

GARDA SÍOCHÁNA OMBUDSMAN COMMISSION

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

(01 JANUARY – 01 APRIL)



Garda
Ombudsman



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INQUIRY INDEPENDENCE IMPARTIALITY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	6
The Role and Functions of GSOC	7
Our Vision, Mission and Values	8
Our Values	9
2. Transition to Fiosrú, Office of the Police Ombudsman: Planning, Preparation and Stakeholder Engagement	10
2.1 New Policing, Security and Community Safety Legislation	11
2.2 Final Stage Of The Path To Fiosrú	11
2.3 Stakeholder Engagement	12
3. Report under the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty	14
4. Our Commitment To Sustainability	18
5. Governance, Finance and Internal Controls	20
5.1 Governance and Structure	21
5.1.1 The Ombudsman Commission	21
5.1.2 Governance	21
5.1.3 Responsibilities and Objectives	21
5.1.4 Meetings of the Ombudsman Commission	22
5.1.5 The Senior Management Team	22
5.2 Finance	23
5.2.1 Expenditure	23
5.2.2 Table B: GSOC Expenditure 2025 (01 January – 01 April)	23
5.2.3 Key management personnel	24
5.2.4 Non-salary related fees	24
5.2.5 Employee benefits	24
5.2.6 Table C: Employee Benefits Breakdown	24
5.2.7 Consultancy, legal costs and settlements	25
5.3 Internal Control Environment	25
5.3.1 Quality management	25
5.3.2 Audit and risk	25
Statement of Internal Control in GSOC 2025 (01 January – 01 April)	27
6. Staffing	30
6.1 Staffing and Organisational Structure	31
6.2 Learning and Development	31

7. Complaints	34
How GSOC Receives and Investigates Complaints	35
Admissibility	35
Types of complaints	35
Key Facts and Figures for Complaints in 2025 (01 January – 01 April)	36
Volume of queries	36
Volume of complaints	37
Admissibility decisions	38
Types of complaints	38
8. Investigations on Foot of Complaints: Outcomes in 2025 (01 January – 01 April)	40
Overview of 2025 (01 January – 01 April) Investigations	41
Time taken to Close Investigations	42
Criminal Investigations	42
Investigations on Foot of Complaints: 2025 Case Studies	44
9. Investigations on Referral under s102 (Death or Serious Harm)	48
10. GSOC's Legal Unit: Engaging with the Courts	52
11. Investigations in the Public Interest	56
12. Protected Disclosures	58
13. Information Requests	59
14. Child Protection	60
Appendix 1: GSOC Investigations On-Hand 2025 (01 January – 01 April)	61
Appendix 2: Profile of Complainants in 2025 (01 January – 01 April)	62
Appendix 3: Gender and Rank of Gardaí Subject to Complaints in 2025 (01 January – 01 April)	66
Appendix 4: Geographical Distribution of Complaints and Allegations	67
Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations	69



On behalf of the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission I am pleased to present our Annual Report for the period 1 January 2025 to 1 April 2025. This report details our activities during the concluding phase of our transition to Fiosrú - Oifig an Ombudsman Póilíneachta, the Office of the Police Ombudsman.

The Commission would like to thank all our teams, partners and stakeholders for their unwavering support and dedication over the years. I look forward to many more years of successful collaboration and engagement as Police Ombudsman.

Emily Logan
Police Ombudsman

1 INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

This annual report has been prepared and submitted to the Minister for Justice in accordance with Section 80 of the Garda Síochána Act, 2005.

The Role and Functions of GSOC

The Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission (GSOC) was an independent statutory agency set up in 2007 under the Garda Síochána Act, 2005 (hereafter 'the Act, 2005'). GSOC's function was to deal with matters involving possible misconduct by members of An Garda Síochána, in an efficient, effective and fair manner.

GSOC dealt with complaints made by members of the public concerning the conduct of members of An Garda Síochána, whether allegations of a criminal or disciplinary nature. In addition, GSOC conducted independent investigations of matters referred to it by An Garda Síochána, the Minister for Justice, the Policing Authority or matters which were deemed by GSOC as meriting investigation in the public interest. These various aspects of GSOC's remit are explained in detail in this report, alongside a detailed accounting of delivery on GSOC's remit in the period 1 January and 1 April 2025.

This report details many of the activities GSOC undertook in the period 1 January and 1 April 2025 to prepare for transition to its successor agency Fiosrú.

Our Vision, Mission and Values

Our Vision

was of first-rate human-rights based policing oversight, contributing to trusted policing and a safe and secure society.

Our Mission

was to provide an independent, high-quality and trusted system for dealing with matters involving the possible misconduct of members of An Garda Síochána, in a manner which respected human rights and promoted public confidence.

