



**GARDA  
INSPECTORATE**

PROMOTING EXCELLENCE & ACCOUNTABILITY

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Report of the Garda  
Síochána Inspectorate

**FRONT-LINE  
SUPERVISION**

**APRIL  
12**

## THE OBJECTIVE OF THE GARDA SÍOCHÁNA INSPECTORATE IS:

'To ensure that the resources available to the Garda Síochána are used so as to achieve and maintain the highest levels of efficiency and effectiveness in its operation and administration, as measured by reference to the best standards of comparable police services.'

(s. 117 of the Garda Síochána Act 2005)



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# FOREWORD

Since the publication of its first report in 2006, the Garda Síochána Inspectorate has emphasised the importance of front-line policing. Uniformed patrol is the most critical and visible function of any police organisation. As we have travelled throughout Ireland, from urban neighbourhoods to rural villages, the Inspectorate has consulted with members of the community who are generally very supportive of their local gardaí. This sentiment is a special tribute to those who perform front-line policing day in and day out.

Whether on foot patrols, mountain bikes, motorcycles or in patrol cars, front-line, uniformed police maintain order and provide service 24/7. Enforcing the law is by no means their only responsibility. They are usually the first to respond, day or night, to people in need, whether victims of crime, accident victims, vulnerable children, the elderly, or ordinary citizens seeking routine advice or service. The Inspectorate estimates that 78% of the sworn personnel in the Garda Síochána are working on the front line with a further 7% providing administrative support.

The effective and efficient deployment of front-line personnel is paramount, particularly during these difficult economic times. Of equal importance is the proper management and supervision of these personnel.

The findings and recommendations set out in this report identify areas for improvement in front-line supervision. Many of these recommendations reflect the valuable input of supervisors currently working on the front line. Without exception, those we talked to recognise the importance of their roles and the need to direct, mentor and encourage their colleagues, especially younger police officers with limited experience. The Inspectorate extends its sincere appreciation to members of the Garda Síochána and others, in Ireland and abroad, who contributed enthusiastically to this review.

Some of the eleven recommendations contained herein are easily achievable, while others must be addressed over time and will require working in cooperation with external organisations. It is the Inspectorate's hope that implementation of these recommendations will further enhance policing in Ireland, building on the great legacy of front-line policing practiced by the Garda Síochána since its inception.

**Kathleen O'Toole**

*Chief Inspector*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is the product of a review of front-line supervision in the Garda Síochána carried out by the Garda Inspectorate at the request of then Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform in December, 2010. It examines the level and quality of supervision of front-line staff, with particular focus on the current role of uniformed sergeants. It includes specific recommendations to enhance supervision and addresses existing barriers that weaken the front line's effectiveness.

This inspection is timely, as public resources must to be used wisely. With pressure on public expenditure resulting from the global economic crisis, police services in many jurisdictions are redefining priorities and rethinking the allocation of resources. Several have adopted the mantra 'front-line first' and have redeployed staff to reflect this priority. In line with previous reports issued by the Inspectorate, the Garda Síochána is placing greater emphasis on front-line policing and is developing strategies to deploy resources more effectively. Proper supervision will be an essential element of any future policing strategy.

## Inspectorate Research

During this review, the Inspectorate benchmarked the Garda Síochána against organisations elsewhere. In particular, the Inspectorate focused on police agencies in Scotland, England, Wales and the United States that have successfully altered front-line service delivery in recent years.

A number of Garda districts were visited, both urban and rural, as well as Garda Headquarters and the Garda College. The Inspectorate was eager to visit the front line, and met with many local gardaí and their supervisors to gain a clear perspective on their views and experiences. Throughout the process, the Inspectorate met with representatives of all ranks, patrolled with front-line officers and attended many meetings and focus groups. Time was also spent with members of the Garda Reserve and non-sworn staff that provided valuable insights into the front-line's vital support network.

The Inspectorate conducted three, sequential phases of research:

- Desktop Research
- Fieldwork
- Data review

## Desktop Research

The Inspectorate reviewed a substantial amount of literature relating to front-line supervision. Several external documents were considered in the early research phase. These included:

- *Reports of the Tribunal of Inquiry into complaints concerning some Gardaí of the Donegal Division chaired by the Honourable Mr Justice Frederick RI Morris (2002-2008).*
- Three reports by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies (HMIC) in the UK: *Leading from the Front Line* (2008); *Valuing the Police, Policing in an Age of Austerity* (2010); and *Demanding Times, The Front Line and Police Visibility* (2011).
- A document from Audit Scotland, *Best Value Audit and Inspection of Police* (2010).
- *Supervision of Police Personnel (seventh edition)* by Iannone, Iannone and Bernstein (2008).

Research also included several internal Garda policy documents such as: *The Garda Code*, *The National Strategy for Community Policing* (January 2009) and other circulars, operational orders and instructions relating to supervision.

It should also be noted that the Inspectorate carefully considered a written submission of the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors (AGSI). The document was relevant and helpful to the Inspectorate. Furthermore, the input of AGSI representatives during the course of the fieldwork was invaluable.

## Field Work

The field work phase of the inspection included three parallel strands detailed below.

### *First Strand – Meetings*

During the course of this review, the Inspectorate visited two Garda districts in the Dublin Metropolitan Region (DMR), Store Street and Crumlin, two districts in the Clare Division, Ennis and Kilrush, the Henry Street District in the Limerick Division and the Cavan and Monaghan districts, in the Cavan/Monaghan Division.

In each case, the Inspectorate met with the Regional Commissioner, the local divisional Chief Superintendent or deputy, and the District Superintendent or deputy. The Inspectorate also met with focus groups including sergeants and inspectors, uniformed and plainclothes officers, civilian staff and volunteers from the Garda Reserve. The Inspectorate also met with representatives from joint policing committees and staff associations in all of the districts visited.

The Inspectorate met with the two Deputy Commissioners and representatives of the Garda Analysis Service. A meeting was also held with the Garda Ombudsman Commission.

### *Second Strand – International Benchmarking*

The Inspectorate is required to benchmark the Garda Síochána against best practices elsewhere in the world. In doing so during the course of this work, the Inspectorate consulted with HMIC Scotland, the Central Scotland Police Service and the Strathclyde Police Service. In England and Wales, the Inspectorate visited the Wiltshire Constabulary, the Greater Manchester Police, the West Yorkshire Constabulary, London's Metropolitan Police and the British Transport Police. The Police Service of Northern Ireland was also consulted.

In seeking input from international policing bodies, the Inspectorate visited the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the FBI's National Academy, both headquartered in Virginia, USA. At the National Academy, an in-depth focus group discussion was conducted with a large group of police supervisors from departments throughout the United States. Visits to police services in the

United States included the Philadelphia Police Department in Pennsylvania, and the Montgomery County Police Department in Maryland.

### *Third Strand – Data Capture*

In order to define front-line policing in the Garda Síochána and assess the breadth of supervision within the organisation, the Inspectorate requested operational data on available resources and deployment. As noted in its sixth report, *Resource Allocation*, the Inspectorate found a glaring deficit of basic information relating to demand and deployment.

## Data Review and Analysis

The Inspectorate completed its review of all documentation and reports gathered. The purpose was to identify possible gaps in front-line supervision requiring further exploration and analysis. Given the lack of reliable data, it was difficult to draw a coherent distinction between the front line and other Garda functions. The Inspectorate expended significant effort in manually translating, analysing, and validating raw data provided by the Garda Síochána.

The following is a brief synopsis of this report.

## Defining the 'Front Line'

The Inspectorate began by mapping the front line of the Garda Síochána, starting with the *visible front line*, members responsible for day-to-day policing in the community. It is the responsibility of the front line to keep people safe, provide service to those in need and enforce the law. The front line responds to emergencies and other calls for service and performs regular patrols, community policing, and traffic services.

The *visible front line* relies heavily on support provided by others in the Garda Síochána, including those who fall into the following categories:

- The *extended front line* – local detectives, crime task forces and local intelligence officers.
- *Front-line administrative support* – sworn officers in administrative or clerical positions who support the front line with services such as communications, warrants, court responsibilities and handling of juveniles.

- *Specialist support* – specialised uniformed and plain clothes units.
- *Management support* – senior leaders, HQ staff, and Garda College staff.

