



An Garda Síochána Older People Strategy

An Garda Síochána 2010



Garda Statement of Strategy

According to the World Health Organisation ageing is a privilege while also a challenge. With the population of older people increasing around the world, and more specifically here in Ireland, the need for tailored strategies for this section of the population is becoming more apparent. Plans targeted at meeting the needs of older people are important and this is evident for example in the areas of health, road safety and accessibility. The need for targeted policing strategies is no different.

While An Garda Síochána works to meet the policing needs of all citizens, we also develop targeted strategies to address the particular policing needs of different demographic groups. This document, An Garda Síochána Older People Strategy, has been developed to ensure the policing needs of older people in Ireland are met to the highest standard possible.

In order to ensure that the needs of older people continue to be met within the broader policing service delivered by An Garda Síochána, the strategy will be inextricably linked with the Strategy Statement 2010 – 2012 and the National Model of Community Policing. Both documents explicitly iterate the aim to increase and strengthen collaborative partnerships, while committing to a more visible Garda presence and a reduction in crime and the fear of crime.

This strategy also reiterates An Garda Síochána's overriding objective, set out in the Strategy Statement 2010-2012, which is to prevent, detect and disrupt crime and criminal activity and to ensure that people feel safe in their homes, on our roads and in public places, specifically as it refers to older people.

An Garda Síochána acknowledges and appreciates the significant contribution given by older people to their communities through voluntary and other activity.



We will continue to work with individuals and groups as we build new partnerships to deliver on our commitment of ‘working with our communities’ and securing a safer future for everyone.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Murphy'.

Fachtna Murphy

Commissioner of An Garda Síochána



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Background

The number of older people throughout the world is increasing considerably. Patterns in Ireland are no different. Between 1996 and 2006, the population of people over the age of 50 increased by 26%¹. The Central Statistics Office (CSO) predicts that by 2020 15% of the population will be over 65, with this increasing to 20% by 2035. Although levels of crime against older people remain low, fear of crime appears to be higher amongst this group.

From the policing perspective, crime victimisation has been found to be lower amongst older people than other groups, however the fear of crime has been shown to be significantly higher². Fear of crime can have negative effects on quality of life. It can significantly limit or restrict the movement and activities of individuals, which can further impact physical, social and emotional well-being³. This, along with a feeling of vulnerability, can lead to isolation and exclusion of older people from their local community. Therefore it is important to ensure the needs of older people are being met with regard to policing, security and safety to ensure older people remain active within their communities.

¹ Figure calculated from CSO population figures.

² Box et al. 1988; Ferraro, 1995; Hale, 1996

³ Fear of Crime in Ireland and its impact on quality of life, National Crime Council, 2009.



Stakeholder Consultation Process

The Strategy for the Older Person was developed following extensive research and consultation with key internal and external stakeholders.

Internal Consultation

A wide range of members of An Garda Síochána contributed to the development of this strategy. This took a number of forms. Focus groups were set up to examine the policing service currently provided and how and where this could be improved. They included Community Gardaí, Crime Prevention Officers and Gardaí from other units. Discussions around the content and direction of this strategy were conducted throughout the country at regional and divisional meetings. Personnel from the rank of Garda to Assistant Commissioner were consulted and many of their comments and opinions have been incorporated into this Strategy.

External Consultation

A number of methods were used to canvass the views and opinions of older people and those working with and for them. Over 50 agencies, some working directly with and for older people, others not specifically so, made written submissions for consideration within the Strategy (See appendix A for the list of organisations). The commitment and interest shown in these submissions was also reflected at focus group meetings, during which people voiced their concerns, ideas and desires for the future of policing for older people in Ireland. These focus groups included both internal and external participants. The information gathered provided the substance for many of the actions.

Discussion also took place with officials from the Office for Older People and it was agreed that the National Positive Ageing Strategy, when published, will take account of this Garda Strategy.