Our Values were central to everything we did and guided us in our approach to how we did our work. They informed our decisions and how we treated our stakeholders and our colleagues. These core values and what they meant to us are shown below:



2

TRANSITION TO FIOSRÚ, OFFICE OF THE POLICE OMBUDSMAN: PLANNING, PREPARATION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

2. TRANSITION TO FIOSRÚ, OFFICE OF THE POLICE OMBUDSMAN: PLANNING, PREPARATION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

2.1 New Policing, Security and Community Safety Legislation

The Policing, Security and Community Safety Act, 2024 (hereinafter the 'PSCS Act, 2024'), signed into law in February 2024 and commenced on 2 April 2025, provides for the continuation of GSOC as Fiosrú - Oifig an Ombudsman Póilíneachta (Office of the Police Ombudsman) and enhanced GSOC's existing powers and institutional independence.

GSOC provided its observations on the PSCS Act, 2024 throughout its passage through the Houses of the Oireachtas and welcomed the changes that will positively effect Ireland's policing oversight structure, in line with the vision of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland (CoFPI).

Fiosrú's key statutory objectives are:

- a) to promote public confidence in the processes for resolving complaints made by members of the public and in investigations,
- b) to improve public understanding of the role and functions of the Police Ombudsman,
- c) to ensure that our functions are performed in a timely, efficient and effective manner and in accordance with fair procedures, and
- d) to undertake research and analysis – in order to identify trends and patterns in complaints and investigations.

The PSCS Act, 2024 sets out a number of significant changes for the reformed organisation in terms of its governance, powers and independence, including:

- change from the current governance model of a three-person Commission to a single Ombudsman, with a Deputy Ombudsman and Chief Executive Officer. The Police Ombudsman is independent in the performance of her functions, accounting directly to the Oireachtas;

- increased financial independence by making Fiosrú a vote-holding body (Vote 46), funded directly from the Oireachtas. The CEO is the Accounting Officer, accounting to the Oireachtas through the Committee of Public Accounts;
- in terms of investigations, expansion of the interpretation of conduct causing 'serious harm' to include sexual offences and abuse of power for a sexual purpose;
- introduction of a statutory review function, which provides complainants with the right to a review in a number of defined circumstances.

2.2 Final Stage of the Path to Fiosrú

2025 saw GSOC complete the final stage of its path of transition to Fiosrú – Oifig an Ombudsman Póilíneachta (Office of the Police Ombudsman).

The objectives of GSOC's transition programme were to:

1. ready GSOC to transition to Fiosrú by completing all of the tasks identified as critical to stand up the organisation, and
2. ensure Fiosrú was ready on commencement day to deliver its remit under the PSCS Act, 2024.

Having initiated activity in July 2021, GSOC's work on the programme to transition to Fiosrú intensified in the early months of 2025. With over 300 tasks identified as critical to implementation, between January and March 2025, work was completed at pace to ensure readiness for commencement day.

It should be recognised that a transition of this size and nature is a significant undertaking for any organisation

Some significant pieces of work that were successfully completed, executed or signed off in the final months of the programme to ensure readiness for day one of Fiosrú, included:

- the GSOC to Fiosrú implementation plan,
- development of processes, guidance documents, letters and forms to reflect the new legislation,
- significant staff training on the new legislation and corresponding new processes,
- website, email and phone systems changed over to Fiosrú in line with commencement,
- market research on the needs of the public who need to interact with Fiosrú,
- survey on public attitudes to inform change in practices and procedures,
- case management system enhancement to enable stronger accountability under the PSCS 2024, Act,
- all necessary arrangements to manage Fiosrú's Vote,
- Fiosrú branding and signage applied as appropriate.

On Wednesday, 2 April 2025 the Minister for Justice signed the commencement orders for the Policing Security and Community Safety Act 2024, which repealed the Garda Síochána Act 2005, and brought Fiosrú into being. On that day, history was made, as Emily Logan was appointed as Ireland's first Police Ombudsman by President Michael D. Higgins at a formal ceremony in Áras an Uachtaráin.

By commencement day, 312 out of 316 critical transition programme tasks were completed, meaning the programme was almost 99% complete. The four remaining tasks were in progress and had an external dependency which prevented them from closing before commencement day.

It should be recognised that a transition of this size and nature is a significant undertaking for any organisation. GSOC's transition to Fiosrú was not without challenge, particularly in terms of resourcing, with the need to maintain normal levels of service and business as usual activities, while simultaneously preparing for Fiosrú. Thanks to the hard work of all involved, GSOC navigated these challenges effectively and achieved smooth and successful transition.

The next chapter of the policing oversight journey, as Fiosrú, has begun.

2.3 Stakeholder Engagement

In addition to engaging with Department of Justice, An Garda Síochána and other agency colleagues on the Act, GSOC also continued to expand its broader stakeholder engagement – both at home and abroad – over the first quarter of 2025. This has been an essential element in our preparation for transition and reform, allowing us to communicate our strategic priorities for the future to policy makers, civil society and the wider public. It has also been an invaluable opportunity for mutual knowledge and experience sharing with colleagues in other jurisdictions. A more proactive and broad-ranging strategy of engagement with key stakeholders will be a key pillar of the work of Fiosrú as it is established and developed.



