

# An Garda Síochána



## Crime Prevention & Reduction Strategy

*Putting Prevention First*

2017





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## COMMISSIONER'S FOREWORD

I am delighted to introduce the *Crime Prevention & Reduction Strategy* for An Garda Síochána.

Preventing crime is, and continues to be the number one policing priority of An Garda Síochána. This *Crime Prevention & Reduction Strategy* has been developed as an overarching strategy to articulate how Garda resources will be used to prevent and reduce crime. The strategy complements organisational policing priorities and is aligned with our Modernisation and Renewal Programme 2016-2021. It is also fully commensurate with Human Rights standards and is in line with our public commitments contained within the Garda Code of Ethics.

This *Crime Prevention & Reduction Strategy* forms an integral part of our commitment to develop Community Policing Teams in every Garda District and is central to the development of our integrated Community Policing system.

Crime is prevented from happening in the first instance through proactive policing. Reducing the fear of crime and the chances of repeat victimisation is a consequence of successful proactive policing. The impact of crime on victims and their families can be traumatic with long-lasting and devastating effects. The Garda victim service policy places victims at the centre of our service by providing a respectful, reassuring, responsive and reliable service to all victims. Where crime prevention is an option, it stands to reason that this is the better policy to pursue rather than subsequent investigation, detection and prosecution after the crime has occurred.

The UN Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime (ECOSOC Resolution 2002/13) provide excellent principles of good crime prevention practice. Our National and Divisional Crime Prevention Officers are pivotal in driving crime prevention and reduction initiatives across the State. This overarching *Crime Prevention & Reduction Strategy* is designed to continue that tradition and embed an organisational ethos of crime prevention across all ranks and specialist units within An Garda Síochána.

Crime prevention and reduction initiatives promoted by An Garda Síochána such as *Operation Thor* are an integral strand of any anti crime strategy. They alert the public to particular crime trends, empower them to take preventative action and hopefully lead to a reduction in that crime. In addition, An Garda Síochána has devised a strategic operating model which incorporates crime prevention as a key priority.

An Garda Síochána has a long established tradition of fostering and developing close relationships with communities it serves. Crime Prevention is a shared responsibility between communities and An Garda Síochána and promoting crime prevention, in partnership and collaboration with communities and agencies, achieves a mutual goal of supporting a safer Ireland for all. By putting prevention first and through the effective implementation of this strategy, An Garda Síochána reaffirms its commitment to prevent and reduce crime across Ireland.



A handwritten signature in black ink, written over a horizontal line.

Acting Commissioner of An Garda Síochána

November 2017



# 1 Introduction

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An Garda Síochána is committed to making crime prevention a top priority. Crime and the fear of crime negatively affect the quality of life of many within the community and An Garda Síochána recognises that, in order to effectively combat crime and the fear of crime, comprehensive crime prevention and reduction strategies must be put in place. Building on lessons learned, various strategies have been developed, such as Neighbourhood Watch, Community Alert, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and target-specific operations to combat particular types of crime. However, criminals are very adaptable and so these strategies must be constantly reviewed, assessed, tweaked and/or replaced as necessary and new strategies developed if we are to keep ahead of the criminal.

Crime prevention will be effective through partnership and collaboration with community and State Agency stakeholders and successful strategies must include elements and groups within society other than the Gardaí. The strategies proposed here are ‘Garda strategies’ and even though there is close cooperation proposed with other agencies and groups etc. it is essentially a ‘Garda only’ national strategy. A truly national strategy would involve a more holistic and all-embracing approach with all relevant bodies, groups and agencies involved from the outset i.e. from the research and development stages right through to the implementation and assessment stages.

A complete national crime prevention and reduction strategy must be ‘whole of society’ and ‘whole of community’ approach. That is to say, it cannot be left to the Gardaí alone – all elements of society, State agencies, local authorities, health boards, schools etc. and all elements of the community right down to the individual citizen must be involved. This strategy does not purport to be a truly national strategy in the above sense. Rather, it is a proactive Garda strategy to deal with the crime problems faced by our fellow citizens and to provide a framework and template for developing specific strategies aimed at tackling particular categories of crime, either locally, regionally or nationally. We are confident that the publication of this Garda strategy will stimulate a wider debate on the need for a more holistic whole of society strategy on the prevention of crime.

