**Garda Síochána Analysis Service**

**AGS Survey High Level Report**

# 1. Survey Overview

This document presents a high level review of the responses received in the Garda Síochána Staff Survey completed during May 2014. In general, question 2 was most completed and had the most detailed responses.

**5 survey questions were set out on the AGS Portal. All responses were in free text.**

1. What are the key strengths as an organisation? (Think About: People, dedication, knowledge, collaboration, reputation, other…)
2. What are the key issues and challenges that you feel need to be addressed? (Think About: decision making, openness and transparency, policies and procedures, resources, budgets, other…)
3. What are the main improvement opportunities that you think we should prioritise? (Think About: Ways of working, public perception, resources and structures, systems and processes, other…)
4. What do we need to ensure is in place to implement these improvements? (Think About: Leadership, strategy, morale, technology, tools, culture, and relationships, other…)
5. Is there any other feedback or insights that you would like to provide?

# 2. Analysis Methodology

A statistical technique known as  Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) was used to see if there were items that were consistently raised, this can be seen by the emergence of synonyms e.g. Cars, Fleet, Vehicles etc. indicating that people are referencing the same ideas/concepts.  This was complemented by a read through by staff in the office of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).

# 3. Survey Analysis

A total of 1,794 responses were received for the period that the survey was open. Of these, 1,713 were deemed to be valid responses. A valid response had at least one of the five questions answered. This gives a response rate of 11.4% based on taking the total number of persons in the force, including civilian staff, to be 15,023.

Table 1 below presents a) the strength of the force by rank, b) expected response rate by rank at equal response rates of 11.4% and c) the actual response rate by rank to the survey.

Not withstanding the varying response rates, the higher number of respondents at Garda rank indicated that a valuable sample was achieved. For the analysis of the survey, the rank of *Inspector, Superintendent* and *Higher than Superintendent* were grouped together. Similarly all Civilian respondents were grouped together.

**This resulted in 4 ranks detailed below in Table 2.**

*Table 1*

| Rank | Strength as of 31/03/2014 | Expected Responses @ 11.4% | Actual Survey Response | *Response Rate* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Garda | 10,716 | 1,222 | 996 | 9.3% |
| Sergeant | 1,840 | 210 | 367 | 19.9% |
| Inspector | 266 | 30 | 89 | 33.5% |
| Superintendent | 147 | 17 | 46 | 31.3% |
| Higher than Superintendent | 51 | 6 | 20 | 39.2% |
| Clerical Officer | 1,378 | 157 | 57 | 4.1% |
| Staff Officer | 187 | 21 | 13 | 7.0% |
| Professional/Technical grade | 254 | 29 | 6 | 2.4% |
| Executive Officer | 85 | 10 | 13 | 15.3% |
| Higher Executive Officer | 78 | 9 | 17 | 21.8% |
| Assistant Principal or higher | 21 | 2 | 10 | 47.6% |
| Not Recorded | | | 79 | |
| | 15,023 | 1,713 | 1,713 | 11.40% |

*Table 2*

| Rank | Count |
|---|---|
| Garda | 996 |
| Sergeants | 367 |
| Insp. + | 155 |
| Civilian | 116 |
| Not recorded | 79 |
| **Total** | **1,713** |

**Twenty-three individual topics were raised most frequently.**

*Table 3*

| | |
|---|---|
| Promotions | Warrants |
| Transfers | Community Policing |
| Uniform | Cars/Fleet |
| Training | Core Units /Specialist Units |
| Morale | Court Process |
| Leadership | Workload/Overtime |
| Internal Communications | Policing Approach |
| External Communications | Investigation Process |
| Rosters | Paperwork |
| Budgets | Discipline |
| Equipment | Skills |
| GSOC | |

**The main issues related to each of the individual topics are outlined in the Table 4 below.**

*Table 4*

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| Promotions | • Lack of openness and transparency surrounding promotion process<br>• Members believe that you only get promoted because of "*who you know, not what you know*"<br>• Promotions should be more merit based<br>• There should be more feedback available to members<br>• Promotion process should be totally independent and managed by an outside body<br>• Overlap between Sergeant and Detective competitions<br>• No career progression for civilian staff<br>• Administrative positions open to Garda members should be open to civilian staff |
| Transfers | • No movement on transfers<br>• No transparency with the transfer process<br>• There is a general opinion that people cannot get transferred as there are no replacements |
| Uniform | • The uniform is not fit for purpose<br>• There should be a summer/winter uniform e.g. short sleeve shirts<br>• The uniform is not practical for physical side of the job, e.g. giving chase<br>• The uniform is not comfortable, e.g. stab vest heavy when worn for prolonged periods of time, heavy boots, wearing of ties, utility belt/car seat belt.<br>• Time delays in system for ordering uniform<br>• More senior officers expressed the view that there is a sense of pride associated with wearing the uniform |
| Training | • More training required in operational aspects of the job, e.g. refresher courses in pepper spray, firearms, driving, handcuffs, ASP Baton etc.<br>• Availability of training courses varies depending on where you are stationed.<br>• There should be dedicated budgets for training<br>• Training is too academic and not applicable to actual job<br>• Training in media, courts and the DPP is required<br>• Lack of training for civilian staff<br>• Training on the roles and responsibilities of Garda members /civilians is required |
| Morale | • Morale is at an all time low across the Force |
| Leadership | • Leaders should be independent of Government/Politics<br>• Leaders should be able to convey the reality of the effects that budget cuts have had on the force<br>• Leaders should communicate with and listen more to the people on the ground<br>• Leaders do not make decisions; they tend to ignore issues until they become problems ' *Leaderhip needs to acknowledge problems and have the will to change it*'<br>• Leadership need to recognise more the work done by members '*A simple thank you for a job well done*' |