Fiosrú

Oifig an
Ombudsman
Póilíneachta

Office of
the Police
Ombudsman



3 REPORT UNDER THE PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS DUTY

3. REPORT UNDER THE PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS DUTY

A central tenet of GSOC's vision was respect for Human Rights and Equality. GSOC's core function has been to handle complaints of potential misconduct by members of An Garda Síochána in an efficient, effective and fair manner.

GSOC's complaints-handling, referral-handling and investigative work engaged the rights of a range of stakeholders including complainants, Gardaí, the broader public and our own staff. The work of GSOC, due to its nature, was underpinned by a strict adherence to fundamental rights, in particular the rights of complainants to seek redress for alleged misconduct, including those who had been the victim of serious crime, or who may have experienced various forms of vulnerability or disadvantage; and the procedural rights of those under investigation.

Equality of access to our services and equitable treatment for all were cornerstones of the service that we provided. We were highly cognisant of our own role in the State's broader obligations under Articles 2 and 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, in particular in the context of our investigation of incidents involving death and serious harm referred to us under Section 102 of the Act, 2005.

Human rights and equality issues that we focused on included:

- Open and transparent engagement with our stakeholders;
- Ensuring that staff were fully aware of the human rights and equality standards that underpin GSOC's work;
- Enhancing the accessibility of our functions and services, including through positive action to engage with diverse groups;
- Safeguarding staff dignity and welfare; and
- Building on the diversity of our workforce.

The Public Sector Human Rights and Equality Duty placed an obligation on GSOC to ensure staff were fully aware of their obligations to protect and defend the human rights of everyone. In 2025 (01 January – 01 April), we continued to build on the substantial progress made on human rights training and education for our staff.

GSOC staff had the opportunity to begin their studies as part of an accreditation programme co-developed with the University of Limerick, leading to a Postgraduate Certificate in Law Enforcement Oversight. Fifty (50) staff enrolled in the first module of this programme, An Introduction to Law Enforcement Oversight; this module contained a lecture on Human Rights and Policing and another on Implementing the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.

GSOC continued to improve the openness and transparency of our stakeholder engagement in the period 1 January to 1 April 2025, including through active engagement with civil society and policy makers. Work continued in the development of a renewed communications and engagement strategy for Fiosrú.

Human rights and equality have remained at the heart of our internal policies and procedures which were examined for review in the context of GSOC's transition to Fiosrú.

Further enhancing the accessibility of our public communications, and of our services both online and in-person, remained a strategic priority for GSOC in transition. We also recognised the importance of generating accessible, disaggregated human rights and equality data, both to identify gaps in rights protections and to identify trends and patterns. We worked to ensure sufficient disaggregated data was available for Fiosrú to support strategic decision making.

Ensuring that Fiosrú is well equipped to capture, interrogate and share disaggregated human rights and equality data is a core priority for us as we progress plans for an enhanced Case Management System to meet the needs of our expanded functions and remit.

GSOC was always proud to have a vibrant and diverse workforce. We conducted our recruitment through the Public Appointments Service, which operates an equal opportunities policy. As GSOC transitioned to Fiosrú, we remain committed to growing in a manner that preserves and enhances the diversity of our workforce, ensuring that we, as an organisation, are reflective of the community that we serve.



4

OUR COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY



4. OUR COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

Building Momentum for a Greener Workplace

Sustainability continued to be at the heart of GSOC, shaping the way we work, innovate and reduce our environmental impact. In the period 1 January to 1 April 2025 we continued our efforts to increase energy efficiency and reduce emissions throughout the organisation.

The start of 2025 marked an exciting new chapter for our Green Team, with a renewed focus on staff engagement and sustainability in action as we prepare for the transition to Fiosrú. We launched a successful campaign to recruit new Green Team members, with new members proposing a range of ideas and priorities for the year ahead. We also consulted with staff across the organisation seeking impactful and innovative proposals for our sustainability programme.

In February, the Green Team carried out an Out-of-Hours Energy Check and Audit, supported by eye-catching posters that gave staff clear, visual feedback on how we're doing and where we can do better. This helped raise awareness of energy use during evenings and weekends, and highlighted small changes that can lead to big savings. In March, to mark Earth Hour, we surveyed staff about their habits when it comes to switching off lights and equipment. The results are informing our ongoing efforts to make energy efficiency a shared and visible priority.

In parallel with staff-led initiatives, our Energy Advisor conducted a detailed audit of the Building Management System (BMS) to identify opportunities for improving energy efficiency. The audit reviewed heating and ventilation controls across key areas of the building, to maximise performance and efficiency to help the new body Fiosrú achieve its 2030 Energy Efficiency and Emissions targets.

5 GOVERNANCE, FINANCE AND INTERNAL CONTROLS

5. GOVERNANCE, FINANCE AND INTERNAL CONTROLS

5.1 Governance and Structure

The Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission was established under the Garda Síochána Act, 2005, as amended. The functions of the Commission were set out in Section 67 of the Act.