The implementation of this strategy will be founded and delivered on four pillars. Implementation will include the introduction of a number of proactive initiatives such as the establishment of a **Garda Crime Prevention National Centre of Excellence** and a Crime Prevention Champion within An Garda Síochána. All Gardaí will benefit from these initiatives through education, training and access to resources which will ultimately develop a tradition within the organisation of encouraging crime prevention and reduction.

The four pillars of the Implementation Plan are as follows:

- ▲ **Building Our Strategic Crime Prevention Capacity**
- ▲ **Operating a Professional Crime Prevention Service through Partnership and Collaboration with Communities**
- ▲ **Implementing Customised Crime Prevention Approaches within Communities**
- ▲ **Communicating Crime Prevention Messages to the Public**



## 2 Purpose & Expected Outcomes

This *Crime Prevention & Reduction Strategy* has been developed as a resource and guidance document which outlines effective approaches to crime prevention and reduction. It describes a range of measures that can be taken by An Garda Síochána for effective delivery of crime prevention and reduction policies. It will provide guidance by way of good practice to assist with the development of appropriate policies and strategies to tackle specific crime problems and support safer communities. Specifically, the purpose of this strategy will be to:

- ▲ Promote principles of good crime prevention and reduction practices
- ▲ Encourage a whole organisational approach to crime prevention within An Garda Síochána
- ▲ Encourage increased commitment to crime prevention with partner agencies
- ▲ Support a coordinated approach to addressing crime problems within Ireland
- ▲ Promote an improved level of collaboration between An Garda Síochána and other agencies within the State
- ▲ Improve the effectiveness of crime prevention and reduction measures
- ▲ Assist in guiding the allocation of crime prevention resources to achieve the greatest impact



In terms of outcomes, the strategy is expected to achieve the following:

- ▲ Increased crime prevention capacity within An Garda Síochána
- ▲ A reduction in crime and the fear of crime within the community
- ▲ A reduction in the risk of becoming a victim of crime
- ▲ Enhanced community safety and security
- ▲ A reduction in re-offending



# 3 Principles of Good Practice

In developing this strategy, international crime prevention and reduction strategies were examined with a view to identifying successful strategies and learning from these examples. Common themes identified in the examination of these strategies included:

- ▲ Collaboration with key partners at local, provincial, national and international level
- ▲ Integration of programmes and strategies across all agencies and partners
- ▲ Strengthening and maintenance of partnerships
- ▲ Identification of successful strategies based on research and empirical evidence
- ▲ Focused action on specific priorities
- ▲ Measurable results
- ▲ Appropriate analysis
- ▲ Funding



In addition, the themes in this strategy have been identified to complement the *Modernisation & Renewal Programme, 2016 – 2021*. The changing demands and expectations of citizens, the emerging security and policing challenges, require a programme that will professionalise, modernise and reform An Garda Síochána over the next five years to ensure we can meet present and future challenges.

Crime prevention will become our number one policing priority. We will work closely with public and private sector partners to reduce the opportunities for crime and re-offending. We will provide impactful and engaging crime prevention advice. We will ensure high Garda visibility in communities.

The UN Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime (ECOSOC Resolution 2002/13) state that:

*‘there is clear evidence that well-planned crime prevention strategies not only prevent crime and victimization, but also promote community safety and contribute to the sustainable development of countries. Effective, responsible crime prevention enhances the quality of life of all citizens. It has long-term benefits in terms of reducing the costs associated with the formal criminal justice system, as well as other social costs that result from crime. Crime prevention offers opportunities for a humane and more cost-effective approach to the problems of crime’.*



Essentially they propose that:

- ▲ Community involvement, cooperation and partnerships represent important elements in crime prevention
- ▲ Crime prevention encompasses a wide range of approaches
- ▲ All levels of government should play a leadership role in preventing crime and reducing harm
- ▲ Crime prevention should be integrated into all relevant social and economic policies and programmes including employment, education, health and urban planning, justice and social services with particular emphasis on communities, families, children and youth at risk
- ▲ Strategies should be built on cooperative partnerships between State Agencies, institutions, community and non-governmental organisations, the business sector and civil society.
- ▲ There must be adequate funding and other resources as well as clear accountability to ensure the implementation and sustainability of strategies
- ▲ Strategies and interventions should be based on a sound knowledge of causes of crime and effective practices
- ▲ All crime prevention initiatives must respect human rights and the rule of law
- ▲ Account must be taken of the links between local and transnational organised crime
- ▲ Crime prevention strategies should, when appropriate, pay regard to the different needs of men and women in society and consider the special needs of vulnerable members of society

From this research, it was learned that there is no single approach to crime prevention. A wide array of interventions is needed to maximise effectiveness. What is clear from our examinations is that, for crime prevention and reduction strategies to be effective, a multi-agency approach must be adopted. The Gardaí alone cannot solve the crime problem – it can only be resolved by the engagement of all levels of society from State Agencies through to the individual citizen.





