



CIGIREACHT AN GHARDA SÍOCHÁNA  
GARDA SÍOCHÁNA INSPECTORATE

Report of the Garda  
Síochána Inspectorate

## PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RESPONDING TO  
CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

NOVEMBER

10

A REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS  
CONTAINED IN THE FOURTH REPORT OF THE GARDA SÍOCHÁNA  
INSPECTORATE ON RESPONDING TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE.

REVIEW OF REPORT FEBRUARY 2021

*Progress on the implementation of Recommendations Contained in the Seventh Report of the Garda Síochána Inspectorate  
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Recommendation Number	Recommendation	Accepted (A); Accepted with Modification (AM); Rejected (R).	Inspectorate Assessment of the Progress of the Recommendation
1	The Garda Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána take every opportunity to stress that there is no place for deferential treatment in modern Irish policing.	A	The recommendation is implemented.
2	The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána assign responsibility for all aspects of development of child protection arrangements to a member of assistant commissioner rank. The assistant commissioner should provide visible leadership and direction in the development of new organisational policies and structures, and in monitoring and evaluating the Garda contribution to the operation of national child protection guidelines.	A	The recommendation is implemented.
3	The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána include the promotion of inter-agency working with the HSE and the development of child protection policies, practices and procedures as a priority in the organisation's business plans. The Garda Síochána should track and publish progress made in implementing change.	A	<p>The progress of the recommendation was examined during the follow up review of Child Sexual Abuse in 2017 and assessed at that time as partially implemented.</p> <p>As it is the subject of additional recommendations in the 2017 review, the recommendation in this report will not be subject to further monitoring.</p>

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<b>4</b>	The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána, in co-operation with the assistant national director with responsibility for child protection in the HSE, prioritise and provide supports for inter-agency working between Gardaí, social workers and staff in child assessment units.	A	The progress of the recommendation was examined during the follow up review of Child Sexual Abuse in 2017 and assessed at that time as partially implemented.  As it is the subject of additional recommendations in the 2017 review, the recommendation in this report will not be subject to further monitoring.
<b>5</b>	The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána work with the HSE in addressing the barriers to joint working identified in reviews of the Children First guidelines and ensure, as far as possible, the use of shared systems and agreed records.	A	The progress of the recommendation was examined during the follow up review of Child Sexual Abuse in 2017 and assessed at that time as partially implemented.  As it is the subject of additional recommendations in the 2017 review, the recommendation in this report will not be subject to further monitoring.
<b>6</b>	The Inspectorate recommends the establishment, on a pilot basis, of at least two child advocacy centres in Dublin involving participation by the Garda Síochána, the HSE, and St Louise's and St Clare's assessment and therapy units. The centres should work closely with the Director of Public Prosecutions. The pilots should be monitored on an ongoing basis and evaluated within a defined time period.	AM	The recommendation is implemented.
<b>7</b>	The Inspectorate recommends that Gardaí assigned to the proposed child advocacy centres should be	AM	The recommendation is implemented.

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	detectives. They should be trained specialist victim interviewers and have specialist training for child sexual abuse investigations, including training for inter-agency working. They should be engaged full-time on child protection cases.		
<b>8</b>	The Inspectorate recommends that counselling support be provided for (i) all Gardaí working full-time in the area of sexual offences and (ii) Gardaí who investigate particularly difficult cases involving grievous sexual offences.	A	The recommendation is implemented.
<b>9</b>	The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána publish information for complainants on how, where and when they can make a complaint about child sexual abuse. This should reassure victims that it is right to report child sexual abuse, confirm that child protection is a top priority for the Garda Síochána and outline how complainants will be treated in their dealings with the Garda Síochána. It is a daunting prospect for a victim of child sexual abuse to approach the counter in a public office at a Garda station to report an offence of this kind. The Garda Síochána should devise victim-friendly options to encourage reporting of child sexual abuse. Most importantly, the information should emphasise that complainants will be believed and that their complaints will be acted upon.	A	The recommendation is implemented.
<b>10</b>	The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána specially train a cadre of front-line Gardaí in each Garda district to take reports alleging child sexual abuse.	A	The recommendation is implemented.

