

Minutes of Fiosrú Audit and Risk Committee

23 June 2025

Attendance	
Committee	Paul Dempsey (Chair), Tom O'Regan, Ray Dolan and Michele Larmour.
Secretary	Pauline Byrne
Management/Staff	Sheila McClelland (CEO), Peter Hogan (Deputy Director of Administration), Amanda McLoughlin (Head of Finance), Garrett Croke and Jon Leeman (Deputy Directors of Operations), Joanne O'Donohue (CRO), Alan Quinn (Project Manager, CMS) and Ellen Kenny (Data and Governance).
Attendees via Zoom	Noreen Lambert and Louise Woods (Senior Designated Officers) and Robert Burke (Mazars).

1. Committee Chair Opening Statement

The Chair welcomed the Committee, management and staff to the first Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) of the newly established Fiosrú, Office of the Police Ombudsman. The agenda was approved and no conflicts of interests were declared.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the GSOC ARC meeting of 27 March 2025 were approved.

3. Fiosrú Statement of Strategy

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) updated the Committee on the status of Fiosrú's Statement of Strategy. The Committee noted that the initial consultation period which included consultation with external stakeholders is complete. Feedback received from the consultations highlighted a number of areas which require improvement, such as maintaining contact with third parties, the importance of explaining the investigatory process to complainants and displaying empathy

towards them. The Committee noted that the current practice is to provide updates on the status of the investigation every three months.

The Committee noted that a workshop for Senior Management was held on 19 June 2025 to discuss the organisation's first strategy statement and the feedback received from the external stakeholders. There was also a wider discussion of the new complaints process. It was acknowledged, that going forward, particular emphasis should be on the quality of service provided. The complaints process should be transparent, fair and empathetic and more engagement with interested parties was required. The Committee noted that not all of the invited stakeholders engaged in the consultation process and recommended that Fiosrú should follow up with them. Fiosrú's CEO will meet with the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors (AGSI) and it was recommended that there should be engagement with the Garda Representation Association (GRA).

4 Deputy Directors Updates

4.1 Administration

The Deputy Director of Administration briefed the Committee on the main developments since the last meeting, including:

- The financial expenditure, continues to be closely monitored and the non-pay expenditure is currently close to profile. Expenditures relating to pay is currently behind profile due to the number of vacant positions.
- Arrangements relating to the new Vote are complete and the formal transfer is expected in the coming weeks. Staff are updated and payroll payments are scheduled for weekly and fortnightly paid staff.
- The transfer to Financial Management Services is due to take place in September 2025.
- A contract has been signed for the Fleet Management System and it is envisaged that the system will be operational from August 2025.
- Sanction has been sought for a new air conditioning system, in the meantime, temporary cooling units have been installed and the situation is being monitored.
- A total of five new staff have joined Fiosrú between 2 April and 31 May 2025. Three were to fill vacancies and two were new posts. A total of four staff left Fiosrú in the same period, which include the Director of Operations and a Senior Legal Adviser.
- Fiosrú now has its own licence to run recruitment competitions and are currently running an advertisement for a Head of Strategy, Outreach and Engagement. The nomination for the position of the Deputy Police Ombudsman has been announced and a number of internal promotions have taken place.
- Fiosrú's Human Resources (HR) Unit are monitoring compliance with the Performance Management Development System (PMDS), with finding

communicated to the Senior Management Team (SMT) fortnightly. Fiosrú engagement with PMDS is currently in line with the Civil Service.

