

In the last 10 to 15 years Irish culture has changed at a faster pace than it had previously evolved and changed over a 40 year span. Culture needs to be moulded and not just left to its own devices. Therefore the best possible thoughts, actions and planning must be included to preserve and produce a country that treats all its citizens with respect and equality.

Policing in its remit is a "guardian" of the peace, this is a very broad challenge in today's society. In order to police any aspect of our living, be it our own personal lives, our social lives, our education, health or simply our day to day existence, we have to equip ourselves with the tools needed to carry out the tasks and responsibilities and use these tools effectively and efficiently.

In order for the Gardai to be able to carry out their job to the best of their abilities, the government has a responsibility and "a duty of care" to ensure that they are adequately resourced in all areas of policing. The first requirement here has to be adequate recruitment of additional Gardai and not just replacement recruitment, to deal with an ever changing and challenging society, an escalation of drug related crime etc etc. The second requirement has to be adequate training, prioritising equipping Garda training for the duties they have to carry out, currently Gardai are required to drive patrol cars without having completed specific advanced driving instruction. These Gardai may be required to partake in car chases of very high powered vehicles and in the circumstances take their own lives and the lives of the public in their hands. Any Garda who is required to drive as part of their job should have advanced driving instruction and also cars that are suitable for requirements. Relevant training should always be the priority and not what is driven by the media. Communication with the Gardai who actually carry out the job of policing on a day to day basis and their feedback must be carried out on an on-going basis and acted upon. There is little relevance of a committee deciding what is needed on the ground when that particular committee has never been on the ground in the current climate, communication is crucial in order to inform the decision makers. While this exercise of submissions is a start, please let it only be a start and I would recommend that actual serving Gardai should form part of this commission, these Gardai would bring the suggestions and concerns of the members to the committee and be involved in the discussion on feedback received by this exercise and provide relevant input to future decision making. In my view it is not enough to have gathered information/comments from serving Gardai, this has to be an on-going exercise for the duration of this commission. The committee as it stands is made up of people with wide and varied experience and a high level of education but no experience of what it takes to carry out the job in today's

climate which is far removed from the demands of the job even as recent as 10 to 15 years ago.

Motivation in the Garda force has to be addressed, this would be helped by changing the sentencing and making crime an unattractive option. Currently there are no deterrents for habitual offenders be they serious crime or petty crime, the Gardai put their lives at risk while carrying out their job. A person may be arrested for a specific crime, the Garda can prove the guilt for the crime, the case goes to court and the offender has the services of a solicitor and or barrister to plead their case. Is it not giving due process to the Gardai to pitch their evidence against solicitors / barristers. In the majority of cases the injured party will not have the free services of a solicitor/ barrister. In order to address this, all injured parties should also have the free services of a solicitor/barrister if it is also supplied to the offender. The system should only allow free legal aid for a number of times to an individual, currently a person without the means can take a case whereas a person who is working and paying their way in society cannot take a similar case as they are expected to pay their way, generally this is not possible. This makes for major inequality in the legal services in this country. There also has to be a deterrent for injuring and/or assaulting a Garda, the judicial system must have the power and use that power to penalise any abuse of Gardai, the system utilised currently just gives two fingers to the Gardai.

If I was to be a cynic I would say that the legal system is not being changed to treat the offender and the offended equally as currently solicitors and barristers engaged in the free legal aid system make a comfortable living from this system.

My submission to the commission request that adequate numbers be recruited to deal with an ever changing Ireland.

Training provided to deal with all aspects of the job, prioritising most urgent.

Change the sentencing for all crime, let there be deterrents and cut down on release on bail, any crime committed while on bail must carry extra actual sentencing to be served.

Sentencing must be updated and consistent in all parts of the country, if an offence carries a certain sentence, that sentence should have to be served.

Treat the Gardai as equal citizens in society, they are doing a job that is difficult and we only want to see a Garda when we have a problem not when they are restricted in their role by red tape.

Garda management must also change, while results are the aim of the job, this cannot be achieved in some instances by pressurising Gardai to get results by increasing numerical results while making statistical returns. Management at all levels have a responsibility to provide adequate staff

numbers, adequate relevant training, develop skills in order to motivate staff, and improve performance for management and Gardai to carry out the job for the better of each individual and the public.

There has to be a reward for working in this country, punishment for breaking the laws of the country and respect for each citizen, please let this be part of the overall achievement of this commissions work.

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