## Overview of Findings

### *Number of Sergeants*

Initial data analysis suggested that the overall number of sergeants (2,151) appeared adequate. This equates to an approximate ratio of one sergeant to six gardaí. In reality, however, this ratio is not consistent on the ground, and in many cases the span of control increases substantially at the front line. This is a significant concern. The Inspectorate also found that many sergeants are performing cumbersome administrative duties, distracting them from supervising in the field. It concluded that many of these responsibilities could be streamlined, automated, or assumed by those of garda rank or civilian staff. There is clear evidence that more sergeants could be released to the visible front line.

### *24/7 Patrol Sergeants*

The Inspectorate identified significant gaps in supervision at the front line, as well as inconsistencies in their roles and responsibilities. Young, less experienced members of the organisation in many areas of the country are working without adequate supervision. The Inspectorate is of the firm view that each station operating a 24/7 service should have a sergeant in the field. To accomplish this, the organisation must redeploy more sergeants to dedicated patrol.

### *Sergeant Supervision of Detainees*

The Inspectorate is also very clear that, while street duty time for sergeants must be increased, certain functions will still require sergeants to be in stations on a 24/7 basis. The detention of prisoners is a very important responsibility and this is an area where supervision was also found to be inadequate. Many examples of prisoners being supervised by members at garda rank, in lieu of sergeants, were noted during the inspection. In certain cases, prisoner supervision was undertaken by very junior gardaí.

Ideally, sergeants should supervise the processing and custody of all detainees, particularly those held for over six hours. This will require a rationalisation in the number of stations where persons are kept in custody for extended periods. Detainees arrested only for the purpose of charge or those detained temporarily for their own protection can be managed locally.

### *Necessary Review of all Sergeant Positions*

Prior to implementing the above reforms, the Garda Síochána must conduct a full evaluation of every sergeant's assignment to ascertain if each position is justified. Sergeants' shift rosters should be examined to determine if they align with the personnel they are supervising. It should also be determined if a sergeant is actually required for the tasks performed.

### *Bureaucracy and Court Attendance*

Apart from the above-mentioned deficiencies in the deployment of sergeants, the Inspectorate identified two other impediments to front-line supervision. The first is unnecessary bureaucracy relating to prosecution. The second is the significant time required for court attendance.

In relation to bureaucracy, there is considerable time and commitment given to internal paperwork. Like most other police organisations, the Garda Síochána is, of necessity, a highly bureaucratic organisation. During the inspection, however, unnecessary, time-consuming bureaucracy was raised as an issue in focus groups on many occasions. The Inspectorate was frequently told that front-line sergeants, who ideally should patrol with gardaí they are supervising, were seldom available to do so. This is an unacceptable situation.

The Inspectorate discovered that administrative processes differ from place to place. In the DMR, decisions on straightforward offences, such as minor thefts, are streamlined, eliminating unnecessary bureaucracy. This was not the case in the rest of the country. Significant efficiencies could be realised by implementing the DMR policy throughout the organisation.

Many sergeants complained that file supervision duties are taking inordinate amounts of time. Some suggested that a system of accreditation could be

introduced for more straightforward offences. This would allow experienced gardaí, on proof of competence, to determine if a file contains the necessary evidence for prosecution.

Costs associated with court attendance are substantial. Court duties account for approximately 25% of the normal Garda overtime budget<sup>1</sup>. In the course of this inspection and its previous review of Garda resource allocation, the Inspectorate examined the participation of gardaí in court. In addition to raising budgetary concerns, the Inspectorate found that the demands of court disrupt the quality of service on the front line. While the effective prosecution of offenders is vital, the amount of time officers spend in court is not consistent with that necessary to provide evidence. It was also determined that there is no requirement for gardaí to seek permission to attend court. Therefore, supervisors are left with unexpected gaps in front-line coverage. The system for court attendance must be streamlined.

The Inspectorate has previously acknowledged the benefits of the court attendance reforms piloted in the DMR. Presentation by sergeants has released gardaí from excessive time in court. This model should be replicated across the country. The Garda Síochána must work in collaboration with the courts and the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) to design a more effective and efficient system for court attendance.

### **Accountability Systems**

The Inspectorate reviewed current accountability systems and processes that affect front-line supervision. These included command and control and daily accountability meetings throughout the organisation. The Inspectorate consistently asked senior managers the following simple question:

*“Can you tell me **now** how many members are on duty in your district/division/region/organisation?”*

This question could not be readily answered. This is a fundamental problem for an organisation with an annual budget of €1.3 billion and more than 15,000 sworn and non-sworn personnel.

Command and control systems in the Garda Síochána are limited, for the most part, to directing resources to calls for service. Going forward, more attention must be given to command and control. Enhanced protocols will result in greater accountability and efficiency. Computer Aided Despatch (CAD) is limited to the DMR. Unfortunately, even the DMR system is not being used to its capacity as a management tool. Beyond the DMR, control rooms across the country should more closely record and monitor the activity of gardaí throughout their shifts.

There are clear gaps and deficiencies in systems for personnel logging on and off duty. The Inspectorate reiterates its previous recommendations for automated resource management and the provision of a national command and control system.

The Inspectorate examined systems and practices related to daily accountability meetings and how they link to front-line supervision. Accountability meetings are held at all levels in the organisation, but the Inspectorate found there was little focus during these meetings on resource allocation and supervision. A clear focus on the topics of resource allocation and supervision in every accountability meeting will lead to greater efficiency and effectiveness.

The Inspectorate examined how front-line members are briefed and inspected. Parades and briefings were observed, but they do not occur before every tour of duty. No formal equipment and uniform inspections were evident. There were examples of effective briefings and deployments undertaken, but they usually involved regular units only. There was little evidence that other front-line personnel were briefed effectively and no evidence of detective briefings. Procedures for briefing and inspection can be enhanced without undue cost.

<sup>1</sup> PQ Reference 38213/11, Written Answer, Thursday, 1 December 2011.

# SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Inspectorate makes the following eleven recommendations to prioritise and strengthen front-line supervision in the Garda Síochána.

## Recommendation 1

The Inspectorate recommends that, in conjunction with the Deputy Commissioner Operations' development of a new strategy for a more effective and efficient delivery of police services, the Garda Síochána conduct an immediate review of the roles, locations and status of all personnel in the organisation. This process should determine how each member contributes to service delivery. The review should also inform Garda management as to the levels of supervision required.

## Recommendation 2

The Inspectorate recommends an immediate review of each sergeant's current role to determine how support staff and improved business processes can ease administrative burdens and release sergeants for front-line deployment. The Inspectorate also recommends a fundamental review of duty patterns to ensure greater sergeant coverage at night.

## Recommendation 3

The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána assign a sergeant for outdoor supervisory duty of front-line staff to each station operating a 24/7 front-line patrol service.

## Recommendation 4

The Inspectorate recommends that sergeants be responsible for all processes relating to detained persons. Stations designated for detentions greater than six hours should be rationalised. These stations should be staffed by sergeants on a 24/7 basis. Processing of detainees who are likely to be released in a speedy manner may continue to occur at local stations, but a sergeant should still oversee initial processing.

## Recommendation 5

The Inspectorate recommends that the decision making process on prosecuting straightforward offences that exists in the DMR be replicated in other regions to the greatest extent possible.

## Recommendation 6

The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána develop a system which authorises experienced gardaí to assist more junior members with case management of certain prosecution files. The system would address high volume, straightforward offences, and would ease administrative burdens on sergeants, freeing them to perform front-line supervisory duties.

## Recommendation 7

The Inspectorate recommends that the procedures for court presentation, prosecution and attendance that exist in the DMR be replicated in other regions to the greatest extent possible.

## Recommendation 8

The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána develop an effective system for supervision of court attendance, thereby reducing unnecessary overtime and time spent away from critical front-line activity.

## Recommendation 9

The Inspectorate recommends that training be provided to new sergeants immediately following promotion. Refresher supervisory courses should be provided as part of the Continuous Professional Development programme.

### Recommendation 10

The Inspectorate recommends that divisional control rooms become a focal log-in point for all front-line gardaí. Front-line staff should inform the control room of their presence when going on and off duty, and should regularly provide updated availability status. Systems and practices for signing on and off duty should be improved and applied uniformly at all levels of the organisation.

### Recommendation 11

The Inspectorate recommends that the subject of resource allocation, availability and visibility be given the highest priority. The effective supervision and deployment of resources should be a standing agenda item at all accountability meetings throughout the organisation.