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<b>11</b>	The Inspectorate recommends that only specially trained Gardaí take statements from child and adult victims of child sexual abuse.	A	<p>The progress of the recommendation was examined during the follow up review of Child Sexual Abuse in 2017 and assessed at that time as partially implemented.</p> <p>As it is the subject of additional recommendations in subsequent Inspectorate reports, the recommendation in this report will not be subject to further monitoring.</p>
<b>12</b>	The Inspectorate recommends that Garda help lines for reporting of allegations of child sexual abuse be staffed on a 24/7 basis and that use of automated answer lines be discontinued.	A	The recommendation is implemented.
<b>13</b>	The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána continue to develop and maintain close working relationships with non-statutory organisations that provide support and services for victims of child sexual abuse. Informal relationships with non-statutory organisations should be underpinned by formal protocols on matters such as sharing of information and referral processes.	A	<p>The progress of the recommendation was examined during the follow up review of Child Sexual Abuse in 2017 and assessed at that time as partially implemented.</p> <p>As relationships with non-statutory organisations will be examined as part of the 2021 inspection of domestic abuse, the recommendation in this report will not be subject to further monitoring.</p>
<b>14</b>	The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána continue to deter the small minority of people who make	A	The recommendation is implemented.

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	false complaints of child sexual abuse by gathering sufficient evidence in such cases to prosecute them.		
<b>15</b>	The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána develop further specialisation in the area of child sexual abuse and, in particular, move away from the current practice whereby the Garda who takes the initial report is the investigating Garda.	A	<p>The progress of the recommendation was examined during the follow up review of Child Sexual Abuse in 2017 and assessed at that time as not yet implemented.</p> <p>As it is the subject of additional recommendations in subsequent Inspectorate reports, the recommendation in this report will not be subject to further monitoring.</p>
<b>16</b>	The Inspectorate recommends that every reported case of child abuse be the subject of a formal risk assessment.	A	<p>The progress of the recommendation was examined as part of the follow up review of Child Sexual Abuse. At that time, although plans were in place to introduce a risk-assessment process, it was not yet implemented.</p> <p>As formal risk assessments will be examined as part of the 2021 inspection of domestic abuse, the recommendation in this report will not be subject to further monitoring.</p>
<b>17</b>	The Inspectorate recommends that the Office of the Minister for Children <sup>1</sup> be asked to consider revision of the child protection notification forms used by the Garda Síochána and the HSE to provide for recording of the date of the initial report of child abuse.	A	The recommendation is implemented.

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<b>18</b>	The Inspectorate recommends that the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs be asked to consider a revision to Children First such that the guidelines state explicitly that prosecution of a sexual offence against a child will be considered within the wider objective of child welfare/protection.	A	The recommendation is implemented.
<b>19</b>	The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána review the timeliness of child sexual abuse investigations with a view to having all but complex and difficult investigations completed within three months.	A	The progress of the recommendation was examined during the follow up review of Child Sexual Abuse in 2017 and assessed at that time as not satisfactorily addressed.  As it is the subject of an additional recommendations in a subsequent Inspectorate report, the recommendation in this report will not be subject to further monitoring.
<b>20</b>	The Inspectorate recommends that, from the outset, Garda investigative strategies take account of the likelihood that a victim of child sexual abuse may refuse to make a formal statement or, having made one, may withdraw it at a later date. Investigative strategies should aim to:  ➤ Achieve corroborating evidence without delay. ➤ Take the victim statement as soon as possible after the initial report is made so as to minimise the time	A	The progress of the recommendation was examined during the follow up review of Child Sexual Abuse in 2017 Abuse and assessed at that time as not satisfactorily addressed.  As it is the subject of additional recommendations in a subsequent Inspectorate report, the recommendation in this report will not be subject to further monitoring.