Consultation Process Findings

What reverberated consistently during both internal and external consultation was the need to build trusting relationships between communities and An Garda Síochána and the need to enhance and build collaborative partnerships. Other common themes echoed throughout consultation centred on increased communication and engagement, improved visibility, response rates and service provision and the use of local media campaigns to advertise crime prevention advice and information. Many agencies wanted more awareness and improved protocols for collaborative approaches to issues such as abuse against older people, health and welfare. They also called for more joined up thinking, more awareness of human rights and discrimination issues, such as ageism, mental health issues, accessibility to premises, documents, and information. Individuals and agencies acknowledged that there are many good initiatives occurring throughout the country, but reinforced the need for consistency across all areas. To achieve this they called for improved processes and service provision.



Current Initiatives

Members of An Garda Síochána are currently working with members of the public on many excellent initiatives. The list below is not exhaustive but illustrates some of the interesting work currently undertaken by Gardaí.

1. Older People Registers - Names, addresses and call logs to older people maintained at many rural Garda Stations.
2. Community Alert and Neighbourhood Watch Schemes have traditionally been very supportive of the position of older people both as activists supporting the schemes and as beneficiaries. They are instrumental in driving community support on the ground. The funding for this, made available from the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, allows local communities to assist older people improve their security.
3. A series of Crime Prevention Leaflets covering bogus callers, street safety and security for older people, amongst others, have been produced by An Garda Síochána and are available at www.garda.ie.
4. Bogus Caller Initiative - This programme assists in advising older people how to engage with uninvited callers to their homes. Essentially a contact card is given from behind a closed door by the older person to the caller, which advises them to contact a named and trusted neighbour to validate the authenticity of the original caller. This initiative aims to combat the problem of Bogus Callers and was piloted in Cork City.
5. The Age Friendly County Initiative promotes collaborative approaches amongst statutory and non-statutory agencies to encourage and maintain the best possible health and well being of older people.
6. Community Gardaí throughout the country provide a number of initiatives to benefit older people, such as the 'A Cup of Tea, You and Me initiative', Senior Citizen Information Days, etc.



An Garda Síochána's Commitment to Older People

This strategy will be supported by each and every member of An Garda Síochána. The commitment to implement it and to meet the policing needs of older people in Ireland will be inextricably linked to the framework of the Strategy Statement 2010-2012. This commitment is evident in the Organisations vision, mission and values as set out below.

Vision

‘Excellent people delivering policing excellence’

Mission Statement

Working with Communities to Protect and Serve

Values

Honesty: Being honest and ethical and adhering to the principles of fairness and Justice

Accountability: Accepting individual responsibility and ensuring public accountability

Respect: Having respect for people, their Human Rights and their needs

Professionalism: Providing a professional policing service to all communities

(Garda Corporate Strategy 2010 – 2012)



How will this Strategy be Achieved?

The Strategy for Older People will contribute directly to achieving the corporate objective of ensuring a peaceful community, by working with communities, and more specifically older people and those working with and for older people. This strategy will be underpinned by the National Model of Community Policing and the Diversity Strategy, and will complement existing support structures and communication methods already in place. To do this four key objectives have been identified:

1. Develop and maintain effective communication links between Gardaí and older people
2. Deliver a timely and effective proactive response by An Garda Síochána for older people
3. Increase trust and confidence by lessening the fear of crime amongst older people
4. Determine and respond to the needs and expectations of older people on an ongoing basis.



Strategic Roles and Responsibilities

In order to achieve these objectives a number of roles and responsibilities will be allocated, to include the following:

Older Person Champion

Deputy Commissioner Strategy and Change Management will be appointed as the 'Older People Champion' in An Garda Síochána and will have overall responsibility for the implementation of this strategy.

Operational Ownership

Chief Superintendents, Superintendents and departmental heads will have responsibility for drafting and implementing plans at a local level to deliver this strategy. Managers, first line supervisors and all members of An Garda Síochána will be responsible for working towards delivering this strategy.

Management Commitment

An Garda Síochána will use its strategic management, and organisational structure, to endorse and support the implementation of this strategy. The key dimensions in this structure will involve the abovementioned older people Champion and operational ownership.



Action Plan

The following section outlines the objectives of this strategy, the initiatives that may be used to achieve them, the owners of these initiatives and the desired outcomes of each.