5.1.1 The Ombudsman Commission

The Ombudsman Commission was a three-person commission, all members of which were appointed by the President following the nomination of the Government and the passage of resolutions by both Houses of the Oireachtas recommending their appointment. One of the Ombudsman Commission members was appointed as Chairperson.

In 2025, the Ombudsman Commission comprised:

- Rory MacCabe, SC (Chairperson)
- Ms Emily Logan

5.1.2 Governance

While the Ombudsman Commission was collectively responsible for leadership across the organisation, section 67(5) provided that the chairperson of the Commission had a unique responsibility to manage and control generally the officers, administration and business of the Commission.

5.1.3 Responsibilities and Objectives

Section 67(5) of the Garda Síochána Act, 2005 provided that the chairperson of the Commission managed and controlled generally the officers, administration and business of the Ombudsman Commission.

Along with its statutory functions and objectives, the Commission's responsibilities also included:

- promoting the success of GSOC by leading and directing GSOC's activities;

- providing strategic guidance to GSOC while still monitoring and supervising the discharge of any of its delegated functions;
- reviewing and guiding:
 - strategic direction,
 - major plans of action,
 - risk management policies and procedures,
 - annual budgets and business plans,
 - setting performance objectives,
 - monitoring implementation and performances, and
 - overseeing major capital expenditure decisions
- acting on a fully informed and ethical basis, in good faith, with due diligence and care, and in the best interest of GSOC, subject to the objectives set by Government;
- promoting the development of the capacity of GSOC including the capability of its leadership and staff; and
- holding senior management to account for the effective performance of their delegated functions and responsibilities.

A range of key decisions were reserved to the Commission, including in relation to:

- Approval of capital projects;
- Putting in place delegated authority levels, financial management policies and risk management policies;
- Approval of significant acquisitions, disposals and retirement of GSOC's assets;
- Approval of annual budgets;
- Assurances of compliance with statutory and administrative requirements in relation to the approval of the number, grading, and conditions of appointment of all staff;
- Setting the organisation's strategy; and
- Production of Annual Reports and accounts.

5.1.4 Meetings of the Ombudsman Commission

The Ombudsman Commission worked closely together with the senior leadership team, while liaising with key senior management in relation to complaints and investigations, on a daily basis. In addition to this, the Ombudsman Commission held formal meetings with GSOC’s senior management on a periodic basis to discharge its statutory governance and operational duties. One such formal meeting took place in the period 1 January to 1 April 2025.

Table A: Attendance at Formal Meetings of the Ombudsman Commission in the period 1 January to 1 April 2025

Formal meetings of the Ombudsman Commission in the period 1 January to 1 April 2025		
Name	Position	No. of meetings attended
Mr Justice Rory MacCabe	Chairperson	1
Ms Emily Logan	Commissioner	1
Ms Sheila McClelland	Chief Executive Officer designate	1
Mr Peter Whelan	Director of Investigations and Operations	1
Mr Peter Hogan	Deputy Director of Administration	1

5.1.5 The Senior Management Team

The Senior Management Team, reporting to the Commission, was responsible for the day-to-day management of the organisation.

During 2025, the following officials served on the Senior Management Team:

- Ms Sheila McClelland, Chief Executive Officer designate
 - Mr. Peter Whelan, Director of Investigations and Operations
 - Ms Aileen Healy, Director of Administration¹
- Mr Peter Hogan, Deputy Director of Administration
 - Mr Garrett Croke, Deputy Director of Operations
 - Mr Jon Leeman, Deputy Director of Operations
 - Mr David Grant, Deputy Director of Operations
 - Mr Darren Wright, Deputy Director of Operations
 - Ms. Edel Gilligan, Head of Legal

5.2 Finance

GSOC was funded through the provision of an annual grant from the Vote for the Department of Justice. The Secretary General of the Department was the Accounting Officer for the Vote and for funding provided to the Commission.

Section 77 of the Act, 2005 required GSOC to keep, in such form as may be approved by the Minister for Justice with the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitisation, all proper and usual accounts of money received and expended by it. The Commission was responsible for keeping adequate accounting records which disclose, with reasonable accuracy at any time, its financial position and enabled it to ensure that the financial statements complied with Section 77 of the Act, 2005. The Chairperson was responsible for the preparation of GSOC's accounts.

5.2.1 Expenditure

The Ombudsman Commission ensured that GSOC fully complied with the Public Spending Code throughout the period 01 January to 01 April 2025.

Table B: GSOC Expenditure in the period 01 January to 01 April 2025

Category	2025 (01 Jan – 01 Apr) Budget €	Expenditure Subhead	2025 (01 Jan – 01 Apr) Expenditure €
Pay	3,668,466.04	A01 - Pay & Allowances	3,468,130.79
Non-Pay	1,444,858	A02 - Travel & Subsistence	39,255.01
		A03 - Incidental Expenses	444,623.60
		A04 - Postal & Telecommunication Services	25,051.87
		A05 - Office Machinery & Other Office Supplies	504,120.15
		A06 - Office & Premises Expenses	542,992.36
		Total Non - Pay	1,556,042.99
Total	5,113,324.04		5,024,173.78

5.2.3 Key management personnel

Total salaries paid to key management personnel by the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission amounted to €886,802.

