

Garda Síochána Inspectorate

Response to AGSI Press Release 27/09/07

The Garda Síochána Inspectorate appreciates the feedback today from the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors (AGSI) and the opportunity it provides to clarify aspects of its third report, Policing in Ireland – Looking Forward.

The Inspectorate has maintained strong lines of communication with all of the Garda representative associations since its inception. Early today, the Chief Inspector contacted each association indicating that she was eager to meet with them to discuss the report after their members have had the opportunity to carefully consider its contents.

The Inspectorate is pleased to note that AGSI is generally supportive of the recommendations made in the third report and has highlighted only two issues of potential concern. The Inspectorate will soon meet with AGSI representatives to clarify its position on these matters.

For the record, the Inspectorate completely agrees with AGSI that promotions should be fair and transparent and based on competencies. The Inspectorate's report actually recommends that "Promotion systems must operate to the highest levels of fairness, integrity and transparency and comply with legal requirements." The Inspectorate's report did state that "It is crucial to get the most qualified Gardaí to sergeant and subsequent ranks as soon as they are appropriately prepared to assume the requisite responsibilities." The Inspectorate made this statement because it believes it is important to avoid circumstances in the future in which significant experience, expertise and corporate knowledge are lost from the Garda Síochána through a series of retirements of senior officers in and around the same time.

The Inspectorate also agrees with AGSI that the national policing model has worked well. In the report, the Inspectorate states, "For a jurisdiction of this size, the Inspectorate believes that a unitary police service makes good sense." The Inspectorate does not believe that implementation of its proposals would result in additional bureaucracies and different styles of policing in different areas. The Inspectorate recognises the central role of Garda Headquarters in "setting strategic priorities and monitoring compliance" and "maintaining and ensuring compliance

with operational and administrative policies and procedures. As the Inspectorate sees it, the need for greater devolution of decision-making to the six Garda regions is to ensure that responsibility and accountability are properly aligned as the Garda organisation “increases in size and the policing environment becomes more complex and diverse.”