Chapter  
**01**

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THE FRONT LINE

Uniformed police maintain order and provide service 24/7, whether on foot patrols, mountain bikes, motorcycles or in patrol cars. Enforcing the law is only one of their responsibilities. They are usually the first to respond, day or night, to people in need, whether victims of crime, accident victims, vulnerable children, the elderly, or ordinary citizens seeking routine advice or service. The Inspectorate estimates that 78% of the sworn personnel in the Garda Síochána are working on the front line with a further 7% providing administrative support.

The Garda Síochána does not produce in-depth data on where and when resources are deployed. In its sixth report, *Resource Allocation*, the Inspectorate noted that the absence of reliable deployment information is a serious gap in supervision and management that must be addressed without delay. During the course of this project, the Inspectorate faced similar challenges due to a lack of quality data. Nonetheless, the Inspectorate based its analysis on statistical information provided by the Garda Síochána to define the front line before assessing how it is supervised.

## International Comparisons

During the course of this review, the Inspectorate visited police agencies in Scotland, England, Wales and the USA. It discovered that most jurisdictions have clearly defined and prioritised their front lines. They are also rethinking their strategies, particularly in light of economic pressures. Priorities have been reconsidered and, in most instances, primary focus is on the delivery of more efficient and effective services at the front line.

For example, the Greater Manchester Police (GMP) recently engaged in a detailed analysis of its entire workforce. GMP defined both its 'front office' and 'back office' services. A programme of work was undertaken to eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy, waste, and duplication of effort, with priority given to effective delivery of services at the front line.

Strathclyde Police, an organisation covering a significant area of urban and rural communities in Scotland, has also fundamentally altered its service delivery with the introduction of new practices for responding to calls from the public. Proper supervision has led to much more effective deployment of resources.

The Inspectorate visited the British Transport Police because they were engaged in a strategic process entitled *Front Line First*. Their goal has been to maintain an excellent service while promoting greater efficiency. They have successfully redeployed valuable resources in favour of front-line delivery.

Wiltshire Constabulary, a small English, mostly rural police service, has been working for some time at defining and refining the day-to-day activity of their visible, front line personnel. They are producing detailed and effective strategies that include hotspot patrolling, backed by firm deployment protocols for both uniformed and detective personnel.

The Philadelphia Police Department is the fourth largest police service in the United States. Its *Crime Fighting Strategy* has resulted in the reassignment of uniformed officers from administrative duties to the front line. The need to supervise staff more effectively was also identified as a key issue.

## Oversight and Research Bodies

In its report, *Demanding Times*<sup>2</sup>, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) in the UK assessed the state of front-line policing. It encouraged the movement of resources towards the front line. Previously, HMIC also published a report entitled, *Leading From the Front Line*<sup>3</sup>. It called for active, visible leadership, with a clear emphasis on upholding standards to improve effectiveness.

International policing bodies that prioritise front-line supervision and delivery were also consulted. For instance, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) offers a series of professional

<sup>2</sup> HMIC (2011) *Demanding Times*.

<sup>3</sup> HMIC (2008) *Leading from the Front Line*.

development sessions for all levels of police management that focus on front-line supervisory issues. Also, the FBI's National Academy offers a program to international participants that places great emphasis on front-line policing and supervision.

Most of the organisations researched have adopted the concept of 'front-line first,' recognising that, particularly in difficult economic times, a visible and well-supervised front line is the primary indicator of an effective police organisation. Many of these police services have successfully redeployed staff from other assignments to the front line.

## The Garda Strategy

It is clear from the results of independently performed public satisfaction surveys that policing by the Garda Síochána is undertaken with considerable success. However, there are definitely gaps that must be addressed. The organisation lacks a clear, comprehensive plan for front-line policing. The National Community Policing Strategy provides some strategic direction, but is not as comprehensive as plans reviewed in other jurisdictions. Documents examined in the course of this inspection included the Garda Code, operation orders and circulars. These provide some additional direction, but are not as robust as documents from other police services that the Inspectorate examined.

The Inspectorate notes efforts underway by the Deputy Commissioner Operations to develop a new strategy for more effective and efficient delivery of police services. This work is being informed by sound data analysis and will address several of the issues identified in this and previous Inspectorate reports. The Deputy Commissioner is consulting with representatives from the Department of Finance and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, Department of Justice and Equality officials, senior Garda management, and other experts. The Inspectorate suggests that the following recommendation be adopted as an essential component of this on-going effort.

### Recommendation 1

The Inspectorate recommends that, in conjunction with the Deputy Commissioner Operations' development of a new strategy for a more effective and efficient delivery of

police services, the Garda Síochána conduct an immediate review of the roles, locations and status of all personnel in the organisation. This process should determine how each member contributes to service delivery. The review should also inform Garda management as to the levels of supervision required.

Clearly defining the front line of a police organisation can be difficult. For instance, front-line experiences take place on the telephone, in conversations at Garda stations, during interviews with suspects, or in face-to-face situations on the street. There are also many personnel who support the front line, including those in communications, forensics, investigations and analysis. It must be acknowledged that the front line is the most important component of any police organisation. Research shows that visible policing is directly linked to public confidence.<sup>4</sup>

In order to assess Garda commitment to the front line, the Inspectorate divided sworn personnel into six basic categories. The six categories are as follows:

- Visible Front Line
- Extended Front Line
- Front-Line Administrative Support
- Specialist Support
- Management Support
- Miscellaneous

*Visible Front Line* is formed mainly of uniformed gardaí who are available and can be readily deployed to meet demands for service from the public. The highest numbers in this category are assigned to regular units whose main function is to respond to emergencies and other calls for service. Members on the regular units also perform routine patrols. A significant number can be found in community policing, who are visible, mostly in uniform and perform a variety of policing duties. Others in this category include the traffic corps, uniformed flexi units and armed response units.

*Extended Front Line* includes some members in uniform and others who operate in plain clothes. Included in this group are local detectives, crime

<sup>4</sup> Dalglish and Myhill (2004), *Reassuring the Public a Review of International Policing Interventions*, Home Office, London.

task forces and local intelligence officers. These personnel are not as visible, but perform important front-line police services.

*Front-Line Administrative Support* includes many sworn officers in administrative positions who assist members in the visible and extended front-line categories. It includes communications staff, juvenile liaison officers, warrant officers, and court officers. Gardaí in this category tend to be station based and are seldom visible or deployable in the field.

*Specialist Support* includes sworn administrative and operational personnel. This includes specialist detective units, national support units, Technical Bureau personnel, local training officers, and those performing immigration duties. They are seldom deployed to meet routine demands for service.

*Management Support* includes senior leaders in the organisation, headquarters staff, and those assigned to the Garda College. They do not perform services in the field and are not readily deployable.

The Inspectorate acknowledges that these are rough delineations. The purpose of this exercise was to assess the organisation's commitment to the front line, not to identify precisely where individuals are assigned. The different classifications are the result of analysing the duty assignments and deployment of personnel as outlined in information provided by the Garda Síochána as of 13 May, 2011. The numbers in each category and the percentages of the organisation they represent are shown in Table 1 below.

The table indicates that 11,370 gardaí of all ranks are assigned to the front line. This is a combined figure of the visible and extended categories. It represents 78% of the total number of sworn personnel in the organisation. This commitment to the front line compared favourably to other police services considered by the Inspectorate.

TABLE 1

Classification of Garda Síochána (all ranks) by Duty Assignment (May 2011)

Assignment Category	Number Deployed	% of Total Deployed
Visible Front Line	8,582	59.27
Extended Front Line	2,788	19.26
Front-Line Administrative Support	969	6.69
Specialist Support	1,170	8.08
Management Support	862	5.95
Miscellaneous	108	0.75
<b>Total Number Deployed</b>	<b>14,479</b>	<b>100</b>

## Roster Patterns

Records provided by the Garda Síochána were carefully examined to determine each sworn member's assignment and work pattern. Assessing the ratio of supervisors to gardaí on each shift was essential. The examination provided an indication of the large number of members who are working fixed eight-hour shifts versus other roster patterns.

The *three relief* roster was designed for gardaí operating on twenty-four hour shifts. The *flexi shift* was developed to increase the numbers of gardaí on duty during periods of peak demand. The country roster was designed for members assigned to small rural stations that do not operate on a 24/7 basis. In addition to the three main shift patterns, there are members who work *fixed eight-hour shifts*, mostly from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., but there are variations.

For the purpose of analysis, four main roster categories were identified to represent the spread of deployment over the course of twenty-four hours. Table 2 outlines the number of sworn personnel on each roster pattern across the organisation.