5.2.4 Non-salary related fees

No non-salary related fees were paid in respect of members of the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission for the period 1 January to 1 April 2025.

5.2.5 Employee benefits

The number of employees whose total employee benefits paid in the period 1 January to 1 April 2025 fell within each of the following pay bands is shown in the following table (these figures include salary, overtime allowances and other payments made on behalf of the employee but exclude employer’s PRSI):

Table C: Employee Benefits Breakdown

Range		Number of Employees	
From To	01 Jan – 01 Apr 2025	2024	
€60,000 - €69,999	28	28	
€70,000 - €79,999	34	21	
€80,000 - €89,999	11	9	
€90,000 - €99,999	14	12	
€100,000 - €109,999	6	3	
€110,000 - €119,999	2	-	
€120,000 - €129,999	4	3	
€130,000 - €139,999	-	3	
€140,000 - €149,999	-	-	
€150,000 - €159,999	-	-	
€160,000 - €169,999	2	1	
€170,000 - €179,999	1	-	
€180,000 - €189,999	1	1	
€190,000 - €199,999	-	-	
€200,000 - €209,999	-	-	
€210,000 - €219,999	-	-	
€220,000 - €229,999	-	-	
€230,000 - €239,999	-	-	
€240,000 - €249,999	-	-	
€250,000 - €259,999	-	1	
€260,000 - €269,999	1	-	

5.2.7 Consultancy, legal costs and settlements

Expenditure in the period 1 January to 1 April 2025 included the cost of external advice to management and general legal advice received by GSOC amounting to €52,579.35.²

5.3 Internal Control Environment

5.3.1 Quality management

Quality Management development continued on an incremental basis, to put in place the necessary framework to ensure the organisation met its statutory and governance obligations and service users received a quality interaction.

5.3.2 Audit and risk

The Commission established its own Audit and Risk Committee in 2022 to oversee the management of risk and internal control in the organisation and to advise the Commission in relation to matters of audit, governance and risk. The committee included two independent members, one of whom chaired the committee, and a member of the Commission. One member of the committee had recent and relevant financial experience. The GSOC Audit and Risk Committee met twice during the period 1 January to 1 April 2025, on 26 February 2025 and 27 March 2025.

2. The programme for transition to Fiosrú was funded centrally as part of the Department of Justice Criminal Justice Programme. GSOC transition costs are thus reported by the Department of Justice.



Statement of Internal Control in GSOC 2025 (01 January – 01 April)

The Ombudsman Commission chairperson hereby acknowledged this responsibility by ensuring that an effective system of internal controls was maintained and operated. This responsibility took account of the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016).

Purpose of the System of Internal Control

The system of internal control provided reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets were safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or other irregularities were either prevented or would be detected on a timely basis. The Commission chair was satisfied that the systems which it had in place were reasonable and appropriate for the Commission's circumstances having regard to its size, level of expenditure, staff resources and the nature of its operations.

Internal Control Environment

The following steps were taken to ensure an appropriate control environment:

- Internal reporting relationships were clearly assigned;
- Management responsibilities were clearly assigned and communicated between the Director of Administration, Corporate Services and the Finance Team;
- Decisions on expenditure rested with line managers and the members of the Commission in line with approved expenditure thresholds;
- Shared service arrangements were availed of in relation to the provision of a number of financial management and related services to GSOC:
 - The Department of Justice provided an agency payment service for the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission.
 - Payroll Shared Service Centre, which is part of the National Shared Services Office, processed payroll and travel and subsistence claims.
 - The Department of Justice provided fixed asset register maintenance, purchase ordering and tax filing services.
- When required, additional services were procured from external providers to supplement these services;
- Robust financial procedures and controls were placed and an external accounting firm was engaged to prepare GSOC's financial statements;
- GSOC had systems in place for the monitoring of risk and, in so far as possible having regard to the operating environment, dealing with the risks that have presented in 2025 (01 January – 01 April).

In addition to weekly operational meetings and monthly Transition Project meetings, the Ombudsman Commission met formally to discharge its governance responsibilities on one occasion in 2025 (01 Jan – 01 Apr).

Risk and Control Framework Risk Management

The Ombudsman Commission established processes to identify and evaluate business and financial risks by putting a Risk Management Policy and Risk Register in place to:

- Identify the nature and extent of financial and operational risks;
- Assess the potential of risks occurring;
- Evaluate and assess capacity to manage the risks that do occur;
- Examine risks in the context of strategic goals;
- Put actions in place to mitigate risks; and
- Regularly report on risks.

