

CIGIREACHT AN GHARDA SÍOCHÁNA
GARDA SÍOCHÁNA INSPECTORATE

Mr Alan Guidon
Clerk to the Joint Committee on Justice
Leinster House
Dublin 2

Your Ref: JCJ/4/5/L/05xx

12 August 2021

**General Scheme of the Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill
Submission from the Garda Síochána Inspectorate**

Dear Mr Guidon,

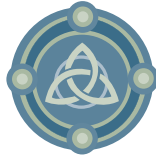
The Garda Síochána Inspectorate welcomes the opportunity to provide the Committee on Justice with a submission on the General Scheme of the Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill, which it hopes will assist the Committee in its scrutiny of the Bill. As requested, our submission is set out in the attached document on a Head by Head basis.

The Inspectorate has played a lead role through its many inspection reports, in supporting Garda Reform and setting out a vision for the delivery of a visible modern policing service. For example, the Inspectorate's report Changing Policing in Ireland (2015) set out a pathway to modernise and restructure the Garda Síochána to ensure that the greatest proportion of personnel is deployed on front-line policing services.

In the Policing with Local Communities report (2018), the Inspectorate highlighted that accessibility and reassurance are essential elements of policing and are critically important to local communities, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

The report of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland (CoFPI) proposed a new approach to policing and community safety, which will ensure that police are more visible in communities, and can focus on preventing harm. The General Scheme sets out to meet the Government's commitment to implement the CoFPI report recommendations, while ensuring that there remains a strong and independent public external accountability mechanism for the Garda Commissioner and the Garda Senior Leadership Team.

The Inspectorate welcomes that the General Scheme will make the prevention of harm and protection of people who are vulnerable or at risk an objective of the Garda Síochána and the safety of communities as a "whole of government" responsibility. It



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is encouraging that it sets out to strengthen the objectives of the Garda Síochána in relation to protecting and vindicating the human rights of individuals.

Of particular relevance to the Inspectorate is the provision for a new body, the Policing and Community Safety Authority (the Authority) to supersede both the Policing Authority and the Inspectorate. A principal function of the Authority will be to carry out inspections in relation to any particular aspects of the operation and administration of the Garda Síochána relating to policing services. In order for the proposed new oversight arrangements to be effective, it is critical that the inspection function remains an important part of the oversight architecture and this submission includes observations and suggestions to support the performance of the inspection function within the Authority.

Pending the enactment of the General Scheme, the Inspectorate continues to fulfil its statutory function of ensuring that the resources available to the Garda Síochána are used efficiently and effectively through inspection as set out in our Work Plan for the period 2019-2021.

The Inspectorate's latest report, "Delivering Custody Services: A Rights-Based Review of the Treatment, Safety and Wellbeing of Persons in Custody in Garda Síochána Stations" (2021) was recently presented to the Minister for Justice and awaits publication. The Committee may wish to note that it recommends a number of legislative changes regarding arrest and detention which are relevant to the General Scheme of the Garda Síochána (Powers) Bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a written submission to the Committee and I hope that our observations will be of assistance in its consideration of the General Scheme.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Toland

Mark Toland
Chief Inspector
Garda Inspectorate

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