



People powered submission to The Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland

Presented 31st of January 2018

Introduction

1,922 Uplift members have shared their views over a period of 24 hours - about what they believe should be the priorities in the reform and development of An Garda Síochána.

Uplift is a people powered community of people in Ireland and Irish people living overseas who believe that Ireland can be a country that cares, respects and supports everyone to live with dignity.

We take co-ordinated digital and offline action to make the voices of thousands of ordinary people heard every day.

This short report outlines the key findings from the survey conducted.

The live report - generated from our survey tool, can be viewed by following this link.

[View Live Report](#)

Main Survey Findings

Trust

- Members were split on how much trust they had in An Garda Síochána. 18% said they had some trust, while 9% said that had no trust, and just 1% said they had a lot of trust.

Fig 1

On a scale of 1 to 10 - how much trust do you have in an Garda Síochána?

1891 out of 1922 people answered this question

Average: 4.59



Community Policing

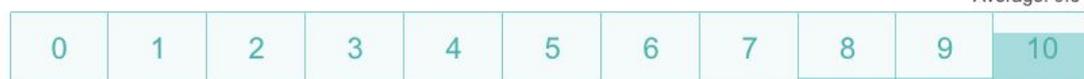
- 70% of members said that it was very important for An Garda Síochána to build better links with the communities they serve.

Fig 2

How important is it that An Garda Síochána invest in building better links with the communities they serve?

1883 out of 1922 people answered this question

Average: 9.34



- 79% of members said they had noticed a decline in the amount of Gardaí policing in their local communities.

Fig 3

Have you noticed a decline in the number of Gardaí policing your local community?

1893 out of 1922 people answered this question



- Members were asked how they thought An Gardaí Síochána could build better links with the communities they serve. The results were as follows.
 - **38% said:** 'Stronger support and accountability for frontline police officers.'
 - **24% said:** 'Have more community liaison officers.'
 - **20% said:** 'Be answerable to local community led policing committees'
 - **12% said:** 'Better training on community issues.'

Fig 4

How can Gardaí build better links with the communities they serve?

1866 out of 1922 people answered this question



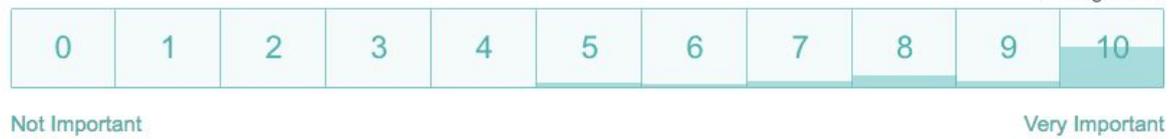
- 89% of members agreed that it was between 'Important and 'Very Important' that An Gardaí Síochána were given training to support minority communities.

Fig 5

How important do you think it is for Gardaí to get training to support minority communities?

1886 out of 1922 people answered this question

Average: 8.37



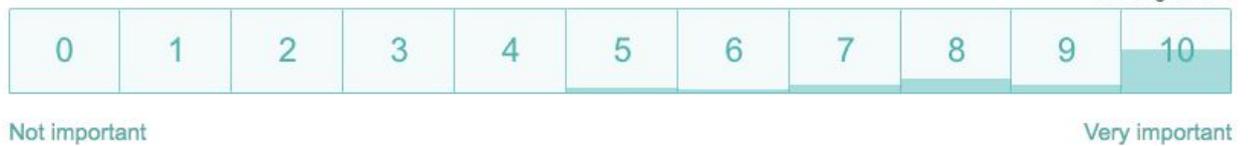
- 92% of members believed it was between 'Important' and 'Very Important' that An Gardaí Síochána had more officers in rural communities.

Fig 6

How important is it for Gardaí to have more officers in rural areas?

1881 out of 1922 people answered this question

Average: 8.58



Member Quotes about Community Policing

“There should be more interest and action taken the safety of rural Ireland in particularly isolated elderly people.”

“Building trust with communities is the most effective way to police them and instills a degree of self-policing.”

“I think there's a need for answerability on a local level and more visibility. The Gardaí should have more of a 'face'. The open days at the stations have been very successful in making a connection but more needs to be done.”

