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Thank you for inviting people to submit to your Commission.

Despite growing up with a healthy respect for An Garda Síochána (AGS), recent events have undermined my confidence considerably in AGS acting as a fair, impartial and upto date, professional police force. In particular, after watching the information given by AGS management in front of the Oireachtas Justice Committee in May 2017, I wondered whether or not the consequence of inaccurate data was considered not only by management but by the rank and file. I wondered whether or not there was adequate training of AGS, not only in Templemore but as ongoing Continuous Professional Development for all members, as technology and research findings change over time.

I would like to raise the following points.

**\* Rebuild Trust through Accurate Reporting.**

Currently it is easier than ever to disseminate false information and its impact can be widespread in society. Therefore it is important that information presented to the public by AGS is factual, accurate and up to date. This is essential if trust is to be rebuilt between the Irish public and AGS.

**\* Science matters.**

Policing decisions should not be based on anecdotes or legacy processes. Any research findings should be thoroughly explored. In April 2017, at the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors (AGSI), a proposal was voted in favour of a motion to make helmets and fluorescent clothing compulsory for cyclists. A similar proposal for pedestrians was also proposed but not passed. These proposals does not reflect a thorough review of the available research and undermines the faith of those genuinely concerned about the level of pedestrian and cycling injuries in Ireland. Much more obvious and well-researched options including international best practice to reduce serious injury and fatalities should surely be proposed first. These kind of proposals give the impression that Gardai directly involved in the Traffic sector, are not fully informed and upto date in best practice and how best to tackle traffic issues.

**\* Data Influences Resources**

Budgets are finite. It is important that resources are targeted based on actual facts and data. Data can tell if a particular promotional safety campaign is working, if behaviour is changing based on investment. Data can tell if infrastructure requires improvements, if extra targeted resources are required. Therefore, data needs to be accurate. When inputting data and information, are members of AGS aware (or trained to be aware) of the consequences of recording data inaccurately? For example, inaccurate breathalyser data being recorded and reported is unacceptable given the urgent need to improve safety on our roads.

**\* International Ideas, Implementation of Best Practice.**

In 2017, it was reported by the West Midlands Police that the number of cyclists killed or seriously hurt on the region's roads has dropped by a fifth since West Midlands Police launched

an operation protecting them from 'close pass' drivers. The WMP invite academics to work with them on research projects to help inform their policing - this is more than lip-service to evidence-based policing, but a practical measure that AGS could adopt with Irish universities. Feeding information on best practice policing back to The Garda National Roads Policing Bureau needs to be based on facts, on data, on research. Again, the data needs to be accurate and gaps in the data need to be recognised and considered.

**\* Cyber Policing.**

Prevention is better than cure. I believe it is critically important that not only are members of AGS Computer Crime Section and all those in the Garda Bureau of Fraud Investigation trained to the highest international standards in cyber security and commercial fraud and money laundering but should be adequately resourced - the consequences of NOT being adequately resourced with human resources and technology will severely curtail their work. However, I would also like to see a much higher level of involvement of AGS rank and file outside of these units, in the prevention and protection of citizens, particularly children, from online crime. Community initiatives could be undertaken so that all children and their parents or guardians are made aware of personal protection in relation to social media and smartphone applications.