Prior to assessing the quality of front-line supervision, the Inspectorate felt it was necessary to define the front line and to outline the allocation of all sworn personnel assigned to it. In the next chapter, the Inspectorate focuses specifically on the allocation of sergeants in the Garda Síochána and the role inspectors play in supporting the front line.

**TABLE 2**

**Classification of Duty Assignments by Roster Pattern (May 2011)**

Assignment Category	24 Hour Roster	16 Hour Roster	Country Roster	Fixed 8 Hour Roster	Number Deployed
Visible Front Line	5,279	2,403	900	0	8,582
Extended Front Line	374	1,938	1	475	2,788
Front-Line Administrative Support	83	1	0	885	969
Specialist Support	187	598	0	385	1,170
Management Support	1	2	0	859	862
Miscellaneous	0	0	0	108	108
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,924</b>	<b>4,942</b>	<b>901</b>	<b>2,712</b>	<b>14,479</b>

Chapter  
**02**

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**SUPERVISION OF  
THE FRONT LINE**

While many Garda ranks play vital roles in front-line supervision, sergeants have the most direct impact. Sergeants are responsible for ensuring that gardaí are performing effectively in the right places and at the right times. Enhancing supervision will definitely improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of the organisation.

The Inspectorate found significant gaps in sergeant deployment at Garda districts throughout the country. There is definitely a need to reassess the duties and responsibilities of sergeants throughout the organisation. Effective front-line sergeant supervision will inspire greater internal and public confidence.

Front-line sergeants are responsible for coaching, mentoring and training those under their supervision in appropriate and effective communication and practices. Therefore, it is crucial that sergeants work closely with and patrol alongside front-line colleagues.

### International Benchmarking

The important role sergeants play in police service delivery is acknowledged universally. For instance, in an examination of police efficiency in Scotland, it was concluded that significant improvements can be realised by using sergeants effectively.<sup>5</sup> HMIC in the UK also emphasised the importance of the sergeant's role in the following statement:

*“Front line sergeants are leaders of people and guardians of excellence in service delivery”.*<sup>6</sup>

**TABLE 3**

**Classification of Sergeants by Duty Assignment (May 2011)**

Assignment Category	Number Deployed	% of Total Sergeants
Visible Front Line	845	39.3
Extended Front Line	751	34.9
Front-Line Administrative Support	105	4.9
Specialist Support	186	8.6
Management Support	249	11.6
Miscellaneous	15	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,151</b>	<b>100</b>

### Deployment of Sergeants in the Garda Síochána

After examining the allocation of all sworn personnel in the organisation, the Inspectorate focused specifically on the assignment of sergeants. According to data provided by the Garda Síochána, there are 2,151 sergeants employed in different roles across the organisation. The deployment, location, and duty detail of every sergeant in the organisation was examined. All sergeant posts were then placed into the same six categories delineated in Chapter 1. The results are depicted in Table 3 below.

There are 845 sergeants in the visible front-line category and 751 in the extended front line. This accounts for 74% of all sergeants. Although this seems to compare favourably with the 78% of total personnel assigned to the front line, when visiting stations the Inspectorate was consistently told that sergeants are not regularly working in the field alongside gardaí in their units. This calls into question whether front-line supervision is being managed properly.

<sup>5</sup> Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland (2008), *Productivity of Police Officers*.

<sup>6</sup> Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (2008), *Leading from the Front Line*.

## Supervisory Ratio

The Inspectorate looked for further evidence of these gaps in supervision by examining the ratio of sergeants to gardaí. Table 4 outlines the ratio across the different categories.

The data indicate that there is an overall ratio of between five and six gardaí to each sergeant. A six to one ratio on the front line would be considered acceptable in most police organisations. The Inspectorate's analysis of Garda supervision reveals, however, that the ratio is much wider at the front line. The visible front line, for example, has an average of nine gardaí to each sergeant. During the Inspectorate's visits, it was found that even this ratio was often exceeded.

Analysis showed that in many of the larger rural stations there is often only one sergeant posted to a regular unit. At one rural district headquarters station, the supervisory ratio was nine gardaí to one sergeant. That sergeant manages the station, including custody facilities, and also provides front-line supervision. It was discovered that some units did not have a sergeant posted to them at all. The Inspectorate encountered a regular unit in a major rural town with no sergeant for over six months. A young member nearing the end of his two-year probation period, working in a small rural unit, indicated that he had never worked with a sergeant since leaving the Garda College.

The experience was different in urban areas. 'Section sergeants' are specifically assigned to supervise regular units in the field, but it was clear that not every unit had a section sergeant. In one large urban station with four regular units, there was only one designated section sergeant attached to a particular unit of twenty-one members. There were no section sergeants designated to the remaining regular units that totalled sixty-one members. Similarly, in another urban station, only one section sergeant was allotted for four regular units. The lack of section sergeants in urban areas is a further indication of gaps in front-line supervision.

In the Inspectorate's third report, *Policing in Ireland, Looking Forward*, a recommendation was made to improve the mobility of sergeants in the field in order to enhance their ability to supervise. While this recommendation has been addressed in part, more needs to be done.

Large supervisory ratios are not confined to the regular units. Analysis of the data provided by the Garda Síochána indicated that in one large urban station the average ratio of gardaí to sergeant in the four community policing units was twelve to one. In one unit, the actual ratio was eighteen to one. The Crime Task Force in this station had two sergeants to supervise twenty-seven members spread over four units. The one sergeant in traffic policing had responsibility for eleven members assigned to two

TABLE 4

Supervisory Ratio of Gardaí to Sergeants (May 2011)

Assignment Category	Number of Gardaí	Ratio	Number of Sergeants
Visible Front line	7,737	9:1	845
Extended Front line	1,873	2:1	751
Front-Line Administrative Support	762	7:1	105
Specialist Support	927	5:1	186
Management Support	374	2:1	249
Miscellaneous	93	6:1	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,766</b>	<b>5:1</b>	<b>2,151</b>

different units. Members in a two smaller urban stations indicated that the detective units in operation had supervisory ratios of 13:1 and 10:1 respectively.

While front-line ratios in many areas are not adequate, there are notable exceptions. The Inspectorate analysed personnel data from 162 small Garda stations (less than six gardaí assigned) to assess the supervision levels there. At 147 of these stations, one sergeant is posted where there are less than six gardaí. A further ten stations have two sergeants posted with less than six gardaí. One station has three sergeants and two gardaí. There are three stations with one sergeant and no gardaí, and one station with two sergeants and no gardaí.

## Duty Rosters for Sergeants

Gaps in sergeant coverage often occur in the evening and through the night. Table 5 details the different roster patterns worked by sergeants in each category as outlined in Chapter 1. This table

also indicates how many sergeants are actually on duty at any given time.

The analysis shows that there are 676 sergeants working fixed eight-hour shifts. This includes many detective sergeants. The Inspectorate learned that most of the sergeants on fixed eight-hour shifts work from 9am to 5pm. There are 249 sergeants working this duty roster in the category of management support, representing 11.5% of all sergeants. There is

also a sizable number of sergeants (243) working the eight-hour roster in the category of extended front line. The Inspectorate questions whether sergeants are actually being assigned to the appropriate shifts. There are only 753 of the total 2,151 sergeants posted to the 24/7 three-relief roster.

It was important to ascertain how many sergeants may be more readily deployable. The Inspectorate focused on sergeants in the visible front line and extended front-line categories. Table 6 shows the results.

The previous two tables indicate that nearly one third of all sergeants are working fixed eight-hour shifts, mostly during the day. This analysis prompts questions and confirms the concerns expressed by members on the ground. There are often gaps in field supervision during the day, but sergeants are even less available to supervise at night.

