



**GARDA
INSPECTORATE**

PROMOTING EXCELLENCE & ACCOUNTABILITY

Report of the Garda
Síochána Inspectorate

Responding to Child Sexual Abuse

**A follow up Review from the Garda
Inspectorate**

December 2017

A Review of the Implementation Status of Recommendations Contained in the Seventh Report of the Garda Síochána Inspectorate on Responding to Child Sexual Abuse; A Follow up Review.

Review of report September 2024

*Implementation Update of the Recommendations Contained in the Twelfth Report of the Garda Síochána Inspectorate
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Recommendation Number	Recommendation	Accepted (A); Accepted with Modification (AM); Rejected (R).	Inspectorate Assessment of the Progress of the Recommendation
2.1	The Inspectorate recommends that the Department of Justice and Equality convene an inter-departmental and multi-agency representative group to develop a National Strategy for Child Sexual Abuse, Child Sexual Exploitation and Online Risks to Child Safety. (Short term)	A	Not implemented - action ongoing.
2.2	<p>The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána, in conjunction with Tusla, establish Local Child Safeguarding Committees at a divisional level to ensure more effective child protection arrangements in all local areas. (Short term)</p> <p>To achieve the above recommendation, the following key actions need to be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure the remit of the local safeguarding committees includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assessing whether the agencies are fulfilling their statutory and non-statutory obligations; ○ Assessing the delivery of the Children First National Guidance; ○ Introducing quality assurance practices, including joint auditing of cases and identifying lessons learnt; ○ Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of training, including multiagency training; and 	A	Implemented.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Functions identified in the Garda Síochána/Tusla Joint Working Protocol for the Senior Local Management Liaison Forum; ➤ Consider whether the national and local committees should operate on a statutory footing; and ➤ Ensure senior management representation at the Children and Young People’s Services Committees (CYPSCs) and at local committee meetings. <p>Consider whether this recommendation and associated actions should be included as part of Recommendation 2.1 to develop a national strategy.</p>		
<p>2.3</p>	<p>The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána, in conjunction with Tusla, develop a new joint approach for assessing and managing child protection/welfare notifications that adopts best practices found in Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs and Concern Hubs. (Medium term)</p> <p>To achieve the above recommendation the following key actions need to be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop a joint single electronic notification and tracking system; ➤ Develop a unique reference number for each case; ➤ Develop a standard operating procedure for the creation and quality of notifications to ensure that sufficient information is provided to allow for immediate assessment of risk and case management. This standard operating procedure should include the 	<p>A</p>	<p>Not implemented - action ongoing.</p>

