



Garda Síochána Inspectorate

Press Release

Publication of Garda Inspectorate Report

“Public Order Policing - A Review of Practices in the Garda Síochána”

- *Identifies areas of good practice, such as standardised training and multi-agency cooperation, briefing days for senior managers and advance welfare briefings*
- *While incidents and risk of widespread disorder in Ireland are relatively low, inconsistent governance and application of the Garda Síochána’s policy on public order policing pose a significant risk to public confidence in the Garda Síochána*
- *The Garda Síochána should urgently develop a strategic threat and risk assessment relating to public order*
- *Proposes that public order policing policies be more transparent and focus on human rights and the Garda Code of Ethics*
- *Recommends the publication of use of force data and monitoring of trends*

The Garda Inspectorate welcomes the publication today of the Inspectorate’s report *“Public Order Policing - A Review of Practices in the Garda Síochána”*. The report, requested by the Policing Authority, is a forward looking examination of the effectiveness of public order policing by the Garda Síochána.

The report explores a number of themes which impact on the effectiveness of public order policing including: strategy; governance and accountability; capability and capacity; operational delivery and post incident management. It makes a number of recommendations which are intended to contribute to greater transparency, clearer governance and leadership and a Human Rights and Equality focused approach to this important area of policing.

Commenting on the publication of the report Chief Inspector Mark Toland said: ***“Despite the work carried out to progress recommendations from two internal Garda reports into public order incidents, the inspection identified a number of areas that require improvement. The implementation of the recommendations in this report will ensure that the Garda Síochána is better prepared to understand and meet its public order obligations.”***

The report identifies areas of good practice, such as standardised training and multi-agency cooperation, the professionalism of public order commanders and advance welfare briefings.

However, the Inspectorate also found that there are diffused governance arrangements in place for managing the Garda response to public order incidents, leading to inconsistent application of Garda policy. This presents a significant organisational risk that a disproportionate policing response will be employed or inappropriate tactics used.

An important objective of this inspection was to assess the evidence of strategic planning by the Garda Síochána around public order. The Inspectorate found that the Garda Síochána has not developed a formalised public order strategic assessment of threat and risk. The Inspectorate also found that there is no internal group monitoring the use of force by Garda members which is a significant gap in governance.

The key recommendations of the report include:

- The Garda Síochána should prioritise the development of a Strategic Risk Assessment to provide the organisation with a robust evidence base for determining the appropriate operating model for public order policing in terms of capacity, capability and training.
- The Assistant Commissioner responsible for Roads Policing and Major Event Management should have lead responsibility for public order governance, policy and compliance. All planned deployments of the National Public Order Unit should have prior approval of the Assistant Commissioner.
- Gardaí are issued with incapacitant spray (commonly referred to as pepper spray), handcuffs and ASP batons. Data relating to the use of these methods of restraint and other uses of force should be published on the Garda Síochána's website and external oversight of use of force trends should be incorporated in the performance monitoring activities of the Policing Authority.
- A standardised transparent selection process for the National Public Order Unit should be put in place and a strategy developed to encourage greater female representation in public order policing.
- There should be a more structured engagement process with event organisers and local communities to assess and minimise the likely impact of an event on a community.
- A mandatory recertification process for all public order commanders should be put in place that ensures that they maintain operational competence, professional knowledge and a current understanding of relevant human rights issues. Event planners and public order commanders should have ready access to human rights advice.
- The Garda Síochána should formalise its debriefing process by involving external stakeholders including organisers, protesters and wider representation from internal organisational units. Lessons learned should be reviewed by the Public Order Steering Group and should influence subsequent selection, training and development of tactics and strategy.

Speaking following the publication of the report, Chief Inspector Toland said, ***"The implementation of these recommendations by the Garda Síochána will contribute to an***

effective, consistent, proportionate and human rights focused approach to public order policing in Ireland.”

The Inspectorate will give a detailed presentation on the Report to the Authority at its public meeting with the Garda Commissioner tomorrow Wednesday 26 June 2019 at 2:30pm in Collins Barracks.

Ends

25 June 2019

Note to Editors

A copy of the report is available at http://www.gsinsp.ie/en/GSINSP/Pages/published_reports

Garda Inspectorate contact: Mr Paul Mc Donnell – 0879975985; ppmcdonnell@gsinsp.ie.