

Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland,

Second Floor
St. Stephen's Green House
Earlsfort Terrace
Dublin DO2PH42
Ireland

RE: Public Consultation, January 2018.

Dear Sir/Madam,

My comments are generally in relation to the Community Sector, & are made with a view to improvement.

Summary:

(A) General Comments:

(B) Community Safety & Security along with Crime Prevention Provisions:
Garda Neighbourhood Watch (NhW) scheme & groups - related comments

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), May 2018

(C) better Inter- (& Intra !), Agency Co- operation.

(D) Road Safety:

(E) Public Safety / Damage to Property/ Crime Prevention by Design:

(& attached as MS Word file)

With thanks,

=====End of Summary=====

(A) General Comments:

I generally find the Gardai who answer calls to the Garda station are very good at dealing with emergencies, & inquiries.

I find the Garda who oversees the Area Neighbourhood Watch operation & meetings of same, to be knowledgeable, helpful & interested in the work.

(B) Community Safety & Security along with Crime Prevention Provisions:

(1) I find the current situation in relation to **Garda Neighbourhood Watch (NhW) scheme & groups**, to be lacking in Structure, Procedure & Practice provisions, including in relation to Residents privacy, & Data Protection, & Communications, including modern electronic Communications.

Part of the objectives of extending, & attempting to upgrade our Neighbourhood Watch group was:

(i) to get *bona fide*, (anonymous ID of target,) info/alerts from Gardai re burglary & crime in the vicinity, so as to reduce hearsay, and old episodes being recirculated & generating unnecessary anxiety to some., (Perhaps such info could be automatically sent to co-ordinators, without identifying the person(s)/ house, that has been targeted ?)

(ii)-and also to encourage residents to report suspicious observations to Gardai, & so that residents would not dismiss an observation easily.,

e.g. a group of teens 'up to no good'.

This current situation is likely to detract from the sustainability of NhW groups

(2) I suggest consideration be given to interviews & conditions for membership of **Neighbourhood Watch** groups. Currently, it seems such groups are very open to abuse of NhW by some individuals for their own purposes.

The existing Handbook on the Garda Website does Not deal with this.

LINK:

(i) <http://www.garda.ie/Controller.aspx?Page=75&Lang=1>

On Right hand side= Booklets & leaflets section, & second from the top of this = Hand Book.

There is much useful information in this, but matters of protecting Privacy & Data Protection are not included.

The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) are to start in May 2018

Web Link: <https://www.dataprotection.ie/docs/GDPR/1623.htm>

There is a lack of training for Volunteer Co-ordinators, & NhW participants.

(3) There has been a recurrent problem with regard to **insurance** for NhW group operations & meetings

(4) **There is great difficulty in getting "on -street" NhW signage: very lengthy circulation of material through various Garda offices, & then the County Council = ca. 1.5 years** . While we got approval from Gardai and Co Council -Roads section, for us to buy & put up the NhW signs as proposed in the application, using some pre-existing ESB networks poles, ESB Networks have now said they do not want the NhW signs on their poles. This is despite other roads in the vicinity continuing to have NhW signs on ESB Networks poles ca. 5 month later.

(C)- (5) There is a need for better **Inter- (& Intra !) Agency Co- operation.**

(a)The various aspects & range of Garda work & assistance could be publicized more.

(b) I am glad to see joint operations/events between Gardai & H.S.E - especially re Older People & Financial, & other Abuse,

- e.g. Festival of Inclusion 2017

(c) However, subsequent to a burglary on our road end August 2016 & a recommendation by Gardai that trees growing on the Public Road be lowered to give less seclusion & better visibility of each others houses & alarms, & a request was sent to the Council to implement this - it has still not been done.

More recently during Storm Ophelia, some of these trees which are growing into the electric wires, went on fire at night - very close to where people were asleep. Luckily a resident saw it, & the Fire Brigade were called & were able to put it out.

(D)-(6) Road Safety:

(a) The practice of **cycling on foot paths** seems to be on the increase. This seems to be tolerated by a lot of Gardai. Being hit by a bike / scooter can be life changing & life destroying, & very costly to those hit, & to the state.. The recovery rates & independent living capability, statistics, a year on from acute hip fractures are not good.

(b) parking on Double Yellow lines

(c) High speed in Residential roads

Traffic is using a narrower link road, as a main route. Last August we have requested speed & traffic volume monitoring from the County Council & await any action

(E)- (7) Public Safety / Damage to Property/ Crime Prevention by Design:

Drinking in public places: This can be very threatening to other members of the community, & users of facilities.

Graffiti is a huge problem. It is very destructive to property, communities, businesses, & tourism. Perhaps more technology can be applied to detecting, tracking & limiting the sources of materials used in graffiti, together with greater penalties.

(We are fresh from an unprecedented graffiti attack on the road at end of December- house walls, perimeter walls-all recently painted; new gate post, vehicles-vans & cars)

Development of Public Spaces: Greater consideration could be given to Crime Prevention by Design e.g. re-development of a local Sports space , beside residential housing.

I hope that improved resources will be given to Community Policing Section, & to Neighbourhood Watch, with a view to nipping problems in the bud, & diverting juvenile people from crime, & making the community a more comfortable place in which to live, for people all age groups & circumstances.

With thanks for your attention,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]