The risk management process in place included:

- A Chief Risk Officer to oversee the management of risk and keep the Ombudsman Commission informed of high-level risks and their mitigations.
- A Risk Management Policy which set out the processes in place for the identification, assessment, management and mitigation of risks in the organisation;
- A Risk Register which contained details of risks and their mitigation and which was kept up to date on an ongoing basis. This register identified specific risks, detailed the controls and actions needed to mitigate those risks and assigned responsibility for the mitigation and operation of controls;
- A Risk Monitoring Group, responsible for ensuring that the Risk Management system was subject to ongoing review, in conjunction with the Senior Management Team and the Chief Risk Officer; and
- An Audit and Risk Committee was established to oversee the management of risk and internal controls in the organisation and advised the Ombudsman Commission in relation to matters of audit, governance and risk.

Development of the framework, policy and structure in place continued at an operational level to move to the next level of maturity by embedding it across the organisation, and aligning it with strategic and business planning for the organisational transition to Fiosrú, Office of the Police Ombudsman.

The Risk Monitoring Group was formed in April 2023 with the membership from across the organisation. The Group met every quarter and reviewed the risk register and ensured regular engagement by stakeholders across the organisation. Managing risk was a regularised iterative process whereby the risks were updated quarterly by the Chief Risk Officer in liaison with business area representatives, monitored by the Risk Monitoring Group and reviewed by the Senior Management Team, Audit and Risk Committee and the Ombudsman Commission.

Monitoring and Review

The system of internal control was based on a system of internal controls which included management of information, administrative procedures and a system of delegation and accountability. In particular, this involved:

- Comprehensive budgeting with an annual budget which was reviewed regularly by senior management;
- Submission of monthly finance reports to the Director of Administration for review; and
- Regular review by the Ombudsman Commission and Corporate Services of financial information;
- Mechanisms were established for ensuring the adequacy of the security of the Commission's information (internally within GSOC) and communication technology systems.

Compliance with the Public Spending Code

The Ombudsman Commission had procedures in place to ensure compliance with procurement rules and guidelines as set out by the Office of Government Procurement. During the period 01 January to 01 April 2025, GSOC complied with those procedures.

The Statement on the System of Internal controls will be reviewed by the Fiosrú Audit and Risk Committee at the Q4 meeting in order to advise the Accounting Officer on the control system in operation during the reporting period. A review of internal controls will be undertaken by Internal Audit for 2025 (1 January - 1 April and 2 April to 31 December 2025) and considered by the Audit and Risk Committee and Accounting Officer in March 2026.



Rory MacCabe, S.C.
Chairperson



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INQUIRY INDEPENDENCE IMPARTIALITY

6 STAFFING

6. STAFFING

6.1 Staffing and Organisational Structure

In accordance with section 71 (3) of the Act, 2005 officers of GSOC were Civil Servants in the Service of the State. Section 71 (4) of the Act, 2005 provides that the Ombudsman Commission is the appropriate authority (within the meaning of the Civil Service Commissioners Act, 1956 and the Civil Service Regulation Acts, 1956 to 1996) in relation to its officers.

The National Shared Services Office (NSSO) provided a suite of HR, performance management, payroll and pensions administration services on behalf of GSOC under a Service Level Agreement.

As of 01 April 2025, GSOC employed a total of 173 staff members, reflecting an increase of 2 individuals compared to the end of 2024.