## Non-Rank Dependent Positions and Potential Civilianisation

The Garda Síochána must consider which sergeant duties can be performed by other ranks or non-sworn staff. Tasks that are not of a supervisory nature and/or do not require sworn powers should be reviewed. The Inspectorate conducted an analysis of the duties currently undertaken by sergeants and estimates that 10.8% of all tasks could possibly be performed by those in garda

**TABLE 5**

**Classification of Sergeant Duty Assignments by Roster (May 2011)**

Assignment Category	24 Hour Roster	16 Hour Roster	Country Roster	Fixed 8 Hour Roster	Total
Visible Front line	467	290	88	0	845
Wider Front line	261	247	0	243	751
Front-Line Administrative Support	8	0	0	97	105
Specialist Support	17	97	0	72	186
Management Support	0	0	0	249	249
Miscellaneous	0	0	0	15	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>753</b>	<b>634</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>676</b>	<b>2,151</b>

TABLE 6

## Classification of Front-Line Sergeants by Roster Pattern (May 2011)

Assignment Category	24 Hour Roster	16 Hour Roster	Country Roster	Fixed 8 Hour Roster	Number Deployed
Visible Front Line	467	290	88	0	845
Extended Front Line	261	247	0	243	751
<b>Total</b>	<b>728</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>1,596</b>

ranks or non-sworn staff. Examples of some of these duties are instructors (53), crime prevention officers (23), telecom technicians (13), and public service vehicle inspectors (7). An additional 99, or 4.6% of all sergeants, serve in administrative roles. These include district and divisional office staff. A breakdown of all the positions identified in the analysis appears in Appendix 1.

The Inspectorate acknowledges that sergeants may be required in some of the above positions, but each position should be assessed to determine if supervisory rank is an essential requirement.

## Redeployment of Sergeants

After considering the data supplied by the Garda Síochána, the Inspectorate is strongly of the view that there are flaws in the strategy for deployment of the 2,151 sergeants across the organisation. In May, 2011 there were 1,596 sergeants in the visible and extended front line. A total of 454 sergeants were operating inside stations; 260 as Senior House Officer (SHO) and 194 as Sergeant-in-Charge (SIC).<sup>7</sup> The Inspectorate believes that a reallocation must be considered which will prioritise the front line.

### Recommendation 2

The Inspectorate recommends an immediate review of each sergeant's current role to determine how support staff and improved business processes can ease administrative burdens and release sergeants for front-line deployment. The Inspectorate also recommends a fundamental review of duty patterns to ensure greater sergeant coverage at night.

<sup>7</sup> SHO is a term normally used in the DMR and some other cities to denote the station sergeant. SIC is slightly different terminology used in other parts of the country for the same position.

## The Need for 24/7 Visible Front-Line Supervision

According to figures provided by the Garda Síochána, there are a total of 169 Garda stations that provide emergency response and patrol services to the public on a 24/7 basis. These services are provided by members from regular units operating on the front line. The Inspectorate has commented in previous reports regarding the level of inexperience in regular units and the depletion of these units due to specialisation. Members operating on the regular units are often young gardaí responding to serious emergencies. They require proper supervision by a sergeant who is working the same shift and is available to assist and support them when required.

### Recommendation 3

The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána assign a sergeant for outdoor supervisory duty of front-line staff to each station operating a 24/7 front-line patrol service.

## Managing Detainees

According to the Garda Síochána, there are 171 stations designated for detention. Two of these stations do not have operational cells. There is likely to be a sergeant on duty at each of these stations at some point during the day, but sergeants are not necessarily available at night.

The Inspectorate examined detention patterns as part of this review. The results, which are based on PULSE prisoner logs, indicate that in 2009 the overall number of people arrested and detained at Garda stations with cells was 112,844. Some stations are busier than others, but numbers of persons detained are not generally high, the average being thirteen prisoners per week.

A more detailed analysis of prisoner logs for one month was conducted to get a sense of the supervisory workload relating to managing detention. A total of 8,931 records were examined, of which 810 had to be discounted due to incomplete or inaccurate data; for example, no release date or no release time provided. The analysis indicates that a total of 85% of detainees are in custody for less than six hours. When a person is arrested for immediate charge, duration is even shorter. There were 2,127 detentions with a duration of one hour or less. A table showing the hours of detention is available in Appendix 2.

Due to the risks associated with the care and custody of prisoners, the Inspectorate firmly believes that, in most circumstances, even for short-term detentions, initial processing should be overseen by a sergeant. In cases when the detention is longer, certainly beyond six hours, more robust supervision must exist. It was estimated that 15% of detentions exceed six hours.

The current system of detention is inefficient. A new system should be designed and implemented. The system should require that sergeants oversee prisoner processing to the greatest extent possible. It should also ensure that a sergeant is present at all times in facilities where detainees are being held for lengthy periods. The number of stations accommodating detentions greater than six hours should be rationalised.

#### Recommendation 4

The Inspectorate recommends that sergeants be responsible for all processes relating to detained persons. Stations designated for detentions greater than six hours should be rationalised. These stations should be staffed by sergeants on a 24/7 basis. Processing of detainees who are likely to be released in a speedy manner may continue to occur at local stations, but a sergeant should still oversee initial processing.

### The Role of the Inspector in Front-line Supervision

While acknowledging the vital role that sergeants play in front-line supervision, the Inspectorate was also charged with examining the role inspectors have in management and supervision. According to the Garda Code, the purpose of an Inspector is to manage and co-ordinate the delivery of policing

services across teams and units. It further states that a key responsibility of an inspector is to ensure the efficient deployment of resources and personnel. While this would imply that inspectors should play an integral role in supervising the front line, the Inspectorate found this was not always the case.

During the course of this review, focus group meetings were conducted with members of the inspector rank in every district visited. A recurring theme across these meetings was the executive role that many inspectors had to fulfil. A key task for any inspector assigned to a district is to provide a close supporting role to the District Officer, including acting as his/her deputy when required to do so. In one district, an inspector was actually referred to as deputy superintendent.

Outside of the DMR, many inspectors have assumed full responsibility for prosecuting cases in court in place of the District Officer. Other tasks undertaken by inspectors include attending community meetings and coordinating district events. Despite this emphasis on more project-based and delegated responsibility, it is clear that some inspectors have a direct role in supervision of the front line. The Inspectorate examined this level of commitment throughout the organisation.

### Deployment of Inspectors

Following a review of the data provided by the Garda Síochána, inspectors were divided into the same duty assignment categories as previously outlined in this report. The deployment, location and duty detail of every inspector post was examined and placed in the six categories as detailed in Table 7.

TABLE 7

## Classification of Inspectors by Duty Assignment (May 2011)

Assignment Category	Number Deployed	% of Total Inspectors
Visible Front Line	0	0
Extended Front Line	224	67.07
Front-Line Administrative Support	3	0.90
Management Support	68	20.36
Specialist Support	39	11.68
Miscellaneous	0	0
<b>Total Deployed</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>100</b>

The results indicate that 67% of inspectors are assigned to front-line duties, even though none could be categorised as visible front line. However, the percentage of inspectors committed to the front line seems to compare well with the 74% of sergeants and 78% of all members estimated to be working on the front line

The overall ratio of sergeants to inspectors is similar to that of sergeants to gardaí. However, the ratio in the Front-Line Administrative Support category is cause for concern as it is completely out of proportion to the other ratios.

## Supervisory Ratio

The Inspectorate compared the ratio of inspectors to sergeants to ascertain the span of control at that level. Table 8 outlines the results across the different categories.

TABLE 8

## Supervisory Ratio of Sergeants to Inspectors (May 2011)

Assignment Category	Number of Sergeants Deployed	Number of Inspectors Deployed	Supervisory Ratio
Visible Front Line	845	0	0
Extended Front Line	751	224	7:1*
Front-Line Administrative Support	105	3	35:1
Management Support	186	68	3:1
Specialist Support	249	39	6:1
Miscellaneous	15	0	0:0
<b>Total Deployed</b>	<b>2,151</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>6:1</b>

\* Ratio refers to combined total of visible and extended front lines

TABLE 9

## Classification of Inspector Duty Assignment by Roster (May 2011)

Assignment Category	24 Hour Roster	16 Hour Roster	Fixed 8 Hour Roster	Number Deployed
Visible Front Line	0	0	0	0
Extended Front Line	89	48	87	224
Front - Line Administrative Support	0	0	3	3
Management Support	0	1	67	68
Specialist Support	0	12	27	39
Miscellaneous	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>334</b>

## Duty Rosters for Inspectors

The duty assignments of inspectors were also examined and classified into roster patterns. Table 9 shows the results.

The analysis shows that 55% of all inspectors are working a fixed eight-hour roster. This supports the view expressed in meetings and focus groups that many inspectors are carrying out executive duties which primarily occur during office hours. An estimated 27% of all inspectors work the three relief system and this applies mostly to inspectors in charge of units who are working on a 24/7 basis. In some cities, inspectors are in charge of large regular units, with primary responsibility for supervising members on the front line. However, it was learned during meetings and focus groups that these inspectors are seldom able to carry out supervisory duties as other responsibilities often take precedence.