## 4 Effective Crime Prevention Strategies

An effective crime prevention strategy is under-pinned by a problem-solving approach and will be founded on a strong evidence base to determine the extent of the problem, the identification of potential interventions and consideration of how these interventions will be delivered.

To determine whether a strategy is successful or not will require continuous assessment and evaluation during the lifetime of the strategy. What works in one area may not work in another. Therefore, the strategy must be robust enough to do what it is designed to do and flexible enough to allow for change and tweaking as the need arises and as determined by ongoing assessment. Evaluation of the strategy has to be evidence-based, and revised if unsuccessful or supported if showing true benefits.



*Sgt Kelvin Courtney of the Garda Crime Prevention National Centre of Excellence*

It must be clearly understood from the outset that some strategies will be more successful than others some will work better in one location than in another and some will work better at particular times. It is important that management and staff do not get disillusioned if a strategy is not working. What is important is that the strategy is analysed, assessed and the reasons for its failure or poor results identified and acted upon.



## 5 Key Fundamental Features

Effective crime prevention requires an understanding of the crime problems and a knowledge or expectation of what needs to be done to address those problems. Key features forming the basis of any effective crime prevention strategy include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ▲ A robust, integrated system of Community Policing
- ▲ Knowledge-led policing
- ▲ Problem-solving and the use of the Garda Decision Making Model
- ▲ Community engagement, partnerships and initiatives
- ▲ Collaboration with local authorities, Joint Policing Committees and Local Policing Fora
- ▲ Situational crime prevention
- ▲ Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)
- ▲ The Garda Youth Diversion and Schools Programmes
- ▲ Appropriate crime prevention training

## 6 Priority Crime Issues

Crimes against property such as burglary and theft are some of the most prevalent crimes within Ireland. Crime and subsequent victimisation is however, not evenly spread across the country. What may be prevalent in one area may be non-existent in another. However, while each area may experience its own level of criminal offending, some crimes will invariably remain prevalent across Ireland.

The need to include particular categories of crime or offending for specific attention will be examined each year, factored into local policing plans and put into action by crime coordination teams in each Garda region. Any emerging patterns on 21st Century crimes such as cyber crime will be analysed and prevention advice will be researched and disseminated to community stakeholders. As in our recent *Operation Thor* anti-crime strategy, we will continue to place a particular focus on repeat offenders and criminals who travel across regions to commit crime.

## 7 Monitoring, Review & Governance

This *Garda Crime Prevention & Reduction Strategy* is a working document and will be subject to ongoing monitoring and review in order to ensure that the Strategy continues to support the principles of the 5 year *Modernisation & Renewal Programme 2016-2021*. Priority areas will be examined so that new and emerging crime trends and issues can be identified and incorporated over time. Individual stakeholders will be responsible for the monitoring of their own specific crime prevention strategies e.g. Divisional Chief Superintendents will evaluate the effectiveness of their own specific strategies with assistance from their Regional Detective Superintendents.

Consistency in the implementation of this strategy will be overseen by Assistant Commissioner Community Engagement & Public Safety in consultation with the Regional Risk Compliance & Continuous Improvement Superintendents. A thorough evaluation of this strategy will be conducted within eighteen months of its introduction, and improvement opportunities will be highlighted and acted upon. Each Divisional Officer will ensure that a member of Inspector rank is appointed within his/her respective division, who is to be tasked with overseeing and monitoring the effective implementation of this strategy.



## 8 Conclusion

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It is indisputable that a long-term crime prevention agenda is the best approach for dealing with crime issues and community safety. A key challenge facing police in society today is integrating enforcement with prevention and linking long-term prevention measures with enforcement operations. From a cost-benefit perspective, European research shows that crime prevention programmes are a cost-effective means to address crime and are shown to provide significant returns on investment. The development and fostering of a whole organisational approach will instil a crime prevention mindset and ethos across An Garda Síochána.