“Local station was closed and robberies have gone through the roof.”

“I think everyday people should have a say in how their community and country is run. After all we are the people on the street and have a better understanding than those higher up officials who might not have an idea of what's going on in different communities.”

“The police are working for the community and ergo the community should be in some type of control over the Gardaí.”

“They no training on issues of inequality and are expected to police a huge diversity of cultures class and gender.”

“With more community liaison officers, the Gardaí could address issues more directly with the help of community feedback.”

“They should be listening from people in the community that really understand and know the problems / challenges that exist in their area, Gardaí are not aware of these issues as they don't spend time in the local community.”

“Need to have more contact with younger kids and communities to build trust in struggling areas.”

“Procedures come from the top down, and must be held accountable.”

Specialist Training for Gender based violence and child abuse

- 90% of respondents said that they thought there should be a review of how An Garda Síochána investigate domestic violence and child abuse.

Fig 7

Do you think there should be a review of how An Garda Síochána investigate domestic violence and child abuse?

1861 out of 1922 people answered this question



Member Quotes about Gender Based Violence and Child Abuse

“I am a domestic violence survivor and my treatment by Gardaí made it worse for me. They treated me like an instigator not a victim.”

“I think we still live in a culture of acceptance of male power.”

“The Gardaí are a very male / boys club attitude.”

“Gardaí are undermanned and under resourced, barring orders and the like are frequently disregarded because the offenders are confident Gardaí will not respond.”

“From what I have read the Gardaí can be quite limited in what they can do even in suspected abuse cases without victim or witness confirmation. I think if a Gardaí suspects abuse there should be more avenues for them to be able to investigate and raise their concerns with social services.”

“They don’t seem to be qualified enough to give support.”

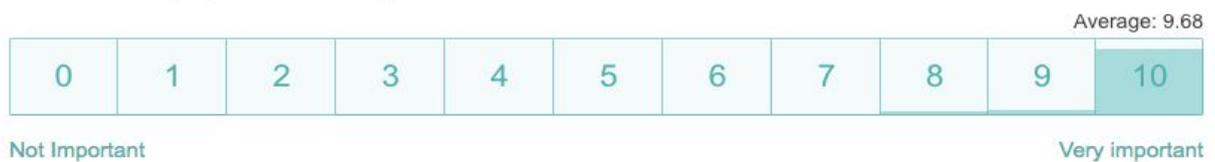
Corruption

- 99% of respondents said that it was between 'Important' and 'Very Important for An Gardaí Síochána to tackle corruption in the force.

Fig 8

How important is it for the Gardaí to tackle corruption?

1879 out of 1922 people answered this question



- Members were asked how they thought An Gardaí Síochána could tackle corruption in the force.
 - 42% said:** Hire an independent Garda Commissioner from outside An Gardaí Síochána to implement major changes.
 - 24% said:** Give more power to the policing authority to hold senior Gardaí accountable.
 - 23% said:** Strengthen support for whistleblowers.
 - 4% said:** Invest in better community oversight.

Fig 9

How best can the Gardaí address corruption in the force?

1885 out of 1922 people answered this question



What members said about Corruption in An Gardaí Síochána

“An independent commissioner from another EU member state should be tasked with monitoring the force.”

“Remove political influence in the force, give the same legal support to an independent investigative organisation, and let the punishment fit the crime when wrongdoers are successfully prosecuted instead of walking away with golden handshakes & large pensions.”

“I don't believe that an independent Garda Commissioner would be able to implement the necessary change and restore trust in the force as the entire structure needs to change which could only be achieved by replacing the entire top tier”

“There is a huge lack of trust in the service. It will be years of important work to build relations between communities and Gardai.”

Conclusion

From the data collected, it's clear a number of themes have emerged as areas of concern from Uplift members.

Namely, that more emphasis needs to be put on community policing by both increasing the number of front line police officers, and also updating the quality of their training to deal with issues pertinent to the local community.

Secondly, rooting out corruption is also of extreme importance for members. The main change members think will help to achieve this task is for An Gardaí Síochána to recruit a new Garda Commissioner from outside the force.

Contact

This is just a snapshot of the data we have collected - [REDACTED]