1. Develop and maintain effective communication links between Gardaí and older people.

Number	Initiative	Ownership	Outcomes
1.1	Instil in all Gardaí the importance of engaging and communicating with older people.	Community Relations and Community Policing (CR/CP). Garda Training College. Chief Superintendent and Superintendents.	Improved service provision.
1.2	Engage with statutory and non statutory agencies in common geographic areas to enhance / establish communication links appropriate to assess the needs and expectations of older people.	CR/CP. Chief Superintendent and Superintendents.	Improved understanding of needs of older people.



1.3	Develop and communicate the Strategy for Older People in line with An Garda Síochána's Strategy Statement 2010-2012, and other existing strategies.	CR/CP.	Co-ordinated approach to Strategy Implementation.
1.4	Promote and utilise the experience and wisdom of older people in their communities, and encourage their participation in crime prevention initiatives e.g. Community Alert/ Neighbourhood Watch.	Chief Superintendent and Superintendents.	Strengthening of community links and improved contribution from older people to communities.
1.5	Through the medium of local and national media keep communities informed of policing issues that affect older people.	Director of Communications. Chief Superintendent and Superintendents.	Reduced isolation and increased engagement.
1.6	Explore diverse technology channels to increase engagement and contact with older people.	CR/CP. Executive Director ICT.	Reduced isolation and increased engagement.



<p>1.7</p>	<p>Publicise and promote initiatives and good practices that An Garda Síochána has established.</p>	<p>CR/CP.</p> <p>Director of Communications.</p> <p>Chief Superintendent and Superintendents.</p>	<p>Reduced isolation and increased engagement.</p>
<p>1.8</p>	<p>Update, review and publicise the Strategy on a continuing basis.</p>	<p>CR/CP.</p>	<p>Improved responsiveness to needs and expectations of older people.</p>



2. Deliver a timely and effective proactive response by An Garda Síochána for older people.

Number	Initiative	Ownership	Outcomes
2.1	Determine the policing requirements of older people and appropriate responses.	CR/CP. Chief Superintendent and Superintendents.	Targeted responses appropriate to requirements.
2.2	Deliver high visibility targeted patrolling, both mobile and foot, in neighbourhoods where older people reside and congregate.	Chief Superintendent and Superintendents.	Targeted responses appropriate to requirements.
2.3	Continue to develop and distribute crime prevention and personal safety advice.	CR/CP. Crime Prevention Officers.	Improved awareness and response to Elder Abuse.
2.4	Continue to develop and distribute Road Safety advice.	GNTB. Chief Superintendent and Superintendents.	Improved awareness of Road Safety issue.



<p>2.5</p>	<p>Continue to make young people more aware of the fear that they can cause to older people through noisy group behaviour.</p>	<p>CR/CP. Chief Superintendent and Superintendents.</p>	<p>Improved understanding of the needs of older people.</p>
<p>2.6</p>	<p>Continuous analysis, identification, profiling and targeting of criminals suspected of committing crime against older people.</p>	<p>Garda Síochána Analysis Service (GSAS) in consultation with Chief Superintendent and Superintendents and National Units.</p>	<p>Targeted responses appropriate to requirements.</p>
<p>2.7</p>	<p>Continuous analysis of crimes committed against older people to identify trends and patterns.</p>	<p>GSAS in consultation with Chief Superintendents and Superintendents and National Units.</p>	<p>Targeted responses appropriate to requirements.</p>



2.8	In line with the National Elder Abuse Strategy, develop and implement a strategy on Elder Abuse in consultation with other statutory and non-statutory agencies.	CR/CP.	Improved awareness and response to Elder Abuse.
2.9	Continue to engage with planning authorities to promote Crime Prevention through environmental design.	CR/CP.	Improved awareness of crime prevention advice.