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	<p>sending of notifications in the case of historical child abuse, missing children and domestic incidents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop a clear framework for strategy meetings and Child Protection Conferences to record decisions and attendance; ➤ Ensure that only specially trained personnel and professionals make key decisions on the management of notifications; ➤ Develop a standard process for closing cases; Develop a national protocol for the sharing of information; ➤ Deliver joint-agency training to improve the quality of notifications; • Develop joint-agency data/metrics on notifications and actions such as attendance rates at meetings; and • Ensure that there is a full evaluation of the out of office hours service provided in child protection matters. <p>Consider whether this recommendation and associated actions should be included as part of Recommendation 2.1 to develop a national strategy</p>		
2.4	<p>The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána review the Sexual Incident and Child Welfare Key Performance Indicator (KPI) report to assess whether it is necessary in its current format. (Short term)</p> <p>To achieve the above recommendation the following key actions need to be taken:</p>	A	Not implemented - action ongoing.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review the use of the metrics on prosecution of sexual incidents in light of PULSE 6.8; ➤ If the KPI report is retained, PULSE should be updated to record additional data such as attendance rates at Child Protection Conferences; ➤ Ensure that strategy meetings held and joint action plans arising out of meetings are accurately recorded on PULSE for production in the KPI reports; and ➤ Provide full access to Sexual Incident and Child Welfare KPI reports and training for those sergeants and inspectors designated to monitor and update KPIs 		
2.5	<p>The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána, in conjunction with Tusla, review the approach and the protocol for dealing with missing children, particularly those who are in various forms of care and those who are at high risk of exploitation. (Short term)</p> <p>To achieve the above recommendation the following key actions need to be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Appoint missing person officers in all divisional Protective Services Units; ➤ Ensure that all high-risk cases are reviewed by a detective supervisor and investigation strategies are completed; ➤ Ensure that the Garda Missing Persons Bureau has a more intrusive supervisory role in checking the quality of investigations conducted; ➤ Ensure that return interviews are always conducted; 	A	Not implemented - action ongoing.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review the approach for conducting interviews with children missing from care, particularly those children who are at high risk of exploitation; ➤ Identify those children who go missing that are at high risk of sexual exploitation and develop early preventative interventions; ➤ Ensure that all missing person investigation reports on PULSE contain full details of the case, including descriptions, actions taken to find persons and the locations where they are found; and ➤ Develop a mobile phone application similar to the Australian system that allows parents and guardians to collect information that is vital for any future investigation. <p>Consider whether this recommendation and associated actions should be included as part of Recommendation 2.1 to develop a national strategy.</p>		
2.6	<p>The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána, in conjunction with other Sex Offenders Risk Assessment and Management (SORAM) partners, develop a national high-level executive group to take overall responsibility for SORAM and to review the joint approach to managing sex offenders and particularly those at risk of causing most harm. (Short term)</p> <p>To achieve the above recommendation the following key actions need to be taken:</p>	AM	Not implemented - action ongoing.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure that the high-level executive group is made up of senior managers similar to the group that drove the implementation of the J-ARC initiative; ➤ Develop Violent and Sex Offenders Register (ViSOR) or a similar e-type information sharing system; ➤ Ensure that all SORAM personnel charged with managing sex offenders are risk assessment trained; ➤ Develop a standard operating procedure for managing prison pre-release meetings and to consider assignment of gardaí and probation officers to manage the release of sex offenders; ➤ Ensure that the National SORAM Office performs an oversight and governance role; ➤ Ensure full representation at SORAM meetings from relevant agencies including local authority housing and mental health services; ➤ Conduct research/evaluation of offender treatment programmes and develop metrics on reoffending rates; and ➤ Provide ongoing SORAM refresher training as well as training for those criminal justice representatives involved in cases at court. <p>Consider whether this recommendation and associated actions should be included as part of Recommendation 2.1 to develop a national strategy.</p>		
2.7	The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána review the procedures for managing sex offenders contained in the Policy on the Investigation of Sexual	A	Not implemented - action ongoing.

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	<p>Crimes, Crimes Against Children and Child Welfare. (Short term)</p> <p>To achieve the above recommendation the following key actions need to be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure that gardaí deployed to sex offender management are part of the new Protective Services Units; ➤ Promote the updating and use of Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System (ViCLAS) as an important source of offender information; ➤ Ensure that all outstanding booklets are entered on the ViCLAS system; ➤ Conduct a review of the use of Sex Offenders Orders; ➤ Provide training for those gardaí conducting risk assessments. <p>Consider whether this recommendation and associated actions should be included as part of Recommendation</p>		
2.8	<p>The Inspectorate recommends that the Department of Justice convene a multi-agency group to review legislative issues in connection with managing sex offenders and particularly those at risk of causing most harm. (Medium term)</p> <p>To achieve the above recommendation the following key actions need to be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consider extending the Sex Offenders Risk Assessment and Management (SORAM) model to 	A	Not implemented - action ongoing.

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	<p>include other categories of offenders who pose a significant threat to public safety;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review the process for the monitoring of young offenders who are under 18 years of age; ➤ Review those sexual offences that are currently excluded from the schedule of offences; ➤ Address gaps in the powers to deal with those who refuse to engage with monitoring gardaí; ➤ Consider legislation to remove the need for a supervision order for SORAM monitoring; and ➤ Consider an obligation to request a presanction report for all adult persons convicted of a sexual offence. <p>Consider whether this recommendation and associated actions should be included as part of Recommendation 2.1 to develop a national strategy</p>		
3.1	<p>The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána develop PULSE recording practices that clearly identify child sexual abuse/ child sexual exploitation incidents and other incidents involving children at risk, such as human trafficking, female genital mutilation, forced marriage and honour based violence. (Short term)</p>	A	Not implemented - action ongoing.
3.2	<p>The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána conduct a review of PULSE incident categories to ensure that all offences of a sexual nature are recorded in a single sexual offence category and issue clear national directions on the correct recording of sexual offences. (Short term)</p> <p>To achieve the above recommendation, the following key actions need to be taken:</p>	A	Not implemented - action ongoing.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Revise the descriptions in the <i>PULSE Incident Recording Manual</i> to ensure that all offences of a sexual nature, including child pornography offences, are recorded in the sexual offences category; ➤ The Central Statistics Office and the Garda Síochána to agree a single categorisation system for all sexual offences; and ➤ Address the recurring theme of over-counting of sexual offences. <p>Consider whether this recommendation and associated actions should be included as part of Recommendation 2.1 to develop a national strategy</p>		
3.3	The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána review the policy of not approaching child abuse victims as part of a third party referral (including clerical notification cases) who are initially unwilling to make a complaint. (Short term)	A	Not implemented - action ongoing.
3.4	The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána take immediate action to increase the numbers of members trained to Level 3 and Level 4 interview standard and to ensure there is sufficient suitably trained members to conduct interviews with suspects and take statements from adult victims of child sexual abuse. (Medium term)	A	Implemented.
3.5	The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána specifically include interviewing of suspects and the taking of statements from witnesses in child sexual abuse cases in the detective training programme. (Short term)	A	Implemented.
3.6	The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána, in conjunction with Tusla, move to a	A	Not implemented - action ongoing.

