



## **Statement by Chief Inspector Kathleen O’Toole**

### **On Publication of the Fifth Report of the Garda Síochána Inspectorate**

#### **Missing Persons – Review and Recommendations**

The Garda Síochána Inspectorate today published its fifth report, “**Missing Persons – Review and Recommendations.**”

The report follows a request from the Minister for Justice, Equality & Law Reform to review current practice regarding missing persons and advise the Government on the need to establish a dedicated missing persons unit within the Garda Síochána and a response network similar to “Amber Alert” in the USA.

The review involved detailed consultation with the Garda Síochána. The Inspectorate team also met with the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Civil Defence, Missing in Ireland Support Service (MISS) and with public and media representatives who have a particular interest in the issue. The Inspectorate undertook international benchmarking by meeting with and reviewing material from a number of other police forces and agencies including the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), West

Yorkshire Police, French National Police, Belgian Federal Police, Leicestershire Police, the FBI, the RCMP, Interpol, Europol and the National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA) in the United Kingdom.

The report includes eighteen recommendations. Among the more significant of them are that the Garda Síochána develop an alert system for missing children and that the current resources of the Missing Persons Bureau at Garda Headquarters be supplemented to enable it to more fully discharge its functions as a central hub dedicated to missing persons cases.

The Chief Inspector commented, “In bringing forward recommendations the Inspectorate is very conscious of the pressures on the public purse at this time. In recommending an Amber Alert system we are satisfied that much can be done without incurring additional cost. When a child goes missing in high-risk circumstances it is vital that arrangements are in place whereby the Garda Síochána can immediately harness the assistance and support of key government and non-government networks in alerting the community.”

Chief Inspector, Kathleen O’Toole acknowledged the commitment of the agencies involved with missing persons and said, “Throughout this review, I was impressed by the commitment of all the organisations and individuals with whom the Inspectorate met. I would like to express my sincere thanks to all who provided assistance and input to our work.”

The Missing Persons Report is available on the Inspectorate’s website [www.gsinsp.ie](http://www.gsinsp.ie).

15 April, 2009