations to ensure that crime investigation in the Garda Síochána is in line with, and can exceed international best practice. Some of these recommendations have been made in previous Inspectorate reports, but haven't been fully implemented, and are, as a result, even more urgent today. Our objective with this report is to help make the Garda Síochána a better service – better for the public, for victims of crime, for the members themselves, and for the criminal justice system in Ireland.”

The report identifies many deficiencies in systems and practices. These include:

- Serious failures in the recording, classification and reclassification of crime incidents;
- Inconsistencies in the claiming of detections;
- A lack of oversight of the decision making process;
- No standardised crime management process for reviewing, allocating and monitoring of investigations and ensuring each investigation is effective;
- An absence of intrusive supervision of crime investigations;
- Inexperienced gardaí investigating serious crimes;
- A new roster that does not adequately support the investigative process;
- Concerns over the timeliness of investigations;
- Inconsistent approach to updating victims of crime;
- Foundation training provided pre-2014 for investigating crime does not adequately equip gardaí for the task;
- Lack of IT and equipment to support the investigation of crime;
- Deficiencies in offender management practices particularly in the taking of fingerprints.

"Many of these issues are not unique to the Garda Síochána," said Chief Inspector Olson, "but they must be addressed if systems and practices are to be improved."

The report also identifies many areas of good practice in different garda divisions and in different parts of the country. These include a new Community Policing Model, a range of Crime Prevention Initiatives, cross-district Crime Operations, a new approach to integrated briefings, and a number of technological initiatives including a Garda Portal for Criminal Intelligence Officers. Such elements of good practice, however, while used in some divisions and in some units, are not consistent across the Garda Síochána.

"Throughout the country, we found committed and dedicated people, and we found many elements of good practice," said Chief Inspector Olson. "But we also found that these elements of good practice are not being shared or employed across the country."

In any organisation of this size, you must ensure that good practice is consistently observed. That requires strong leadership, strong supervision, and strong governance.”

Several of the crime investigation issues in the report are not the sole responsibility of the Garda Síochána and the report highlights how other parts of the criminal justice system can influence the investigation of crime. Inefficiencies in the system must be addressed in a holistic manner, the report states, by regular collective collaboration between all criminal justice partners. Twenty-two of the report’s recommendations request action from a combination of criminal justice partners to improve the standards of crime investigation in Ireland on a wide variety of issues.

Some of the key recommendations in the report:

- Implement a new divisional model of delivering policing services including detective resources;
- Procure a Computer Aided Dispatch system (CAD) that accurately records calls for service and efficiently uses available resources;
- Develop a new national crime investigation/records management system;
- In the interim, take actions to improve the use of the PULSE incident recording system;
- Designate the Garda Information Service Centre (GISC) as the final decision maker in the classification of crime and for ensuring that detections are correctly recorded;
- Establish a crime management unit model on a divisional basis and include a system of Dedicated Decision Makers to decide on the classification of crime and approving the detection of a PULSE incident record;
- Develop new Crime Counting Rules for both recording and detecting crime in which the Central Statistics Office should have a central role;
- Introduce National Incident and Crime Recording Standards;
- Appoint a Force Crime Registrar with responsibility for accuracy and integrity of the recording of incidents and detections;

- Develop major incident investigation teams to investigate murders and other specified serious crimes;
- Implement systems to improve the quality of supervision of crime investigation;
- Improve the service and information provided to victims of crime;
- Develop and implement a technology based custody system;
- Improve investigative skills for gathering best evidence;
- Examine the whole process of fingerprinting and managing of persons detained in custody;
- Develop Standard Operating Procedures for the management of warrants and bail.

“Many of our recommendations depend on the acquisition of modern technology used by most international police services,” said Chief Inspector Olson. “This technology can provide the modern tools the Garda Síochána needs to inform more efficient and effective operational decisions. Technology cannot, however, take the place of strong management practices, strong supervision and strong governance in the investigation of crime”.

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Copy of report available at <http://www.gsinsp.ie>

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Note for editors

The Garda Inspectorate is a three-member team established on 26 July 2006 in accordance with Part 5 of the Garda Síochána Act, 2005. Prior to his appointment as Chief Inspector in June 2012, Chief Olson served as a consultant for the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), working with the Chicago Police Department in facilitating an organisational study to assess the efficiency of their existing systems, policies and procedures. During his 38 year policing career, he served as Chief of Police in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Police Commissioner in Yonkers, New York, Chief of Police in Corpus Christi, Texas and 20 years coming up through the ranks to Deputy Chief of Police in Omaha, Nebraska.

There are two Deputy Chief Inspector posts. One is held by Mark Toland, formerly of the London Metropolitan Police Service, who was appointed to the Inspectorate in June 2012. The second Deputy Chief Inspector is Debra Kirby, formerly of Chicago Police Department, USA.

Deputy Chief Inspector Mark Toland joined the London Metropolitan Police Service in 1980, serving nine years as a frontline officer and eleven years as a sergeant and inspector. For two years he was responsible for training all new student officers and managed in excess of 4,000 new members. As a Chief Superintendent he led three busy, diverse and challenging London boroughs. Whilst at Brent in North West London he ran a number of major undercover operations to tackle organised gangs, involved in shootings and drug dealing. In addition, he had responsibility for security and policing of major events at Wembley Stadium, Lords Cricket Ground and Twickenham Rugby Stadium. Mr. Toland was awarded the Queen's Police Medal (QPM) in 2010.

Deputy Chief Debra Kirby was appointed to the Inspectorate in January 2014 after having served almost 28 years with the Chicago Police Department in a variety of uniformed and specialised assignments. She has been involved in numerous operational, policy and training initiatives within her career including domestic violence response and prosecution; investigative responses to community policing priorities; overseeing 'CompStat' and performance measurements; developing and implementing detention, use of force and stop and frisk policies and restructuring the approach to internal affairs. She also served as the operational lead for one of the largest national special security events - the NATO 2012 Summit.

Addendum to this Report

On 26th May 2014, following a report by Mr Seán Guerin S.C. (Guerin Report), the Minister for Justice and Equality, Ms. Frances Fitzgerald T.D., requested the Garda Síochána Inspectorate, pursuant to Section 117 of the Garda Síochána Act 2005, to:

“carry out an inquiry into all of the crime investigation and other Garda management, operational and procedural issues identified in the Guerin report relevant to your statutory remit, and report to me as soon as possible.”

It was not within the Inspectorate's remit to duplicate Mr Guerin's work by examining the action taken by the Garda Síochána in response to the relevant complaints, but rather to review the process issues identified in Mr. Guerin's report relevant to Garda Síochána practices and procedures.

Consequently the contents of the Guerin Report were considered against the backdrop of the Inspectorate's ongoing and comprehensive inspection of crime investigation and crime prevention by the Garda Síochána. Throughout the various parts of the Crime Investigation Report, references are made to certain issues identified in the Guerin Report. The Addendum to the Crime Investigation Report brings together the findings of the Inspectorate's report with the issues raised in the Guerin Report.