In 2007, a policy was introduced in the DMR whereby at least one inspector per division must be available throughout the night shift to respond to serious incidents. There was no evidence of a similar policy outside the DMR.

District Officers often delegate the responsibility for supervising probationary police officers to unit inspectors. Inspectors typically oversee the work of probationers by examining pocket notebooks and offering advice and direction on performance levels. While this form of supervision is undertaken

for probationers, the Inspectorate found no evidence that it was continued once members complete probation.

The supervisory role performed by inspectors differs from the more direct role performed by sergeants, but it is equally important. The Inspectorate noted occasions when inspectors became directly involved in supervising the front line, but those cases were the exception, not the rule. Clearly, inspectors in charge of regular units have a responsibility to supervise the sergeants in those units and influence management of the front line. However, the demands associated with other responsibilities often leave inspectors unable to devote the necessary attention to that aspect of their job.

An issue consistently raised by inspectors was the lack of job descriptions for posts they occupy. The Inspectorate noted this issue in its third report and recommended the creation of job descriptions for inspectors. According to Garda management, this matter is currently being progressed. Supervision responsibilities should be included in job descriptions for inspectors working at the front line.

Chapter  
**03**

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**BARRIERS TO  
FRONT-LINE  
SUPERVISION**

There were two barriers to effective front-line supervision raised repeatedly by those interviewed during this inspection. The first is a cumbersome internal bureaucracy, particularly around the prosecution of offenders. The second is the issue of court attendance.

## Bureaucracy

The Inspectorate fully appreciates that a certain amount of bureaucracy is required in all police organisations, but every effort must be made to eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy and to automate business practices whenever possible. It was consistently expressed in focus groups that sergeants and other members spend too much time inside stations engaged in cumbersome bureaucratic processes. Bureaucratic practices, such as reviewing files and reports prepared by gardaí, are essential, but there is universal agreement that many tasks could be eliminated, streamlined or delegated to other sworn or non-sworn staff. Regular unit sergeants reported that unnecessary and/or overwhelming bureaucracy prevents them from supervising their units in the field. These sergeants estimated that, on average, they patrol with their units in the field only 10% of the time, most often on Friday and Saturday nights.

In a written submission to the Inspectorate, the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors (AGSI), confirmed that their members seldom patrol alongside the gardaí they are responsible for supervising. They firmly attribute this to burdensome bureaucracy. During focus groups and interviews, inspectors and superintendents also complained about the amount of paper files and levels of bureaucracy. There is consensus that IT improvements in recent years have not led to the elimination of a strong, paper-based culture.

## Supervision of Files

The term 'file' is used regularly by gardaí to describe several forms of documentation, such as written documents relating to investigations, formal reports to superintendents and requests for decisions on prosecution. The supervision of files relating to prosecution is one of the main duties performed by sergeants and inspectors. Garda policy states that a critical and essential supervisory duty of a sergeant is to ensure that files for prosecution contain all necessary proofs, supporting documentation and

exhibits before such files are considered complete. It is vital that there is an efficient and effective procedure in place for processing files.

Each Garda district has a correspondence register for the purpose of recording and tracking files. The Inspectorate learned that only files and correspondence that are processed through the district office are allocated a reference number and entered on the register. There are occasions when files do not go through the district office and are not recorded on the system. For example, in a straightforward case in the DMR, such as theft from shop, the decision to prosecute is normally made by the arresting garda and the supervising sergeant. The file is not submitted to the district office for registration. This is problematic, as supervisors cannot properly review and track unregistered files. The personal retention of prosecution files relating to straightforward offenses by individual gardaí also undermines effective supervision, as sergeants do not have direct or ready access to them. All files should be registered and accessible to supervisors.

When reviewing investigation and prosecution files, the Inspectorate also observed that reports and comments were not consistently signed and dated. This is another practice that makes the task of supervising files difficult for sergeants and inspectors.

The Inspectorate learned that prosecution related files are often supervised by a combination of sergeants, inspectors and superintendents. The process differs from place to place. In some locations, written updates are required, while in other places, a list of files is maintained and examined at daily accountability meetings.

Proper file management is an essential element of front-line policing. It is clear that there is significant room for improvement in Garda practices relating to files. Efforts should be undertaken to professionalise, standardise and automate the creation and maintenance of all files. This will

alleviate some of the administrative burden on supervisors and allow them to review files more efficiently.

Files prepared for prosecution decisions that go to the district officer and the DPP appear to be more professional and consistent in nature. They are always entered on the correspondence register and have a greater degree of organisational importance attached to them. However, the Inspectorate noted different practices in the decision-making process. In the DMR, prosecution decisions for straightforward offences, such as 'theft from shops', do not go to superintendents for direction. This eliminates the need for gardaí to prepare files to be reviewed by inspectors and superintendents for prosecution decisions. However, in divisions outside the DMR, files are created for all offences and submitted through the chain of command to the superintendent for decision on prosecution.

To assess the demands associated with preparing prosecution files, the Inspectorate analysed PULSE incidents recorded during the week of 24 January, 2011 in the districts visited. The charge 'theft from shop' was selected because many supervisors interviewed cited it as a good example of an offence handled differently in the DMR than other regions. At the Store Street DMR Garda Station, a file for decision on prosecution for 'theft from shop' is not created. The sergeant reviews the offence on PULSE and decides if an offender will be charged. Store Street Garda Station recorded a total of 31 charges for 'theft from shop' during the one-week period. Extrapolating this number across a twelve-month period results in approximately 1,612 charges processed annually without the creation of a file.

In the Henry Street Garda Station, Limerick, and the Ennis Garda Station, Clare, the same offence was analysed. A total of 12 and 9 charges respectively were recorded in both stations. These charges did result in the creation of a prosecution file, which was forwarded to the sergeant, inspector and/or superintendent for direction. When extrapolating these figures across a twelve-month period, the result is 624 prosecution files at the Henry Street station and 468 in the Ennis station that required supervision.

Ennis is a District Headquarters Station and is reasonably representative of other district headquarters. Excluding the DMR, there are ninety-four district headquarters across the country. Extrapolating the Ennis figure of nine charges per week for 'theft from shop' across the ninety-four district headquarters adds up to 43,992 files annually. The process of creating and reviewing a file is time consuming, not just for gardaí, but for those who must review them. If only one hour of personnel time were saved for each of the 43,992 cases, it would equate to 5,499 tours of duty.

In analysing the potential for greater savings, the Inspectorate reviewed four high volume, straightforward, categories of offences. These were theft from shops, disorderly conduct, minor assault and possession of drugs for personal use. Crime figures published by the CSO indicate a total of 93,873 incidents in these categories for 2010. When removing the DMR totals, it leaves 60,838 incidents elsewhere in the country.

The Inspectorate's analysis demonstrates that significant efficiencies can be realised if the DMR system is adopted across all districts. It would alleviate some of the unnecessary administrative burden on sergeants, inspectors and superintendents.

#### Recommendation 5

The Inspectorate recommends that the decision making process on prosecuting straightforward offences that exists in the DMR be replicated in other regions to the greatest extent possible.

In other police services, formal systems of accreditation are in place for more experienced police personnel, allowing them to process less serious, straightforward crimes. On proof of their competence in file creation, no further supervision is required. A similar system for high volume, straightforward offences could be introduced in the Garda Síochána.

#### Recommendation 6

The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána develop a system which authorises experienced gardaí to assist more junior members with case management of certain prosecution files. The system would address

high volume, straightforward offences and would ease administrative burdens on sergeants, freeing them to perform front-line supervisory duties.

## Court Prosecution

Outside the DMR, many inspectors and superintendents continue to spend multiple days each week in court in addition to preparation time. As part of this process, decisions on whether or not to prosecute are made by district officers. As indicated earlier in this chapter this process leads to the creation of many unnecessary files, increasing the burden on supervisors. Court duties create a significant distraction from their other responsibilities, including supervision and management of front-line personnel. There are clearly differing opinions among inspectors and superintendents as to the value of continuing their prosecution roles. Some believe their visibility and credibility in the community is heightened by their public appearances in court. Most superintendents and inspectors consulted stated that it is seriously impacting their ability to meet their core responsibilities and a more efficient system must be developed.