3. Increase trust and confidence by lessening the fear of crime amongst older people.

Number	Initiative	Ownership	Outcomes
3.1	Increase awareness among Gardaí of the diverse challenges facing older people.	CR/CP. Garda Training.	Improved awareness of diversity issues.
3.2	Develop a station / district register of older people (with consent) as a means of supporting engagement by Community Gardaí.	Superintendents.	Increased confidence and lessen feelings of fear.
3.3	Use all opportunities to promote the idea of supportive and caring neighbourhoods through new and ongoing initiatives.	Chief Superintendent and Superintendents.	Increased confidence and lessen feelings of fear.
3.4	Improve quality of follow up, including victim support referrals, with older people who are victims of crime.	CR/CP. Chief Superintendent and Superintendents.	Building of more trusting relationships.
3.5	Develop/improve partnerships with statutory and non statutory agencies in producing information designed to reduce the fear of crime.	CR/CP.	Increased confidence and lessen feelings of fear.



3.6	Ensure that An Garda Síochána provide accurate, timely and proportionate information on crime to the media.	Director of Communications.	Increased confidence and lessen feelings of fear.
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4. Determining and responding to, on an ongoing basis, the needs and expectations of older people.

Number	Initiative	Ownership	Outcomes
4.1	Develop mechanisms within the Public Attitude Survey to canvass the views of older people.	CR/CP. GSAS.	Identification of views and opinions of older people.
4.2	Establish bi-annual fora with a selection of agencies that work with older people.	CR/CP.	Identification of views and opinions of service providers of older people.
4.3	Document needs, expectations and key issues arising from regular interaction with older people and statutory and non-statutory agencies. Use this information to update policing plans.	Chief Superintendent. and Superintendents.	Identification of older people most at risk.
4.4	Maintain a standard approach to recording and updating incidents involving older people.	Chief Superintendent and Superintendents. Executive Director ICT.	Identification of older people most at risk.



Assessment of Implementation

Evaluation of this strategy will be carried out in collaboration with a range of other strategies and initiatives underway within the framework of the Diversity Strategy 2010-2013 and the National Model of Community Policing. The evaluation will include the evaluation of interagency meetings, community meetings and events, collaborative approaches undertaken, crime trends, complaint trends and interviews/surveys.

Conclusion

While older people share the needs of the wider population, they also have specific needs, which An Garda Síochána is committed to meeting. The population of older people will continue to increase and this strategy should be regarded as sufficiently fluid to address the needs of and responses required for such a diverse group into the future.



*An Garda Síochána is committed to the delivery of this strategy;
You can also play a part*

What services would you like to see available from An Garda Síochána for older people? What good ideas do you have that could assist in making communities feel safer and more secure? What other agencies, individuals, etc can play a role?

If you would like to comment, or make suggestions about this document and its contents, or if you have answers to the questions above, please contact us at:

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Appendix A

List of Organisations who made submissions

Active Retirement Ireland	Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists
Age Action Ireland	Iveagh Trust
Age and Opportunity	Law Reform Commission
An Bord Altanais Nursing Board	Louth County Council
Association of Occupational Therapists of Ireland	Munitir na Tire
Ballyfermot Senior Citizens Forum	National Council for the Blind of Ireland
Bord Gais	National Disability Authority
Caring for Carers Ireland	Office of the Ombudsman
Clare Local Development Company	Older Women's Network (Own) Ireland
Cosc	Pavee Point
School of Nursing & Midwifery, University College Cork	Probus Clubs
DSPCA	Pensions Ombudsman
Eircom Limited	Religious Society of Friends in Ireland - Quakers
Equality Authority	School of Nursing & Midwifery, Trinity College Dublin
ESB	The Adelaide & Meath Hospital
Financial Regulator	The Alzheimer Society of Ireland
Health Information and Quality Authority	The Carers Association and Care Alliance Ireland
Irish Association of Older People	The Dental Health Foundation (DHF)
Irish Congress of Trade Unions	The Irish Senior Citizen's Parliament
Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association	The Irish Sports Council
Irish Farmers Association	The National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery
Irish Hospice Foundation	The National Treatment Purchase Fund
Irish Human Rights Commission	The Psychological Society of Ireland
Irish Rural Link	Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice

**Thanks and appreciations are given
to all who took the time to make a submission**