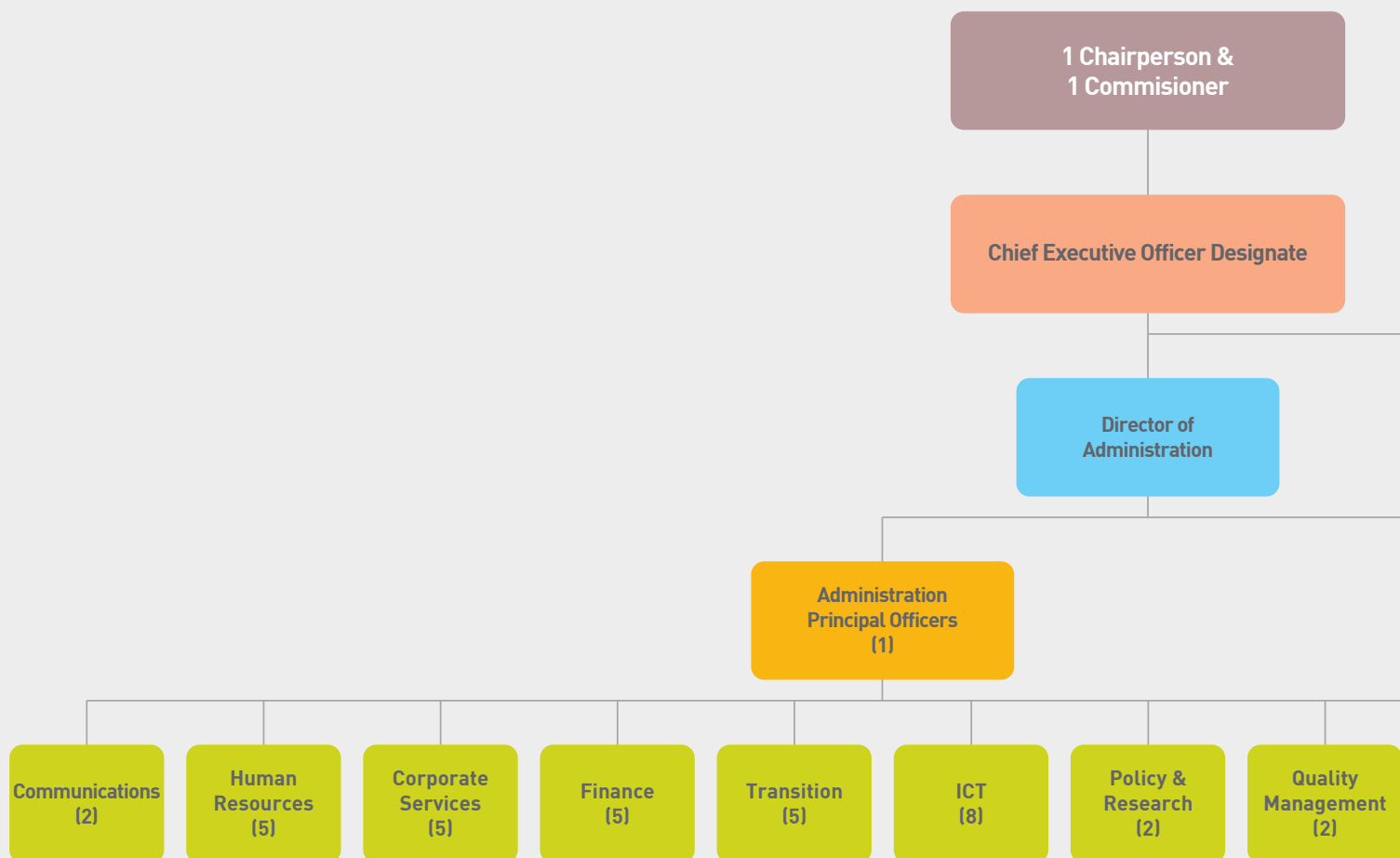
Recruitment was a key focus for HR in the period 01 January to 01 April 2025 to fill vacancies and newly created roles. Up until 01 April 2024, 5 new staff members were recruited. A number of internal competitions were also underway to provide promotional opportunities to existing staff.

Chart 1 outlines the organisation's structure and resource distribution as of 01 April 2025.

GSOC established policies and procedures that enable its staff to make disclosures under the Protected Disclosures Act, 2014. No internal disclosures were made under this policy in the period 01 January to 01 April 2025.

6.2 Learning and Development

All of GSOC's learning and development activities and deliverables for the period 01 January to 01 April were aligned to our Learning and Development Strategy 2021-2024 and the needs identified through our annual learning needs analysis process. This strategy highlighted our focus on developing the capabilities the organisation needed to achieve GSOC's vision, mission and strategic outcomes. GSOC's aim was to make sure that GSOC staff had the knowledge, skills and experiences they needed to carry out GSOC's statutory functions consistent with best practice. We sought to equip GSOC with the capabilities required to meet future organisational needs and to progress the careers of our staff.

Chart 1: GSOC organisational structure and staffing resources as of 01 April 2025

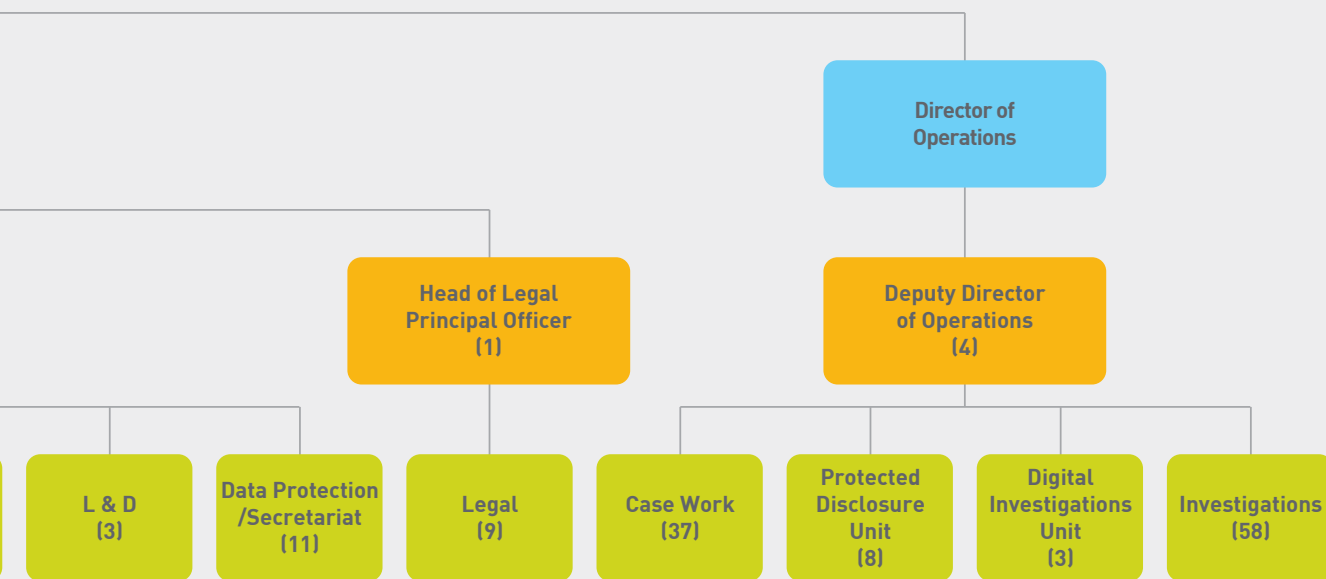
Investing in the learning and development of staff members remained a key priority for GSOC during the period 01 January to 01 April 2025. We achieved this through a combination of different learning experiences across various formats including:

