

[REDACTED]

To whom it may concern,

Please find below my submission on Garda Reform.

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These comments are made in the knowledge of the good job done by Gardaí with the near impossible task that society expect them to undertake – to be a bouncer, security officer, social worker, detective, carer etc all at once and meet every encounter with an appropriate approach.

1. Close Templemore and reassign Garda training to an existing 3rd level college. My preference would be for a private provider such as Griffith College. Private sector colleges should show greater flexibility than existing state funded colleges and quicker to adapt, change and customise to Garda Authority's needs. An issue I have with Garda culture is its defensive and "us against the world" nature. Garda operate in the real world and it is important that you should start as you mean to proceed.
2. Introduce 1 or 2 additional entry points into the Gardaí. Former Army, fire service employees along with former commercial managers, social workers, probation officers along with others could form candidates that might be appointed as Sergeants and Inspectors. While a cadet model of entry could bring graduates into the Gardaí, they would come with little experience of work culture. Candidates with previous work experience would bring a more robust view and counter balance to existing Garda culture.

3. The position of Garda Commissioner should be open to candidates from all backgrounds, nationality and experience. A major issue I witnessed with Gardaí is the lack of management skills. This may stem from the responsive nature of the job to the immediate break in or car accident.
Sending a senior Garda on a leadership or management training course 10,20 years into their career will do little to change their thinking or working style, given the strong and pervasive culture within the Gardaí.
My preference would be for an external candidate with either commercial or foreign policing experience. Any chosen appointee should have the authority to recruit a team around them. Otherwise, the system could quickly isolate and render them powerless.
4. Introduce an internship scheme whereby Gardaí with 3+ years' service can work in other suitable organisations for 6 months to increase their skill set and also break the Garda culture hold on their thinking. This could be a "swap" scheme with the other organisation. Introduce a sabbatical scheme where Gardaí can apply to work for 1 or 2 years overseas with police forces or other suitable organisations.
5. Start anew with all Garda areas and abolish all existing names for Garda districts. The continued use of the term Metropolitan shows the archaic nature of structures within the Gardaí.
6. The critical area of "telecommunications" – including hardware, software, mobile phones, website, email and social media has to should be dealt with by international providers to police forces.
7. Lines of authority and reporting structures should be simplified and the continued part authority by the Department of Justice should finish. Adding additional bodies to a dysfunctional Garda force will not change performance but draw existing limited resources to dealing with these bodies. Multiple bodies only weaken authority and confuse responsibility and reporting lines.
A Garda Authority with strong imbedded corporate governance and populated by heavy hitters in a variety of disciplines and experience will form a single line of reporting for a Garda commissioner and their serious management team. The Garda Authority would incorporate the existing Garda Inspectorate and GSOC (Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission).



Wednesday 31st January 2018