As an organisation, An Garda Síochána has a long-established tradition of fostering and developing close relationships with the communities it serves. It is essential that the community remains at the heart of everything we do, as they are our greatest ally in our work in preventing and detecting crime and protecting the safety of the people. This is an overarching strategy developed to provide guidance and assistance and will be the framework for developing particular and individual strategies to tackle specific crime problems affecting the community. From an organisational perspective, it will encourage, embed and develop a mindset of crime prevention amongst all management and staff. From a community perspective, it will be effective in promoting and capitalising on the win-win benefits of crime prevention for all in making our communities safer places in which to live and work.

This *Crime Prevention & Reduction Strategy* will form part of An Garda Síochána's commitment to develop Community Policing Teams in each district throughout the country and will be an integral part of this integrated Community Policing system.





# 9 Implementation Plan

## CULTURE CHANGE

PRIORITY AREA 1	BUILDING OUR STRATEGIC CRIME PREVENTION CAPACITY		
OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	OUTCOMES
1. An Garda Síochána will build and develop a robust organisational crime prevention structure and culture	A. Designate Deputy Commissioner Policing & Security as the organisational <i>Crime Prevention Champion</i> .	Commissioner	<i>Improved Crime Prevention Culture</i>
	B. Ensure that the crime prevention function is placed on the agenda at each of the Commissioners Senior Leadership Meetings.	Deputy Commissioner Policing & Security	
	C. Ensure every member of An Garda Síochána understands the role of crime prevention (through Annual and Divisional Policing Plans) to reduce the incidence of crime.	Deputy Commissioner Policing & Security Divisional Officers	
	D. Building on the work of the National Crime Prevention Unit, develop an organisational <i>Garda Crime Prevention National Centre of Excellence</i> under a dedicated fulltime Superintendent, that establishes, implements and centrally co-ordinates best crime prevention practice with all internal and external stakeholders. This unit will also coordinate and evaluate local crime prevention initiatives and encourage the spread of good crime prevention practices.	Deputy Commissioner Policing & Security	
	E. Ensure that a culture of crime prevention is developed and nurtured through Garda training programmes.	Director of Training Each Regional Assistant Commissioner	
	F. Ensure “Standard Operating Procedures” are utilised and implemented by all National and Divisional Crime Prevention Officers in each Garda Division.	Superintendent Garda Crime Prevention National Centre of Excellence Divisional Officers	
	G. Ensure that Crime Prevention Officers are intrinsically involved in the Divisional crime management function, and with supporting the Garda Victim Service Offices.	Divisional Officers	<i>Increased Crime Prevention Capacity</i>
	H. The Garda Síochána <i>Garda Crime Prevention National Centre of Excellence</i> will develop, foster and grow collaborative partnerships with key stakeholders in community, business and third level institutions, as well as State Agencies and Local Authorities.	Assistant Commissioner Community Engagement & Public Safety	
	I. Ensure consistent implementation of the <i>Crime Prevention &amp; Reduction Strategy</i> across all Garda Divisions.	Assistant Commissioner Community Engagement & Public Safety	
	J. Review the <i>Crime Prevention &amp; Reduction Strategy</i> within 18 months of launch.	Assistant Commissioner Community Engagement & Public Safety	





CONSISTENT STANDARDS

PRIORITY AREA 2			
OPERATING A PROFESSIONAL CRIME PREVENTION SERVICE THROUGH PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION WITH COMMUNITIES			
OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	OUTCOMES
2. An Garda Síochána will build, operate and deliver a consistent and professional crime prevention service. (continued)	E. Ensure regular CPD up-skilling is provided to all National & Divisional Crime Prevention Officers in Crime Prevention theory, practice and innovation.	Superintendent Garda Crime Prevention National Centre of Excellence	<i>Increased Crime Prevention Competence &amp; Collaboration</i>
	F. The <i>Garda Crime Prevention National Centre of Excellence</i> will host twice yearly Strategic Partnership Meetings with business and community stakeholders such as retailers, metal theft stakeholders etc.	Superintendent Garda Crime Prevention National Centre of Excellence	
	G. Divisional Officers will host annual local partnership meetings with business and community stakeholders such as retailers, metal theft stakeholders, the Irish Farmers Association etc.	Divisional Officers	
	H. Divisional Officers will identify and profile local public disorder issues and work in collaboration with community stakeholders to prevent and reduce incidence of same.	Divisional Officers	
	I. The <i>Garda Crime Prevention National Centre of Excellence</i> will research and develop a Crime Prevention Award System to encourage and spread good crime prevention and security practices across Divisions.	Superintendent Garda Crime Prevention National Centre of Excellence	