- The first module of the accreditation programme was completed by 46 staff members. The second module is to commence in September 2025, with a reduced number of staff members committed to the full programme.
- There has been positive feedback received from the first Leadership programme targeted at Higher Executive Officers (HEO) and Designated Officers (DO). A leadership development programme will now be rolled out to the SMT.
- Fiosrú is currently engaging with the Irish Prison Service (IPS) regarding the accommodation at its Longford office and the proposed development of interview suites at the site.
- Fiosrú's Cyber Security Strategy is currently in progress and work is ongoing in relation to sourcing auditable cyber security training for staff.
- The Communications Unit are continuing their work on the Fiosrú website. The Committee noted the number of media queries that have been received.
- The 2024 Annual Report has been finalised and submitted to the Department of Justice (DOJ) in English and Irish.
- On 01 May 2025, the Police Ombudsman, CEO and staff representatives delivered a presentation on Fiosrú to the Public Accounts Committee at Leinster House.

4.2 Operations

The Deputy Director of Operations briefed the Committee on the main developments since the last meeting, which include:

- The number of active investigations under both the Garda Síochána Act, 2005 (2005 Act) and the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act, 2024 (PSCS Act, 2024).
- A significant change in practice has been implemented in casework due to the changes brought about by the introduction of the PSCS Act, 2024. The Committee acknowledged the importance of the admissibility process, the time involved in the decision making and the number of cases received each week.
- There has been a significant increase in the number of complaints received, which is proving challenging as the current resourcing dedicated to the PSCS will become insufficient as case numbers increase. Also, due to the inability to delegate functions under the 2005 Act to new staff limits the restructuring of investigative teams.
- Operations are currently liaising with the Learning and Development Unit to deliver further training on the PSCS to the remainder of investigation staff.
- The Committee noted that the use of Family Liaison Officers in cases relating to sexual abuse cases has been considered. This will require additional training for staff, in addition to trauma informed practice training.
- One public interest investigation has been launched and Fiosrú have received a number of incidents of concern from the Garda Commissioner.

- Advices have been sought from the Office of the Attorney General in relation to investigations under the 2005 Act.

There was a discussion on the new Statutory Review Unit and the Committee noted that the initial number of review requests received was low, however, this number is now increasing. The work involved in the review process is challenging and there was a need for additional resources.

There was a discussion on Operational KPI's and it was agreed that there should be a common approach to KPI's, they should be standardised and in a common format that is easily understood.

The Committee noted that engagement between Fiosrú and An Garda Síochána (AGS) has been very good, particularly with Internal Affairs. The Committee recommended that the detailed caseload table for the Trace and Fiosrú teams, contained in the Directors Activity Report should be anonymised.

The Committee thanked the Deputy Directors for their briefing and recommended for the Directors Activity Report should be a summarised high-level report for future ARC meeting.

5 Risk Management

The Chief Risk Officer (CRO) briefed the Committee on the Risk Register. In particular, it was noted that:

- The Q1 2025 GSOC Corporate Risk Register was submitted to and adopted by the Police Ombudsman; it was subsequently shared with all Fiosrú staff on 11 April 2025.
- Quarterly input was sought from risk and mitigating action owners this quarter, with returns to be made by 30 April 2025.
- The Risk Monitoring Group (RMG) met on the 20 May 2025 and 22 May 2025 to review the draft Q2 Corporate Risk Register. Two Risks had emerging risk aspects identified which required further consideration post the RMG meetings. The two identified emerging risks were Non-compliance with statutory obligations and Reputation Management. Both risks have been updated after the meetings of the RMG following consultation with the relevant business area representatives.
- On 27 May 2025 the CRO met with the CEO and further proposed amendments were documented. The draft Q2 Risk Register was then submitted to the CEO for review. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) subsequently reviewed the Register on 06 June 2025.
- The CRO had an additional meeting with the CEO on 10 June to consider the emerging risk aspects and the overall ownership of risks. The updated draft Q2 Risk Register was shared with SLT for their meeting on 12 June 2025.