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	<p>available for the victim to be influenced to withdraw cooperation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Adopt any and all safeguarding options open to the Gardaí and social workers if there is any continuing risk, high or low, to the well-being of the victim or other person.</li> <li>➤ Review cold cases periodically taking account of any changed circumstances that may prompt new criminal justice options.</li> </ul>		
<b>21</b>	The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána consider the option of seeking a search warrant in any case where difficulties are encountered, or are likely to be encountered, in obtaining, by voluntary means, church or other documentation that is believed to contain evidence for the purpose of a prosecution.	A	The recommendation is implemented.
<b>22</b>	<p>The Inspectorate recommends two categories of positive outcomes of Garda investigations into child sexual abuse as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number and proportion of cases in which prosecutions were directed by the Director of Public Prosecutions.</li> <li>➤ Number and proportion of cases not prosecuted in the interest of the welfare of the child victim and where concerns for the welfare of other children were met.</li> </ul>	AM	<p>The progress of the recommendation was examined during the follow up review of Child Sexual Abuse in 2017. At that time, the Director of Public Prosecutions advised that it was not possible to provide information on the number and proportion of cases not prosecuted in the interests of the welfare of a child victim.</p> <p>In response to a follow up request in 2021, the Garda Síochána have advised that they are unable to provide the number and proportion of cases not prosecuted in the</p>

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			<p>interest of the welfare of the child. This is in part due to the fact that the numbers of such directions are low, and even if the welfare of the child is a factor, it's unlikely to be the only factor and is very unlikely to be even referred to in the written directions. The Garda Síochána has outlined a commitment to move towards a broader range of case measurements and outcomes.</p> <p>As a result of the information provided, the recommendation is assessed as not implemented, rather than rejected.</p> <p>Due to the passage of time since the recommendation was first made, the difficulties in progressing this recommendation and the commitment of the Garda Síochána to move towards a broader range of case measurements and outcomes, the recommendation in this report will not be subject to further monitoring.</p>
<b>23</b>	The Inspectorate recommends that when it is established that a complaint of child sexual abuse is false, the Garda Síochána should immediately inform the person against whom the complaint was made.	A	The recommendation is implemented.
<b>24</b>	The Garda Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána put arrangements in place to ensure that a	A	The recommendation is implemented.

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	person who is the subject of an allegation of child sexual abuse is informed without delay of a decision by the Director of Public Prosecutions not to prosecute.		
<b>25</b>	The Garda Síochána should, as required by policy, “immediately” create an offence record on PULSE of each complaint of child sexual abuse. Ideally, the policy should set a specific time limit. Summary of Garda Síochána.	A	The progress of the recommendation was examined during the follow up review of Child Sexual Abuse in 2017 and assessed at that time as not satisfactorily addressed.  As it is the subject of an additional recommendation in subsequent Inspectorate reports, the recommendation in this report will not be subject to further monitoring.
<b>26</b>	The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána Professional Standards Unit have a role in ensuring adherence to crime counting rules and other Garda directives on crime recording. The Unit should be in a position to provide quality assurance on PULSE records to the Central Statistics Office, the body with responsibility for publication of crime statistics.	A	The recommendation is implemented
<b>27</b>	The Inspectorate recommends that, in the interest of quality assurance, the services of the Garda Síochána Information Centre (GSIC) at Castlebar be used to enter records of sexual offences on PULSE.	A	The recommendation is implemented

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<b>28</b>	The Inspectorate recommends that Garda efforts in tracing unaccompanied minors who go missing from State care be at least sustained, and if possible increased, in the interest of the young people concerned, and as a demonstration of the State's commitment to countering any possible means of human trafficking. The Garda Síochána should collate information on the circumstances in which those who go missing are traced	A	The recommendation is implemented
<b>29</b>	The Inspectorate recommends further investments of staff and resources in the countering of child sexual abuse offences on the internet. Law enforcement efforts should be complemented by preventive measures, including education of children about safe surfing on the internet	A	The progress of the recommendation was examined during the follow up review of Child Sexual Abuse in 2017 and assessed at that time as partially addressed.  As it is the subject of additional recommendations in subsequent Inspectorate reports, the recommendation in this report will not be subject to further monitoring.