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| Internal Communications | • Senior ranks do not engage enough with lower ranks<br>• Members are informed by the media before they are informed by management |
| External Communications | • The organisation should be more forceful in responding to negative criticism in the media<br>• More training required for dealing with the media |
| Rosters | • The roster is not family friendly<br>• Sergeants feel that the roster makes the job more difficult, i.e. files not worked on for four days, etc.<br>• Lack of overlap at key periods, e.g. weekends and other crossovers<br>• 5$^{th}$ Unit is not working – not enough resources to man the unit<br>• Rural areas have been particularly disadvantaged by the new roster |
| Budgets | • Better use could be made of budgets, e.g. maintenance of vehicles, costs of doctors for prisoners, cost of meals for prisoners, etc.<br>• Cuts in budgets is effecting members ability to do their job, i.e. reduced overtime<br>• There are not enough gardaí to do the job<br>• There are too many gardaí working in offices ' *There are too many gardai in Garda Headquarters when they are required on the streets*' |
| Equipment | • Broken printers<br>• No access to PULSE on many computers<br>• Not enough official USB sticks<br>• Not enough IT support in relation to new roster system<br>• Many tasks are done manually but could be done with an IT solution<br>• Technology should be used more in policing |
| GSOC | • GSOC have a negative attitude towards members<br>• Members feel they are viewed as guilty even before investigation begins<br>• Members feel that GSOC do not take their views on board and that they have no right of appeal<br>• A lot of complaints are without merit and time wasting |
| Warrants | • New system required for managing Warrants |
| Community Policing | • Community policing, interaction with communities through GAA clubs and other voluntary groups is identified as a key strength in the survey across all ranks |
| Cars/Fleet | • Not enough patrol cars<br>• Cars are not fit for purpose, i.e. certain makes and models not suitable for particular jobs.<br>• More cost effective to buy new cars than pay high maintenance costs for older vehicles |
| Core Units /Specialist Units | • Core Units should be viewed as key to policing<br>• Too many resources attached to specialist units |

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| | • Lack of opportunity for movement into specialist units |
| Court Process | • Different views on the merits of the court presenting system |
| | • Where there is no court presenting system, attendance in court is time consuming |
| | • Where there is a court presenting system, supervisors have issue with the lack of court experience members have |
| | • Handling of the paper trail for warrants is an issue for members |
| | • Non-collection of fines is an issue for members |
| | • Managers highlight the need for streamlining court process, expansion of the court presenters system, and for a review of how prisoners in the courts are handled |
| Workload /Overtime | • Lack of overtime is affecting morale |
| | • Overtime is being unevenly distributed amongst members |
| | • There is a general view that overtime is a perk rather than a requirement |
| Policing Approach | • The use of discretion must be maintained |
| | • A unified, unarmed police force is viewed as a particular strength |
| Investigation Process | • Members experience difficulties doing complex investigations while having to do other duties |
| | • Members expressed concern about having to investigate crimes of a sexual nature without adequate training |
| | • Member of Sergeant rank highlight difficulties with conducting investigations with increasing workloads and the need to perform repeated updates on investigations when there are no developments |
| | • Inspector ranks and above highlight the time restrictions on investigations and in particular reference the need for more feedback to victims |
| Paperwork | • All ranks highlight the onerous nature of paperwork and how IT solutions could and should replace this |
| | • Many areas that could be streamlined by IT solutions have been identified |
| | • Duplication of work, i.e. Information required on PULSE and recorded in registers, logs, etc. |
| | • Sending reports to managers when they already have the information |
| Discipline | • Lack of discipline is a key concern for members of higher ranks |
| | • Underperformance is not being dealt with by management |
| | • Underperformance de-motivates other members/staff |
| Skills | • Many members lack basic skills to perform duties |
| | • Members that show potential should have the opportunity to develop skills |