

This submission is sent by Care After Prison.

Care After Prison (CAP) is a peer led organization that provides information, referrals, support services to those who have been affected by imprisonment. The organization is the first peer led charity of its kind in Ireland. CAP provides a safe place where ex-offenders can establish goals and identify areas where support will be needed to integrate positively with their families and communities. Our organization also works closely with families and loved ones of individuals under and awaiting sentencing. The service users include current, past offenders and their families.

Garda suggestion:

- **Feedback forum**
 - Create an informal feedback forum for the public
 - The Garda should expand their website to include an informal feedback forum. This feedback section will allow community members to share their experiences with Garda offices and its officers. The forum will enable the department to become aware of the views of the public more readily. This will also help improve the number of comments and complaints that the Garda will see because it will be easy for the public to comment.
 - Make sure to follow up on the success of the new GSOC complaint reporting system
- **Continue open discussions and training in relation to difficult topics**
 - Open these discussions to the public
 - Promote public participation
- **Increase opportunities and/or training to raise awareness and understanding of diverse populations including Travellers, refugees, and disadvantaged communities, etc.)**
 - Ethics courses requirements (annually or biannually)
 - General courses on each group (Travellers & refugees)
 - Discourage assumptions, judgements, or stereotypes made on certain individuals
- **Actively promote recruitment of a Diverse police force so that it better reflects the increasing diversity of the population**
 - Actively seek collaboration from diverse backgrounds/ minorities with recruitment
 - More representative of community
 - Understand the pressures
- **Youth Homeless Policy**
 - Improve liaison and referral arrangements for young people out of home
 - Use appropriate facilities for young people out of home instead of Garda Stations
- **Respect of all people not just those in good standing**
 - Maintain a high level of respect to all individuals demonstrating equality and fairness in all dealings with the public, e.g. those with addiction issues, offenders, Travellers, minority and ethnic communities and the LGBT community
 - If the young people see a high level of respect, then the regard of the police might have a positive effect.
 - Families and parents will teach their children that Gardai are highly respected and respectful organization.
 - Maintained respect will change the police regard with prisoners, offenders (current and past), the homeless, Travellers, & addicts etc.
- **Accountability for actions**
 - Public should be able to hold Garda accountability for mistreatment

- Timely apologies when necessary
- **Communication skills**
 - Train all officers in interpersonal communication skills
 - Teach to avoid aggressive or negative communication with community members
- **Training**
 - Mandatory courses throughout Garda career (ethics, communication, other continual training courses)
 - Integrate career development courses that will be completed for all ranks
 - Reach out to organizations that work closely with people from diverse backgrounds in training
 - Development courses for those in leadership roles
 - **Communication skills**
 - Train all officers in interpersonal communication skills
 - Teach to avoid aggressive or negative communication with community members
- **Social Inclusion division creation**
 - Create a division that focuses on social inclusion
 - Improve/strengthen relationship with organizations like CAP
 - Increase Garda resources that focus on homelessness (youth and adult) and drug addiction
 - Have a committee for organization directors to examine ways to improve the police and social care programs
 - Some of the committee could be with people who have personal experience with social inclusion issues
 - Can discuss incidents with police and teach how to best resolve issue
- **Legislation to try to address:**
 - Domestic violence → should be moved to a criminal offense rather than a civil offense
 - Avoid criminalizing addicts → find more restorative and rehabilitation-based options instead of prison
 - Spent convictions → Expand the number of individuals who are eligible for spent convictions not only one-time offenders with very minor offenses. Spent convictions not beneficial to the majority of those incarcerated.

Garda is a highly respected and trusted organization by the community and will grow in its capabilities through its determination to address areas of concerns. The organization has a history of trying to better itself and reform from its mistakes. Moreover, the Garda views the community's opinions in high regard and makes an effort to take their views into the organization's new reform policies.