

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

Ríomh-phoist:/Email: foi@garda.ie

Re: Freedom of Information Request FOI-000230-2017 Request Part-Granted

Dear _____

I refer to your request, dated 18th May, 2017 and received on 19th May 2017 which you have made on behalf of _____ under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2014 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.

I understand a member of staff from my office was in contact with you seeking clarification on your request. It was agreed that your request would be amended.

Your request sought:

- i. All training given to members of An Garda Síochána in relation to dealing with members of the public experiencing mental ill-health;*
- ii. Training given to members of An Garda Síochána in relation to compliance with the provisions of the Data Protection Acts 1988 — 2003;*
- iii. The policy or policies of An Garda Síochána in relation to use by members of social media both while on duty and while off duty;*
- iv. The policy or policies of An Garda Síochána in relation to use by members of their private mobile telephones while on duty.*

I wish to inform you that I have decided to part-grant your request on 12th June, 2017.

1. Findings and particulars

On receipt of your correspondence, your request was forwarded to the Garda College in Templemore where a search was conducted for the records sought.

In respect of part (i) of your request wherein you sought “*All training given to members of An Garda Síochána in relation to dealing with members of the public experiencing mental ill-health*”; I am to advise that this particular query was the subject of a recent parliamentary question and the following information was provided in that regard.

During the 32 week BA in Applied Policing Programme, Trainee Gardaí are exposed to and challenged with the issues surrounding vulnerable persons suffering from mental illness.

The training programme is delivered using a Problem Based Learning approach (PBL), detailed as follows:

PBL is an approach to learning and instruction in which students tackle problems in smaller groups under the supervision of a tutor. PBL can be viewed as a learner centred teaching model that uses problem solving as the vehicle for learning. With PBL, the Trainee/Probationer is presented with a real life problem, which he or she must attempt to solve.

In attempting to solve the problem, the Trainees/Probationers work alone or in a small group(s). He or she undertakes to obtain information through research, reading and group discussions. The Trainees/Probationers then assembles an action plan or project. Learning occurs during this process, with close guidance from teaching staff. PBL encourages Trainees/Probationers to ask questions and do research to determine what actions to take.

There are seven modules to the program and training is provided to Gardaí who are exposed to and challenged with the area of vulnerable persons suffering from mental illness.

Within the Module – **Policing with the Communities**, there is one full unit designated to Mental Illness Awareness.

Unit 5 – Mental illness awareness, which focuses on the area of elderly and also mental illness. In relation to this unit the Trainees receive a PBL disclosure in respect of an individual who may be suffering from any one of the following frequent conditions:

1. Alzheimer’s and Dementia
2. Depression/Bi-polar Disorder.
3. Anxiety-Panic Attacks.
4. Schizophrenia Obsessive Compulsive.
5. Aspergers Syndrome and Autism.
6. Self Harm.

This is a summative assessment whereby the trainees must research each condition and as a follow on how the Gardaí will deal with the potential challenges faced when presented with an individual displaying the characteristics of these mental illnesses.

The Trainees will compile a smart card containing a summary of the key points and the contact services available for each illness. This session culminates with the Trainees

making a presentation on the particular illness which they have researched. In total, there are approximately 10 hours contained within this module.

Finally, in relation to vulnerable people with mental illness, as part of the BA programme, the Trainees attend a ½ day workshop on SafeTalk and a 2 day workshop on ASIST. Both of these workshops are run in conjunction with Garda College instructors and the HSE National Suicide Prevention Office. These workshops are considered the best practice programmes in the world for dealing with persons who present with suicidal thoughts. These programmes are produced by Living works, a Canadian based company.

The vulnerability of suspects, witnesses and injured parties is embedded on all training courses for Investigative Interviewing.

Level 3 Investigative Interviewing addresses the area of memory through the use of enhanced cognitive interview skills. The areas of personality disorders and mental health are also covered on these training courses

Part (ii) of your request sought information on “*Training given to members of An Garda Síochána in relation to compliance with the provisions of the Data Protection Acts 1988 – 2002*”; I can advise you that Data Protection Training is provided to all trainee Gardaí during the first phase of their training at the Garda College. The topic of Data Protection is also included on Module 1 of the Sergeants Development programme under the heading ‘Pulse & Data Protection’.

A Data Protection Code of Practice for An Garda Síochána was developed by the Data Protection Commissioner in conjunction with the Garda Commissioner and was published in 2007. This publication was brought to the attention of all members of An Garda Síochána on its publication and all members must adhere to the Code. The rules of Data Protection for An Garda Síochána are as outlined below.

1. Obtain and process information fairly
2. Keep it only for one or more specified, explicit and lawful purposes
3. Use and disclose it only in ways compatible with these purposes
4. Keep it safe and secure
5. Keep it accurate, complete and up-to-date
6. Ensure that it is adequate, relevant and not excessive
7. Retain it for no longer than is necessary for the purpose or purposes
8. Give a copy of his/her personal data to the relevant individual, on request

Further information and a copy of An Garda Síochána’s, Data Protection Code of Practice is available on the Garda website and may be accessed by following the attached link:

<http://garda.ie/Controller.aspx?Page=136&Lang=1>

Part (iii) of your request sought “*The policy or policies of An Garda Síochána in relation to use by members of social media both while on duty and while off duty*”;

The sections of the act which may deny access to information are known as exemptions. In this regard, I am refusing part (iii) of your request in accordance with Section 15(1)(d) of the Freedom of Information Act 2014 which states:

- (1) A head to whom an FOI request is made may refuse to grant the request where
(d) the information is already available in the public domain.

There are three Social Media policies relating to An Garda Síochána and they may be accessed by following the attached link.

<http://garda.ie/Documents/User/Use%20of%20Social%20Media%20Guidelines.pdf>

Please note that two of the policies are saved in the document entitled 'An Garda Síochána Social Media Policy' which is on the left hand side of the page.

The last part of your request, part (iv) sought "The policy or policies of An Garda Síochána in relation to use by members of their private mobile telephones while on duty".

Section 15(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act states:

- (1) A head to whom an FOI request is made may refuse to grant the request where
- (a) The record concerned does not exist or cannot be found after all reasonable steps to ascertain its whereabouts have been taken.

As this record sought by you in relation to the use by members of their private mobile telephones while on duty does not exist, your request is refused.

2. Rights 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 **FOI-000230-2017**.

**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: IE86B0F190001710026896
BIC: BOFIIIE2D

You must ensure that your FOI reference number (FOI-000230-2017) 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.

Personal details in respect of your request will be removed to protect confidentiality where applicable.

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

Yours sincerely,



HELEN DEELY
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION OFFICE

14th June, 2017