

# An Garda Síochána

Oifig Saorála Fáisnéise,  
An Garda Síochána, Teach áth Luimnigh,  
Lárionad Gnó Udáras Forbartha Tionscail,  
Baile Sheáin, An Uaimh,  
Contae na Mí.  
C15 DR90



Freedom of Information Office,  
An Garda Síochána, Athlumney House,  
IDA Business Park,  
Johnstown, Navan,  
Co Meath.  
C15 DR90

Teileafón/Tel: (046) 9036350

Bí linn/Join us  

Láithreán Gréasain/Website:  
[www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie)

Ríomh-phoist:/Email: [foi@garda.ie](mailto:foi@garda.ie)

## Re: Freedom of Information Request FOI-000023-2020 Request Part-Granted

*Dear*

I refer to your request, dated and received on 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2020 which you have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 (FOI Act) for records held by An Garda Síochána.

Part 1(n) of Schedule 1 of the FOI Act states that An Garda Síochána is listed as a partially included agency "*insofar as it relates to administrative records relating to human resources, or finance or procurement matters*". Therefore, only administrative records that relate to human resources, finance or procurement shall be considered.

Your request sought:

- 1. The top 15 monetary sanctions imposed on Gardai to be found in breach of Garda discipline in 2019 and the nature of the breach of discipline in each case.*
- 2. The number of Gardai to be suspended from duty in 2019 and the reason for the suspension in each case.*
- 3. The number of Gardai to be found to be in breach of Garda discipline in 2019 and the total amount imposed in fines last year.*
- 4. The number of Gardai to be dismissed from the force last year and the reason in each case.*

I wish to inform you that I have decided to part-grant your request on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2020. I have numbered your request for ease of reference.

The purpose of this letter is to explain my decision.

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## 1. Findings, particulars and reasons for decision.

The Internal Affairs Section of An Garda Síochána were contacted to identify the information requested in your FOI Request.

Part 1 of your request is seeking *‘the top 15 monetary sanctions imposed on Gardai to be found in breach of Garda discipline in 2019 and the nature of the breach of discipline in each case’* The figures contained in the table below relates to a singular member.

Number	Breach	Sanction
1	15x Neglect of Duty	11 weeks, 5 Day’s Pay
2	1 x Discreditable Conduct 1 x Intoxication 1 x Drinking on Duty	€5,750
3	1 x Neglect of Duty	4 Weeks Pay
4	4 x Neglect of Duty	3 ½ Week’s Pay
5	1 x Neglect of Duty 1 x Falsehood/Prevarication	3 Weeks Pay
6	5 x Neglect of Duty	€2,500
7	2 x Neglect of Duty	2 Weeks Pay
8	2 x Discreditable Conduct	1 ½ Weeks Pay
9	1 x Neglect of Duty	€1,000
10	1 x Discreditable Conduct	1 Weeks Pay
11	1 x Discreditable Conduct	1 Weeks Pay
12	2 x Falsehood/Prevarication	1 weeks Pay
13	4 x Neglect of Duty	€1,000
14	2 x Neglect of Duty 1 x Discreditable Conduct	€1,000
15	9 x Neglect of Duty	€900

In cases where the sanction is referred to in weeks/days of pay, this was the finding of the board of inquiry/appeal board as recorded at Internal Affairs. Discipline section does not have access to the member’s financial records.

In relation to part two of your request you are seeking *“the number of Gardai to be suspended from duty in 2019 and the reason for the suspension”*. I wish to advise that the number of Gardai who were suspended in 2019 was 21. I can advise that some of the members remain on suspension and others had their suspensions lifted within 2019. As per the Regulations, these suspensions are considered long term suspensions. ‘Short term suspensions’ for example are members who would be suspended for a court appearance and would not be included in this figure.

Due to the small number of members currently suspended, I am withholding the rank and the reasons for suspension of the members concerned. I am conscious of my obligations to retain

personal information in a confidential and secure manner and prevent personal information from being released into the public domain unnecessarily. Personal information is defined at section 2 of the FOI Act and includes the following:-

## ***Section 2 – Interpretation***

### **2. (1) In this Act—**

*“personal information” means information about an identifiable individual that, either—*

*(a) would, in the ordinary course of events, be known only to the individual or members of the family, or friends, of the individual, or*

*(b) is held by an FOI body on the understanding that it would be treated by that body as confidential,*

*and, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, includes—*

*(iii) information relating to the employment or employment history of the individual,*

*(v) information relating to the individual in a record falling within section 11(6)(a),*

*(vi) information relating to any criminal history of, or the commission or alleged commission of any offence by, the individual,*

*(xi) the name of the individual where it appears with other personal information relating to the individual or where the disclosure of the name would, or would be likely to, establish that any personal information held by the FOI body concerned relates to the individual,*

As referenced at section 2 above, section 11(6)(a) refers to access to records but does not include certain personal records. Section 11(4) sets out the right of access to records and the types of records that can be accessed. However, in section 11 there are number records that are considered personal and are not automatically subject to release by an FOI body. Section 11(6)(a) sets out the records that are not included for release at section 11(4).

*(6) Subsection (4) shall not be construed as applying, in relation to an individual who is a member of the staff of an FOI body; the right of access to a record held by an FOI body that—*

*(a) is a personnel record, that is to say, a record relating wholly or mainly to one or more of the following, that is to say, the competence or ability of the individual in his or her capacity as a member of the staff of an FOI body or his or her employment or employment history or an evaluation of the performance of his or her functions generally or a particular such function as such member,*

I am refusing to provide details of rank and reasons for suspension as I believe that the individuals involved will become easily identifiable beyond their family and friends and it would be considered a breach of the confidentiality upon which the information is being held by the Garda Organisation. The release of information about such a small number of incidents, such as rank and reason for suspension, which is specific to each individual, will allow for a person to become more identifiable and possibly named in the public domain. I am therefore applying Section 37(1) Personal Information which states:

### **Section 37 - Personal Information**

37 (1) Subject to this section, a head shall refuse to grant an FOI request if, in the opinion of the head, access to the record concerned would involve the disclosure of personal information (including personal information relating to a deceased individual).

