



CIGIREACHT AN GHARDA SÍOCHÁNA
GARDA SÍOCHÁNA INSPECTORATE

**Post Implementation Review:
Crime Investigation Report 2014 Recommendation 8.17**

Recording details of Children under 12 on PULSE intelligence records

03 December 2024

Today the Garda Inspectorate has published a post implementation review of Recommendation 8.17 from its 2014 *Crime Investigation* report which stated “*that the Garda Síochána conducts an urgent review of the recording of children’s details as an intelligence record on PULSE*”.

Generally, a person is assigned a unique PULSE Identification Number (PULSE ID) following their first formal interaction with the Garda Síochána. This does not necessarily infer criminality and a person may have a PULSE ID because they were a victim of crime or they were involved in a road traffic collision. A PULSE ID can also originate from the creation of an intelligence record. Intelligence records are usually created for persons linked to criminal or suspicious behaviour. As such, it would be unusual for a police service to create intelligence records for children under the age of criminal responsibility.

During the 2014 Crime Investigation inspection, concerns about the inappropriate recording of children’s details on PULSE intelligence records were raised by a number of people who met with the inspection team. At that time, the Inspectorate was informed that thousands of children under 12 including infants under the age of one had a PULSE ID and associated intelligence records.

Chief Inspector Mark Toland said,

“While the Garda Síochána took immediate action to address this recommendation, including issuing instructions on creating intelligence records for children under 12, it was not until changes were made to the PULSE system in October 2020 that it could be considered fully implemented”.

Commenting on progress, Chief Inspector Toland said *“While the 2014 recommendation is considered by the Inspectorate to be fully implemented, further action is still required. There is also organisational learning from this review as it shows that instructions and guidance need to be constantly monitored to ensure continued compliance and that additional actions such as training and technology fixes are often critical to achieving sustained change in practices.”*

Key Findings

- From the inception of PULSE in 1999 until March 2015, a total of 7,356 intelligence records were created for children under 12. Of these, 3,668 intelligence records were non-compliant with data protection legislation in place at that time and were removed. Separately, 645 PULSE IDs were also removed;
- The issuing of instructions and guidance to address the recommendation had an immediate but short lived impact on the number of intelligence records created after 2015 and it was not until changes were made to the PULSE system in October 2020 that sustained change was achieved;
- An examination of a sample of intelligence records created between January 2015 and October 2020 found a small number of records that were not compliant with garda policy. Records sampled after that time were found to be compliant;
- PULSE data supplied to the Inspectorate contained multiple errors and in many cases attributed an intelligence record to a child under 12 when they were in fact older and in some cases an adult. Accordingly, the number of intelligence records for children under 12 is far lower than the garda data suggests;
- Due to the PULSE data errors found and the sensitive nature of this type of intelligence, stronger monitoring is required at both national and local levels; and
- 91% of the garda workforce had completed an e-learning training course on creating intelligence records on children under 12.

In support of the work completed to date, the Inspectorate has made additional recommendations as set out below.

Key Recommendations for the Garda Síochána

- Conduct an audit of intelligence records for children under 12 and remove any intelligence records and PULSE Identification Numbers that do not comply with garda instructions and guidance;
- Develop a technical solution for the PULSE system to address system and data errors; and
- At both national and local levels, ensure strong oversight of the creation of PULSE Identification Numbers and intelligence records for children under 12.

Notes to editors

Please see link to press pack <https://www.gsinsp.ie/media-kit-enquires/>, and link to review <https://www.gsinsp.ie/pir-ci2014-rec8-17-recording-details-of-children-under-12-on-pulse-intelligence-records/>.

For any follow up requests for information, please contact: Mr Gerry McDonagh - 087 9373459, GAMcDonagh@gsinsp.ie.

A Post Implementation Review is conducted to verify if a recommendation made in an Inspectorate report has been fully implemented, and if so, whether it is achieving the intended outcome(s). Following an internal assessment process, Recommendation 8.17 from the 2014 *Crime Investigation* report was selected.

Generally, a person is assigned a unique PULSE ID following their first interaction with the Garda Síochána. When an incident occurs that requires formal action by the Garda Síochána, a PULSE incident record is created to outline the circumstances and to record any action taken. This may relate to a crime, a civil matter or an incident such as a missing person. For any person, including a child who is recorded for the first time as a victim, offender or witness in a PULSE incident record, it will also generate a PULSE ID.

A PULSE ID may also be generated through the creation of an intelligence record on a person's activities. Intelligence records are usually created for persons linked to criminal or suspicious behaviour. As such, it would be unusual for a police service to create intelligence records for children under the age of criminal responsibility. Prolific criminal offenders may well have several hundred PULSE incidents and intelligence records associated with their PULSE ID.