In the district courts of the DMR, gardaí prosecute certain cases on behalf of the State. The decision-making process relative to prosecution in the DMR is more efficient, particularly when addressing straightforward cases. This reduces the need for creation of files. There is also a system in the DMR whereby sergeants, known as Court Presenters, bring cases for mention to the courts in place of prosecuting gardaí. These practices result in a more efficient prosecution system. In the view of the Inspectorate, replicating the DMR practices across the country will address many supervisory and management issues.

### Recommendation 7

The Inspectorate recommends that the procedures for court presentation, prosecution and attendance that exist in the DMR be replicated in other regions to the greatest extent possible.

## Court Attendance

The Inspectorate has commented in previous reports about the significant inefficiencies related to court attendance by gardaí of all ranks. Attendance in court is at the behest of the judiciary and little account is taken of what duty a member of any rank may have to abandon in order to attend court on a particular date or at a particular time. Front-line gardaí, due to the nature of their work, are required to attend court regularly. There is little management or supervision of court appearances. Gardai frequently spend hours waiting in court to present evidence, which often takes only a few minutes. There is no supervisory input, as to when and why front-line gardaí attend court. This results in gaps in front-line policing.

As previously reported by the Inspectorate, there is general acknowledgement throughout the ranks that the system for court attendance is inefficient. To date, the organisation has not invested in systems or processes that can accurately record and track data on court attendance.

The Inspectorate visited six courts to observe processes and witness the nature of evidence given in court by gardaí. Members are often called to district courts in the morning and wait several hours to provide evidence. Sometimes, if cases are continued, they are eventually excused without testifying at all. Testimony is often something as simple as providing the identity of an individual and the fact he/she has been arrested, later charged and/or cautioned. On average, the Inspectorate counted twenty gardaí in each court at any given time. The Criminal Justice (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1997 allows that evidence of arrest, charge and caution, may be given by a member other than the investigating member. This practice was not witnessed in the selected courts visited by the Inspectorate. Applying this provision of the 1997 Act across all courts would promote much greater efficiency.

To get a broader view, the Inspectorate consulted with district judges representative of both urban and rural courts. It was clear that these judges value the presence of gardaí of all ranks in their courts. There was a view expressed that district officers outside the DMR should be in court to stand over their decisions to prosecute and to be called to account.

The Inspectorate appreciates and respects these opinions, but considering current fiscal pressures and the competing demands on supervisors and managers, such a system is a luxury that cannot be justified in current times.

Garda Management has informed the Inspectorate that they are currently reviewing court time expenditure and processes. This is a positive development.

Court business is scheduled by the courts with minimal input from Garda supervisors or managers. The courts determine remand dates for accused persons, whether they are on bail or in custody. There is seldom consideration of the resulting impact on Garda resources. The Inspectorate was pleased to witness exceptions in two district courts where judges actually enquired when Gardaí were rostered on duty and considered such when deciding remand dates. This practice should be standardised.

Garda documents indicate that over €13.5 million in overtime funds were spent on court attendance in 2010. This accounts for approximately 25% of the normal overtime budget. In the current fiscal climate, there is no doubt there will be pressure to reduce Garda overtime expenditure.

All of this underscores the need for the Garda Síochána to work closely with the courts to develop a sensible and efficient system for court attendance. Eliminating unnecessary court appearances and better scheduling of required appearances will reduce overtime expenditure, prevent unnecessary gaps in front-line policing, and free up supervisors and managers to perform other important duties.

#### Recommendation 8

The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána develop an effective system for supervision of court attendance, thereby reducing unnecessary overtime and time spent away from critical front-line activity.

The Inspectorate was pleased to hear of the reforms underway in the DMR that relate to notifications for court attendance. Currently, individual gardaí are notified directly. If the notification is directed to the District Officer, it will allow for better planning and supervision.

## Training

Professional management and leadership training is an essential element in ensuring effective supervision of Garda personnel. It is particularly important that newly promoted sergeants receive proper training to prepare them for their roles as supervisors. Each focus group of supervisors consulted during the course of this inspection was asked about the quality of training in a range of disciplines, including training specifically aimed at supervisors and managers. Detailed documentation on training courses offered at the Garda College and elsewhere was provided to the Inspectorate. It indicates that there is a wide range of courses available.

During focus group meetings, members expressed concern that training was not provided in a timely manner immediately following promotion. The Inspectorate was informed by one member, that he was not given an opportunity to participate in a sergeants' training course in the Garda College until twelve months after his promotion. Others expressed similar concerns. Such delays in the provision of courses, particularly for new sergeants, are unacceptable. Training should be provided to newly promoted sergeants immediately following promotion.

Furthermore, consideration should be given to the provision of refresher supervisory training as part of the programme of Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

#### Recommendation 9

The Inspectorate recommends that training be provided to new sergeants immediately following promotion. Refresher supervisory courses should be provided as part of the Continuous Professional Development programme.

Chapter  
**04**

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ACCOUNTABILITY

Effective supervision promotes greater accountability in a police organisation. Supervisors and managers need to know the number of people working, their identities, their assigned tasks and their locations. The Inspectorate assessed basic accountability systems in the Garda Síochána and concluded that there is much room for improvement.

When conducting focus groups and other meetings with gardaí of all supervisory and management ranks, the Inspectorate asked the following question:

*“Can you tell me now how many members are on duty in your district / division / region / organisation? If you cannot do that immediately, how long would it take to get the answer?”*

The replies varied according to the span of control and geographical spread, but very few respondents had the information readily available. At district level, the Inspectorate was informed it would take an average of two hours to get accurate information. At regional level, this expanded to several hours. At headquarters, the estimates were much longer. In all cases, the process of acquiring the answer would involve several people conducting manual exercises. As concluded in the Inspectorate’s report on Resource Allocation, Garda management is unable to ascertain efficiently if it has the right people in the right places at the right times.

The Inspectorate has stated previously that there is considerable scope for improvement in resource allocation and deployment. In earlier reports, it has recommended automated resource management and human resources systems. It will take time to acquire and implement these systems, particularly during difficult financial times, but the Inspectorate believes that proper utilisation of such tools will result in much greater efficiency. In the interim, existing automated and manual command and control systems should be used to full capacity.

Command and control is the process by which a police organisation manages calls for service from the public and deploys personnel. In most jurisdictions, the command and control system is an integral component of the overall accountability framework. It provides a central communications hub for all police operations, tracks the activity of personnel and provides visibility as to available

resources. During the course of this inspection and in its previous work, the Inspectorate observed systems in other jurisdictions.

The Central Scotland Police Service is a relatively small organisation operating in a predominantly rural environment. The main control room is its operational hub. Police personnel log on duty at that location and constantly update their status throughout their tours. Calls are carefully screened to ensure the proper resources are being deployed at the right times. Central Scotland utilises the automatic person location devices installed in the radios carried by personnel and in vehicles. The mapping capability provides real-time visibility as to available resources and enhances the safety of personnel performing services in the field.

The London Metropolitan Police Service, operating in a mostly urban environment, has invested heavily in command and control facilities. It also operates an automatic person location system. It is currently implementing a strategy that designates all control rooms ‘Total Resource Centres.’ The centres monitor the dispatch and movement of all staff. All personnel log on duty through the control rooms, which provide real-time views of available resources.

The Inspectorate previously recommended the rationalisation of garda control rooms. The Garda Síochána has been developing a long term strategy to implement the recommendation. In the interim, there is definitely room for improvement by utilising existing systems more sensibly and efficiently.

Outside the DMR, there are twenty-two main control rooms located in divisional headquarters buildings. There are also communication rooms at district stations. In the DMR, there is one central control room serving six divisions, the traffic corps and other specialist functions. It is also the main control centre for certain national operations. As

in other parts of the country, other communication rooms are located in the district stations of the DMR.

The Inspectorate found consistently that the main control rooms only deploy response vehicles and are not responsible for all deployable resources. In one large city control room, even response vehicles did not sign on with the communications room and their status on patrol at any given time was unknown to the communications room. District control facilities seem to have greater awareness of available resources, but systems are not standardised. As reported by the Inspectorate in the past, the lack of automation is startling when compared to other modern police services.

The DMR is the only region with a computer aided dispatch (CAD) system. CAD is a system that records emergency and non-emergency calls for service and assists dispatchers in assigning the appropriate personnel and response vehicles. It also has the capacity to log members on and off duty and track their activities throughout the course of their shifts. Potentially, the existing system could be used to record all members on duty in the DMR and deploy them from a central point. The Inspectorate was told that all members in the DMR are required to record their availability status on CAD, but this does not happen in practice. It is clearly under-utilisation of technology which is already available. This is an example of an improvement that could be introduced with no cost implications.