There is a Public Interest Test applicable to section 37 of the FOI Act.

#### **Public Interest Test**

As per section 37 of the FOI Act I have considered the public interest issues which arise in this case and have taken account of the following factors in favour of release:

- Ensuring openness and transparency of organisational functions to the greatest possible extent,
- The public interest in members of the public exercising their rights under the FOI Act,
- That there is more than just a transitory interest by the public in this information,
- The right to privacy is outweighed by the needs of the public.

In considering the public interest factors which favour withholding the records I have taken account of the following:

- Allowing a public body to hold personal information without undue access by members of the public,
- The public interest is not best served by releasing these records,
- That the Organisation can conduct its business in a confidential manner,
- That there is a reasonable and implied expectation by employees that sensitive personal information will remain confidential,
- That there is no overriding public interest that outweighs the individual's right to privacy.

A public interest test was carried out when considering the release of the personal information but having balanced the factors both for and against the release, I decided that the public interest in preserving the personal information and the reasonable expectation that information can be maintained in a confidential manner by An Garda Síochána in the context of its disciplinary proceedings outweighs the public interest which would be served were the records released to you.

In addition to section 37(1) I am also applying section 35(1)(b) to the release of the information you seek. The disclosure of personal information of this nature would, in my opinion, be a breach of an implied equitable agreement between An Garda Síochána and the individual(s) involved. The reasons for suspension for a member of An Garda Síochána contains the necessary quality of confidentiality whereby an individual could reasonably expect an equitable duty of confidence to exist between the parties concerned. Any records of this nature are part of an internal disciplinary investigation as per the Garda Síochána (Discipline) Regulations 2007 (as amended). Furthermore, where disciplinary matters proceed to a Board of Inquiry, regulation 29(8) states "*An Inquiry shall be held in private*". I am also of the view that it would be unconscionable for this Organisation, engaged in processes involved in alleged breaches of discipline, not to treat all information relating to the process, inclusive of the decision to suspend a person, as confidential. Therefore, I am now applying section 35(1)(b) of the FOI Act to only partially grant your request. Section 35 (1)(b) states:-

**Section 35 – Information obtained in confidence**

35. (1) Subject to this section, a head shall refuse to grant an FOI request if—

(b) disclosure of the information concerned would constitute a breach of a duty of confidence provided for by a provision of an agreement or enactment (other than a provision specified in column (3) in Part 1 or 2 of Schedule 3 of an enactment specified in that Schedule) or otherwise by law.

In relation to part three of your request “The number of Gardaí to be found to be in breach of Garda discipline in 2019 and the total amount imposed in fines last year”. Please see table below which outlines this information as sought by you.

Members Found in Breach 2019	Total Temporary Reduction	Members Found in Breach 2019 Advice/Caution/Reprimand/Warning	Members Found in Breach in 2019 Dismissed
57	€22,800	60	1

\*The above figures include part 2 and part 3 investigations.

Members of An Garda Síochána are subject to the Garda Síochána (Discipline) Regulations, 2007 as amended. As per the Regulations, minor disciplinary matters are addressed locally by way of Regulation 10. Such records are retained locally and are not held centrally. Matters of a more serious nature (Part 3) and a less serious nature (Part 2) are progressed centrally through the Discipline Section.

Please note that there are 9 members included in the above figures found in breach of discipline in 2019 and given monetary fines. These members were fined ranging from 1 week reduction in pay up to 11 weeks 5 days reduction in pay, a monetary figure cannot be determined for these fines.

As regards the part of your request were you seek “The number of Gardaí to be dismissed from the force last year and the reason in each case” I wish to advise that were a total of 10 members of the force dismissed in 2019. However I am refusing to disclose the reason of dismissal due to the small number of cases and I believe that a person could become more identifiable and possibly named in the public domain. I am therefore applying Section 37(1) Personal Information as previously defined on page 2 and 3 of this letter.

**2. Right of Appeal**

In the event that you are not happy with this decision you may seek an Internal Review of the matter by writing to the address below and quoting reference number **FO1-000023-2020**.

**Freedom of Information Office, An Garda Síochána, Athlumney House, IDA Business Park, Johnstown, Navan, Co. Meath, C15 DR90.**

Please note that a fee applies. This fee has been set at €30 (€10 for a Medical Card holder). Payment should be made by way of bank draft, money order, postal order or personal cheque, and made payable to Accountant, Garda Finance Directorate, Garda Headquarters, Phoenix Park, Dublin 8.

Payment can be made by electronic means, using the following details:

**Account Name:** Garda Síochána Finance Section Public Bank Account

**Account Number:** 10026896

**Sort Code:** 900017

**IBAN:** IE86BOFI90001710026896

**BIC:** BOFIE2D

**You must ensure that your FOI reference number FOI-000023-2020 is included in the payment details.**

You should submit your request for an Internal Review within 4 weeks from the date of this notification. The review will involve a complete reconsideration of the matter by a more senior member of An Garda Síochána and the decision will be communicated to you within 3 weeks. The making of a late appeal may be permitted in appropriate circumstances.

Please be advised that An Garda Síochána replies under Freedom of Information may be released in to the public domain via our website at [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie).

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the above, please contact me by telephone at (046) 9036350.

Yours sincerely,

 **ACTING ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**  
**MARIA BRODIGAN**  
**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION OFFICER**

3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2020.