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	<p>standard operating procedure for conducting joint interviewing of child victims. (Medium term)</p> <p>To achieve the above recommendation, the following key actions need to be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Ensure that sufficient numbers of social workers are trained as child specialist interviewers to allow joint interviews to take place;➤ Both agencies to be involved in the development and delivery of a joint interview training course that caters for the child interview requirements of social workers and garda members;➤ Review the use and conduct of clarification interviews;➤ Develop metrics and quality assurance processes for interviews;➤ Ensure that all specialist interviewers are attached full-time to investigation units or are released on a rotational basis for immediate deployment;➤ Encourage more male gardaí to become specialist interviewers;➤ Ensure that investigating officers view the victim interviews;➤ Develop a programme of refresher training for specialist interviewers;➤ Remove the need for specialist interviewers to create transcripts of interviews;➤ Review the issue of parents/guardians who refuse to allow a child to be interviewed or medically examined; and		
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review the referral process to units such as St Clare’s and St Louise’s and in particular resolve the use of credibility assessments. <p>Consider whether this recommendation and associated actions should be included as part of Recommendation 2.1 to develop a national strategy</p>		
3.7	<p>The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána, in conjunction with the Director of Public Prosecutions, review the processes and develop joint protocols and approaches for the management of child sexual abuse cases. (Short term)</p> <p>To achieve the above recommendation the following key actions need to be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clarify the types of cases that should be referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions; ➤ Consider the findings and recommendations of the 2015 independent review of the investigation and prosecution of rape cases by the Metropolitan Police Service and the Crown Prosecution Service; and ➤ Develop a best practice model for providing early investigative advice. <p>Consider whether this recommendation and associated actions should be included as part of Recommendation 2.1 to develop a national strategy</p>	A	Implemented.
3.8	<p>The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána develop a mandatory welfare referral process for gardaí</p>	A	Implemented.

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	and garda staff carrying out child sexual abuse investigative or examination roles. (Short term)		
3.9	The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána complete the roll-out of all Divisional Protective Services Units by the end of 2018. (Short term)	A	Implemented.
3.10	<p>The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána assign the Divisional Protective Services Units with responsibility for all aspects of investigating child sexual abuse including taking the initial report, interviewing victims and suspects, inter agency notifications and the implementation of the revised Policy on the Investigation of Sexual Crime, Crimes Against Children and Child Welfare. (Short term)</p> <p>To achieve the above recommendation the following key actions need to be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Following the introduction of the functional model of policing outlined in the <i>Crime Investigation (2014)</i> report, ensure that the superintendent in charge of crime has overall divisional responsibility for investigating child sexual abuse; ➤ Ensure that each divisional unit has a dedicated detective inspector in charge; ➤ Ensure that all investigators assigned to the unit are fully trained and complete specific training in the investigation of sexual offences and child protection; ➤ When using gardaí who are not assigned to the divisional PSU to gather evidence, ensure that they have received specialist training in the investigation of sexual offences and child protection; 	A	Implemented.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identify opportunities for the assignment of garda support staff; ➤ Revise the Policy on the Investigation of Sexual Crime, Crimes Against Children and Child Welfare in the light of the recommendations in this report and deliver bespoke training on the new policy to those who have core responsibilities; ➤ Consider attachments for probationary gardaí to divisional units; and ➤ Develop a process for sharing learning and good practice between units 		
<p>3.11</p>	<p>The Inspectorate recommends that the Department of Justice and Equality convene a criminal justice multi-agency working group to deliver a more victim-centred service to child sexual abuse victims. (Medium term)</p> <p>To achieve the above recommendation the following key actions need to be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consider the extension of pre-trial hearings; ➤ Reduce unnecessary and repeated court appearances by witnesses; ➤ Develop joint-agency monitoring of data on case timeliness and factors affecting the outcome of criminal cases; ➤ Develop pre-trial evidence for children, vulnerable victims and witnesses; and ➤ Include the provision of special measures as part of a pre-trial hearing process. 		<p>Implemented.</p>