PRIORITY AREA 4	COMMUNICATING CRIME PREVENTION MESSAGES TO THE PUBLIC		
OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	OUTCOMES
<p><b>4. An Garda Síochána will build, develop and operate a wide range of communications solutions to disseminate key crime prevention messages to the public.</b></p>	<p><b>A.</b> Identify suitable <i>mechanisms</i> for disseminating key crime prevention messages to communities.  <b>E.G</b> - Billboard adverts                      - Targeted local public information campaigns across a range of media                      - Patrol car marking                      - Social media                      - Utility bills etc.</p>	<p>Director of Communications                       Superintendent Garda Crime Prevention National Centre of Excellence</p>	<p><i>Improved Dissemination of Crime Prevention Advice</i></p>
	<p><b>B.</b> Ensure that crime prevention advice is delivered in a media friendly fashion.</p>	<p>Director of Communications                       Superintendent Garda Crime Prevention National Centre of Excellence</p>	
	<p><b>C.</b> Develop bespoke crime prevention advice mechanisms for hard to reach and vulnerable communities.</p>	<p>Director of Communications                       Superintendent Garda Crime Prevention National Centre of Excellence</p>	<p><i>Pertinent and Focussed Delivery of Crime Prevention Advice</i></p>
	<p><b>D.</b> Develop and design a <i>crime prevention App</i> for dissemination on IOS, Android and Windows platforms.</p>	<p>Director of Communications                       Executive Director ICT                       Superintendent Garda Crime Prevention National Centre of Excellence</p>	
	<p><b>E.</b> Continue to use the <i>CrimeCall</i> TV programme to disseminate monthly crime prevention advice to the public.</p>	<p>Assistant Commissioner Community Engagement &amp; Public Safety</p>	<p><i>Pertinent and Focussed Delivery of Crime Prevention Advice</i></p>
	<p><b>F.</b> Host two dedicated crime prevention weeks each year on relevant themes.</p>	<p>Assistant Commissioner Community Engagement &amp; Public Safety</p>	
	<p><b>G.</b> Engage with relevant stakeholders to ensure that CPTED principles are considered with regard to the built environment.</p>	<p>Superintendent Garda Crime Prevention National Centre of Excellence</p>	<p><i>Pertinent and Focussed Delivery of Crime Prevention Advice</i></p>
	<p><b>H.</b> Ensure that regular and pertinent crime prevention advice is delivered taking into account emerging crime trends and seasonality factors.</p>	<p>Divisional Officers                       Garda Síochána Analysis Service                       Superintendent Garda Crime Prevention National Centre of Excellence</p>	





**EDUCATION & AWARENESS**

PRIORITY AREA 4	COMMUNICATING CRIME PREVENTION MESSAGES TO THE PUBLIC		
OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	OUTCOMES
<p>4. An Garda Síochána will build, develop and operate a wide range of communications solutions to disseminate key crime prevention messages to the public. (continued)</p>	<p>I. Continually review the success of crime prevention initiatives and readjust as necessary.</p>	<p>Divisional Officers Garda Síochána Analysis Service</p>	<p><i>Increased Crime Prevention Awareness</i></p>
	<p>J. Ensure regular review of the provision of crime prevention advice by An Garda Síochána.</p>	<p>Director of Communications Superintendent Garda Crime Prevention National Centre of Excellence</p>	
	<p>K. Seek the active participation of the public by informing them of the need for crime prevention action and their role in it.</p>	<p>Director of Communications Divisional Officers</p>	
	<p>L. Provide the information necessary for communities to address crime problems.</p>	<p>Divisional Officers Assistant Commissioner Community Engagement &amp; Public Safety</p>	
	<p>M. Explore new opportunities and mechanisms for delivering crime prevention advice.</p>	<p>Director of Communications Superintendent Garda Crime Prevention National Centre of Excellence</p>	



