



CIGIREACHT AN GHARDA SÍOCHÁNA  
GARDA SÍOCHÁNA INSPECTORATE

Garda Síochána Inspectorate

Press Release

Publication of Garda Inspectorate Report

**COUNTERING THE THREAT OF INTERNAL CORRUPTION- *A review of counter-corruption structures, strategies and processes in the Garda Síochána***

**Key Findings**

- ***There is no strategic analysis of the threat of corruption in the Garda Síochána with leadership responsibilities for corruption spread across a number of areas.***
- ***There are significant gaps in the guidance given to the Garda workforce in relation to maintaining professional boundaries, abuse of power for sexual gain and notification of relationships and associations to supervisors.***
- ***There is an absence of policies and guidelines in important areas such as substance testing, business interests and post-employment activities.***
- ***There are weaknesses in governance and supervision in areas of wide Garda discretion, such as discontinuances of district court cases, exemptions for Gardaí receiving fixed charge penalty notifications and charging for policing services.***
- ***There is poor understanding of and confidence in the processes for reporting wrongdoing which prevents members of the Garda workforce from speaking up and reporting concerns.***
- ***The Garda Síochána does not have the capacity for proactive real time internal monitoring of its information systems to prevent and detect the misuse of data.***
- ***Organisational learning is not effectively used to prevent corruption.***
- ***Improvements need to be made in the systems and processes for Garda workforce vetting, property management and information security.***

The Garda Síochána Inspectorate welcomes the publication today of the Inspectorate's first ever self-initiated inspection. Due to the unique nature of policing, internal corruption will always pose a threat to the integrity of the Garda Síochána. The report is a comprehensive examination of the effectiveness of the Garda Síochána at preventing, detecting and mitigating the threat of internal corruption, it also assesses the structure, strategies and processes in place to counter corruption.

During the course of the review, the Inspectorate encountered many examples of individuals and specific departments within the Garda Síochána developing policies and practices to enhance and support organisational integrity. However, the review found that a number of internationally recognised counter-corruption functions require development within the Garda Síochána.

Following the publication of the report, Chief Inspector Mark Toland said, ***“It is clear that the Garda workforce is predominantly honest and performs its duties with integrity. However, due to the corrosive nature of corruption and the potential it has to severely damage public confidence in policing, there is no room for complacency”.***

He went on to say ***“People usually come into contact with the Garda Síochána at times of crisis when they can be especially vulnerable. While most will receive a policing service delivered to the highest standards of professional behaviour, the report identifies significant gaps in the guidance given to the Garda workforce in relation to having appropriate relationships and maintaining professional boundaries. He continued, “While abuse of power for sexual gain by police officers is recognised internationally as a current corruption threat in policing, there was little awareness of this risk in the Garda Síochána”.***

Additionally, Chief Inspector Toland said ***“The Garda Síochána must also do more than simply react to instances of corruption as they occur. Instead, it must take a more proactive approach to identifying and tackling corruption”.*** Acknowledging the positive engagement between the Inspectorate and the Garda Síochána, particularly with the head of the new Garda Anti-Corruption Unit, Chief Inspector Toland also said ***“While the establishment of an Anti –Corruption Unit within the Garda Síochána is welcomed, it needs to be sufficiently resourced to create dedicated intelligence and investigation teams and should have the capacity to proactively monitor all Garda information and communications technology”***

**The report makes 34 recommendations designed to deliver a more effective approach to countering the threat of corruption within the Garda Síochána. These include:**

- *The development of a multi-agency strategy to manage the corruption threats within the Garda Síochána and across the wider criminal justice sector.*
- *The appointment of a senior police leader with overall responsibility for counter corruption.*
- *The development of a strategic assessment of corruption threats, and the setting out of a counter-corruption control strategy that establishes priorities for action.*
- *The improvement of systems and processes for Garda workforce vetting, property management and information security.*
- *The development and implementation of policies and guidelines relating to conflicts of interest, the maintenance of professional boundaries, and the mitigation of the threat of Abuse of Power for Sexual Gain.*
- *The improvement of governance and supervision in areas where a wide degree of discretion exists.*
- *The development of a strategy to encourage the reporting of wrongdoing.*

In conclusion, Chief Inspector Toland said ***“I am convinced that the implementation of the 34 recommendations contained in this report will ensure that the Garda Síochána and the wider criminal justice sector are better prepared to prevent and detect corruption and in doing so protect the high level of public confidence in policing.”***

**Ends**

## Note to Editors

Please see link to press pack <https://www.gsinsp.ie/media-kit-enquires/>, and link to report <https://www.gsinsp.ie/countering-the-threat-of-internal-corruption>.

For any follow up requests for information, please contact: Mr Paul Mc Donnell – 0879975985, [ppmcdonnell@gsinsp.ie](mailto:ppmcdonnell@gsinsp.ie)

## Additional Information

In considering which aspects of policing should be examined in its Work Plan for 2019-2021, the Inspectorate consulted widely with a number of key stakeholders including the Garda Síochána, the Policing Authority, and the Department of Justice. The final Work Plan outlines several distinct areas of operation and administration, prioritised for examination taking into account the level of risk to human rights, public safety, public confidence, reputation and financial management in the Garda Síochána. One such area is countering the risk of corruption within policing.

The inspection which was led by former **Deputy Chief Inspector Hugh Hume\***, focussed on the effectiveness of the Garda Síochána at preventing, detecting and mitigating against internal corruption. Specifically assessing the effectiveness of the Garda Síochána in relation to international standards and practices and the relevant factors affecting the following:-

- **Strategy and Governance**; in terms of the identification and management of risk, internal and external oversight, and the current anti-corruption architecture and strategy.
- **Building Organisational Resilience Against Corruption**; in terms of selection, vetting, leadership and supervision, physical and systems security and procurement.
- **Enhancing Professional Integrity**; in terms of ethics and integrity training, organisational registers and disclosures, substance testing, transparent and ethical decision making, professional standards, and maintaining professional boundaries.
- **Identifying and Investigating Corruption**; in terms of protected and confidential disclosures, intelligence, investigation, regulation and information sharing.
- **Reducing the Impact of Corruption**; in terms of demonstrating an effective response to reports of corruption and organisational learning.

For the purposes of the inspection, the Inspectorate relied on the following commonly accepted definition of corruption used by a number of Government agencies, departments and commercial entities within Ireland:

*“Corruption is an abuse of a position of trust in order to gain an undue advantage”.*

\* Hugh Hume was appointed to the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission in February 2021.