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	Consider whether this recommendation and associated actions should be included as part of Recommendation 2.1 to develop a national strategy.		
4.1	<p>The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána conduct a review of the findings emanating from the response to the Garda Inspectorate’s request for information on the management of referrals of child abuse material. (Short term)</p> <p>To achieve the above recommendation, the following key actions need to be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Examine why divisions did not respond to the request for information; ➤ Review the packages sent to divisions from 2014 and 2015 that were still outstanding at 31 December 2016; ➤ Analyse the reasons for the time taken to conduct searches by the divisions; ➤ Review the searches that took place after the request date of 2 August 2016; and ➤ Examine the delays in sending requests for examination of devices from divisions. 	A	The core elements of the recommendation have not been addressed and no work is ongoing. As the recommendation has not been addressed and due to the extended passage of time, it will not be subject to further monitoring.

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4.2	<p>The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána implement a standard operating procedure for assessing, managing and investigating child abuse material referrals and for tackling online child sexual abuse. (Short term)</p> <p>To achieve the above recommendation, the following key actions need to be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review the resourcing needs for pro-active operations and re-active investigations; ➤ Develop a new image categorisation system in line with international best practice; ➤ Develop a risk-based assessment process using a model such as the Kent Internet Risk Assessment Tool for use at all stages of investigations into CAM; ➤ Activate a pro-active system such as Child Protection Systems or Round-Up that generates real time intelligence on offenders accessing CAM; ➤ Ensure that Child Abuse Image Database or a derivative of this system is developed for use in CAM assessment; ➤ Develop a dedicated pro-active investigation unit to tackle online abusers operating in P2P networks and those seeking to have contact abuse with children; ➤ Develop a dedicated victim identification unit; and ➤ Develop an information pack for suspects that includes information on suicide prevention support. 	A	Not implemented - action ongoing.
4.3	<p>The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána implement a standard operating procedure for conducting searches of addresses in child abuse material cases and</p>	A	Not implemented - action ongoing.

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	<p>other cases where devices are likely to be seized. (Short term)</p> <p>To achieve the above recommendation, the following key actions need to be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Implement triage technology to assist with initial assessments; ➤ Utilise the skills of forensic examiners at searches; ➤ Provide accreditation for forensic examiners; ➤ Acquire encryption technology and develop the specialist skills of examiners; and ➤ Consider the assignment of forensic examiners to the Garda National Protective Services Bureau 		
<p>4.4</p>	<p>The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána, in consultation with key partner agencies, conduct an annual joint strategic assessment process on the threats posed by the internet to the safety of children. (Short term)</p> <p>To achieve the above recommendation, the following key actions need to be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop problem profiles and plans for CSE and internet-related CSA crimes; ➤ Develop crime prevention plans including opportunities to promote the use of blocking, take down and filtering; ➤ Develop pro-active policing approaches to tackle online CSE; ➤ Combat the live streaming of on-demand abuse; ➤ Target groups that produce CAM on the Darknet; and 	<p>A</p>	<p>Not implemented - action ongoing.</p>

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	<p>➤ Tackle the misuse of legitimate online platforms for CSE-related crimes such as the dissemination of child abuse material, grooming and child sexual exploitation.</p> <p>Consider whether this recommendation and associated actions should be included as part of recommendation 2.1 to develop a national strategy.</p>		
4.5	<p>The Inspectorate recommends that the Department of Justice and Equality consider introducing legislation in child sexual abuse related cases to provide power to compel any person who appears to have lawful access to a computer or other device to provide a password and any encryption key or code in order to operate that computer. Failure to comply with this requirement should be an offence. (Medium term)</p> <p>To achieve the above recommendation the following key action needs to be taken:</p> <p>➤ To consider whether these powers should be provided with or without the authority of a warrant.</p>	A	Not implemented - action ongoing.