Outside the DMR, the Inspectorate believes there is an opportunity to enhance visibility and accountability through better utilisation of the main control rooms. If all 'visible front line' and 'extended front line' personnel are tracked effectively by divisional control rooms, greater efficiency will be inevitable.

In Greater Manchester, the Inspectorate visited a police station comparable to a divisional headquarters in Ireland. At the beginning of each shift, a superintendent or chief inspector leads a briefing for all personnel and uses a simple white board to confirm that each officer has logged on and is being properly deployed. This is an example of a low cost solution which could be easily replicated by the Garda Síochána.

In addition to observing the command and control structure in the Garda Síochána, the Inspectorate reviewed other systems that detail who is on duty and how they are held to account. There was a myriad of local systems, ranging from gardaí phoning the front counter so entries can be made in a station diary, to entries on clipboards in the office of the sergeant in charge. These systems focus mainly on the regular and community units and do not include detectives. The systems are inadequate and inconsistent.

The rollout of the Tetra radio system in the Garda Síochána was completed in 2011. The system contains Global Positioning Systems (GPS) technology for tracking the position of all resources in the field. The Inspectorate previously recommended that GPS be incorporated into the development of a national CAD system. The activation of the tracking technology will enhance police officer safety and enhance resource management.

When looking at reporting mechanisms at divisional level, obvious gaps were exposed. Divisions are notified of district duty rosters approximately fourteen days in advance. Changes that occur in the intervening period are not updated. Current practices undermine accountability and efficiency.

#### Recommendation 10

The Inspectorate recommends that divisional control rooms become a focal log-in point for all front-line gardaí. Front-line staff should inform the control room of their presence when going on and off duty, and should regularly provide updated availability status. Systems and practices for signing on and off duty should be improved and applied uniformly at all levels of the organisation.

The Inspectorate attended a number of accountability meetings in districts and divisions. The meetings were generally well organised and attended by the appropriate supervisors. Some matters, such as crime, were discussed in detail, but with the exception of one location, there was no reference to resource allocation, availability or visibility. However, the Inspectorate was particularly impressed by practices at the Store Street Garda Station in Dublin. There was a clear focus on reducing bureaucracy to facilitate more

patrol time. Sergeants were more visible in the field, working with both regular units and community gardaí. Important topics, such as resource deployment, were also discussed at the Divisional Chief Superintendent's accountability meeting.

#### Recommendation 11

The Inspectorate recommends that the subject of resource allocation, availability and visibility should be given the highest priority. The effective supervision and deployment of resources should be a standing agenda item at all accountability meetings throughout the organisation.

### Parades and Inspections

At the commencement of each tour of duty there should be a parade, inspection and briefing. The Inspectorate believes that structured pre-duty briefing is essential to effective management and supervision and previously made a recommendation to this effect in its third report. The Garda Síochána indicated that this recommendation had been addressed and implemented in May, 2009. However the Inspectorate learned during the course of this inspection that parades and briefings do not occur at the start of every tour of duty. According to those interviewed at focus groups and meetings, parading is rarely conducted on the early shift and if parades occur on the night shift they tend to be informal. The Inspectorate was told that parades and briefings do take place at the start of the late tour of duty.

The Inspectorate attended a number of parades to assess current practices. In the larger stations, at the times when the Inspectorate was present, the regular units and community policing personnel attended parades. At one parade, traffic officers were also present. With one exception, the Inspectorate did not witness uniform or personal safety equipment inspections.

In the Ennis District, the Inspectorate witnessed very effective parading, inspection and briefing arrangements. The parade was led by an inspector. It included regular units, community gardaí, and traffic corps. The Community Intelligence Officer provided a briefing. The District Officer was present at another parade and briefing relating to a high profile political visit. This was a large parade with

briefing of multiple units. It was the only time the Inspectorate witnessed a visible check of uniforms and equipment.

Briefing front-line gardaí is an important supervisory responsibility. The absence of briefings before every tour of duty is a serious gap in the supervision of front-line staff. The Inspectorate reiterates its previous recommendation for structured briefings and suggests a review of the unit briefing process put in place in May, 2009 to ensure it is fully adhered to.

### Individual Reviews and Feedback

The Inspectorate notes that there are no formal mechanisms for individual feedback and/or reviews on work performance in the Garda Síochána. This is a marked contrast to most other modern police services.

Views on performance management were provided from personnel at all levels throughout this supervision inspection process. Those at more senior ranks definitely favour some form of performance assessment. In focus groups and other conversations, most participants at all ranks explained that they had no problem with such a system in theory, but emphasised the importance of transparency. They agreed that substantive feedback would be helpful; not simply discussion of the number of arrests made, traffic tickets issued, and detections completed. The Inspectorate shares this view.

A recommendation for the development of a professional performance management system for all gardaí was made by the Inspectorate in its third report. The introduction of such a system is now an element of the Croke Park Agreement. The Inspectorate believes that a professional and transparent performance management system will enhance the quality of supervision to front-line staff.

# LIST OF APPENDICES

## **APPENDIX 1**

Non-Rank Dependent Sergeant Postings (May 2011)

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## **APPENDIX 2**

Number of Prisoner Logs on PULSE in January 2010  
by Hours of Detention

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# APPENDIX 1

## Non-Rank Dependent Sergeant Postings (May 2011)

Possible Non Rank Dependent Posts	Total	%	Potential Civilianisation Posts	Total	%
Instructors	53	2.46	Administration	39	1.81
Crime Prevention Officer	23	1.07	Divisional Office Staff	29	1.35
Crime Scene Investigator	22	1.02	District Office Staff	12	0.56
Telecoms Technician	13	0.60	Staff Office	5	0.23
Information Technology	12	0.56	Regional Office	5	0.23
H.R.M. Operations	12	0.56	Commissioners Office	3	0.14
Command And Control	9	0.42	D/Commissioner SRM Office	2	0.09
Procurement	8	0.37	D.M.A. Office Harcourt Square	1	0.05
PSV Inspector	7	0.33	D/Commissioner Operations Office	1	0.05
Press Office	7	0.33	Finance	1	0.05
Fingerprints (Tech Bur)	6	0.28	Research	1	0.05
Project Management	6	0.28		99	4.60
Cyprus	5	0.23			
Specialist Training H.Q.	5	0.23			
Health and Safety Advisor	4	0.19			
GCRO	4	0.19			
Internal Affairs Garda HQ	4	0.19			
Kosovo	3	0.14			
UN (Yugoslavia)	3	0.14			
Ballistics (Tech Bur)	2	0.09			
Garda Band	2	0.09			
GISC - Castlebar	2	0.09			
Housing	2	0.09			
Photography (Tech Bur)	2	0.09			
Special Events	2	0.09			
Technical Bureau (Not Specified)	2	0.09			
Telecommunications Unit (Not Specified)	2	0.09			
Transport Area	2	0.09			
Document (Tech Bur.)	1	0.05			
Firearms (Armoury)	1	0.05			
Garda College (CPD/SP Training)	1	0.05			
Garda Mounted Unit	1	0.05			
In Service Training (Train & Development Unit)	1	0.05			
Management School (Train & Development Unit)	1	0.05			
Mapping (Tech Bur)	1	0.05			
Museum	1	0.05			
	232	10.79			

# APPENDIX 2

Number of Prisoner Logs on PULSE in January 2010 by Hours of Detention

Hours of Detention	Number of PULSE Prisoner logs	% of Total Logs for Month*	% of Usable Logs**
Less than six hours	6982	78.18%	85.97%
Between 6 and 12 hours	600	6.72%	7.39%
Between 12 and 18 hours	321	3.59%	3.95%
Between 18 and 24 hours	109	1.22%	1.34%
Over 24 and less than 48 hours	79	0.88%	0.97%
Over 48 and less than 72 hours	20	0.22%	0.25%
Between 72 and 168 hours	10	0.11%	0.12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8121</b>	<b>90.93%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
Discounted Logs***	810	9.07%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>8931</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	

\*This column represents the total number of prisoner logs that were created on PULSE for this month.

\*\* Useable logs are the figure remaining after incomplete records have been discounted. Logs were discounted where there was no release date, no release time, where the arrest time and the release time were the same, where the detention period was longer than seven days and where the release time was 00.00.00.

\*\*\*Discounted logs is the total number as described at \*\* above.