- The Committee noted the high-level organisation risks this quarter; New CMS Project, Knowledge, Information and Document Management and Lack of Resource Resilience.
- The Committee noted the two organisational risks which increased in Q2. The first is the PULSE Records, this is due to the departure of staff and AGS have not approved any of the user Applications submitted by GSOC/Fiosrú for additional Authorised Officers to access the PULSE system as part of our statutory functions. Secondly, Non-compliance with statutory obligations; this risk has been identified relating to organisational Designations/Delegations under the 2005 Act since the commencement of the PSCS Act, 2024.

The Committee noted that the Draft Fiosrú Risk Management Policy is currently with the Police Ombudsman for consideration. The existing policy and risk register will remain in place pending approval. The procurement of Risk Management software is an objective for Q3. The Committee thanked the CRO for her briefing and continued hard work.

6 PSCS Investigations

6.1 Trace

The Senior Designated Officer for the Trace Investigation Team briefed the Committee on the work being conducted by the team. The Trace team was set up to carry out the initial tasks of the investigation. These tasks include; engagement with the complainant from the outset, attending scenes, securing CCTV footage and administrative tasks. The Committee noted the importance of gathering information promptly, as well as maintaining contact with the complaint throughout the process.

The Committee noted that the Learning and Development (L&D) Unit in conjunction with Operations has introduced an induction and mentoring programme for new investigators, as well as an induction book, which outlines tasks to be completed as part of the programme. Investigation processes will be standardised and streamlined and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) are currently under review. It is envisaged that additional investigators assigned to the Trace team will be geographically spread to provide resilience to the organisation.

6.2 Fiosrú Team

The Senior Designated Officer for the Fiosrú Investigation Team briefed the Committee on the work being conducted by the team. The Committee noted that the initial tasks conducted by the Trace were of significant help to the Fiosrú investigation team. The Committee were advised that both SDOs work collaboratively in identifying and addressing any issues in processes that may arise, which feeds into

the development of SOPs. The Committee was provided with a breakdown of the current PSCS investigations.

The Committee noted that there has been a welcomed engagement with new garda members enquiring about the process. There was a discussion about the timeliness of investigations and the delays encountered by Fiosrú when interviewing garda members.

The Committee enquired if there was a dedicated unit within Fiosrú to investigate allegations relating to sexual offences. The Committee were advised that a specialist unit has been established but requires further resources.

7 Case Management System (CMS)

The CMS Project Manager briefed the Committee on the main developments with the new CMS Project, it was noted that:

- Funding requirements for 2026 onward, have been drafted and submitted to the Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Services, Reform and Digitalisation (DPER) and feedback is awaited.
- The interim CMS is now active and is being closely monitored to address any issues and concerns that may arise.
- Ways of working team capacity has significantly reduced by business priorities, impacting progress.
- Work is continuing on the system reporting requirements, which is currently in test phase.
- Work is continuing on the development of business process mapping .

The Committee thanked the CMS Project Manager for their presentation.

8 Internal Audit

The Mazars representative briefed the Committee on the internal audit activities. The Committee noted that the GDPR/Data protection audit was ongoing and nearing completion. The proposed schedule for 2025 Audit Plan was discussed. It was agreed that the next audit, Workforce Planning would be deferred to Q1 2026 and instead the Operational Exhibit management and user access security would be moved to Q3 2025. It was agreed that the chain of evidence is important and this aspect is to be included in the audit. It was agreed that the Internal Audit Manager would meet with the Fiosrú's Head of Finance in advance to determine the scope of the audit. It was also agreed that there would be a meeting with Fiosrú's management team with regards to lessons learned from the Garda Síochána Act, 2005.

There was a discussion on the Workforce Planning audit and the Committee advised that DPER have a guidance document, which could be used as a benchmark for the audit.

9 Governance

The Draft Audit and Risk Charter was reviewed and it was agreed that it would be signed at the next meeting. The Committee discussed available dates for its next meetings and it was agreed meetings would be held on 29 September and 8 December 2025.

10 AOB

The next ARC meeting is scheduled for 29 September 2025 at 13:00 hours.

11 Closed Session

The Committee and the CEO held a closed session.