- Formal education opportunities:

- University of Limerick (UL) accreditation programme: 50 staff commenced the first iteration of the Introduction to Law Enforcement Oversight module with University of Limerick. Staff attending this and future modules can gain a Postgraduate Certificate in Law Enforcement Oversight.
- Leadership Development: our first group of staff at Higher Executive Officer (HEO)/ Investigative Officer (IO) level commenced their Leadership Programme which was co-designed by the Institute of Public

Administration. Separately, GSOC's Senior Designated Officers (SDOs) have been participating in the UK College of Policing Senior Investigating Officer Development programme (SIODP).

- Informal mentoring:
 - GSOC commenced a cross-organisation mentoring programme with the Office of the Ombudsman.
- Synchronous (live) and asynchronous (recorded webinars and eLearning) learning experiences:
 - In preparation for the commencement of the PSCS Act, 2024 staff attended in-person and online sessions covering various aspects of the PSCS Act, 2024 and various Standard Operating Procedures supporting its implementation within Fiosrú.



- Conference attendance
- Partnering with relevant criminal justice, and representative, advocacy and victim support bodies
- Knowledge sharing among staff through scheduled knowledge sharing sessions and informal colleague support

Learning needs for the period 01 January to 01 April 2025 were identified through a learning needs analysis at an organisation and team level. We also reviewed individual needs captured in our performance management system, ePMDS.

In total, GSOC staff completed 208 individual participations across 36 distinct live learning experiences during the period 01 January to 01 April 2025. Overall participation rates were more than 2 times greater than the same period in 2024. This increase reflected an increased investment and emphasis on supporting the development of GSOC staff, as well as our efforts to prepare staff for the commencement of the PSCS Act, 2024. The high participation rates also illustrated the value and priority placed on development opportunities by our staff and by leadership within the organisation.

7 COMPLAINTS

7. COMPLAINTS

How GSOC Receives and Investigates Complaints

Section 83 to 101 of the Garda Síochána Act, 2005 set out how complaints alleging Garda misconduct were made to GSOC. The complainant must have been directly affected by what they believe is Garda misconduct, must have witnessed the alleged misconduct or a complaint could be made on behalf of someone, if consent was provided. Complaints could be made to GSOC in a number of ways, whether by filling out a GSOC complaint form online, in writing, by post, via email, in person at the GSOC public office or via correspondence from Garda Stations.

Admissibility

All complaints received by GSOC were assessed against a list of admissibility criteria outlined in section 87 of the Act, 2005. This list set out the criteria a complaint needed to meet to be admitted by GSOC for investigation. If a complaint did not meet the criteria it would not be admitted by GSOC and would be deemed inadmissible.

For a complaint to be investigated it must have met the following criteria:

- It must have been made by (or, in certain circumstances, on behalf of) a person who had been directly affected by what they believed was Garda misconduct, or must have witnessed the alleged misconduct;
- It must have related to behaviour by a member of An Garda Síochána which would, if proven, constitute a criminal offence or a breach of Garda discipline;
- It must have been made within one year of the incident which was the subject of the complaint;
- It must not have been frivolous or vexatious;

- It must not have related to the general direction and control of An Garda Síochána by the Garda Commissioner;
- It must not have related to the conduct of a member of An Garda Síochána while the member was off-duty, unless the conduct alleged would, if proven, been likely to bring discredit on An Garda Síochána.

Types of complaints

Criminal

All complaints that contained allegations of a criminal nature against Gardaí have been and/or continued to be investigated by GSOC investigators. Such investigations have taken place under section 98 of the Act, 2005. Conducting criminal investigations, GSOC investigators continue to have full policing powers, equivalent to all the powers, immunities and privileges conferred and all the duties imposed on members of An Garda Síochána.

The case studies in the following sections include examples of some criminal investigations.

Disciplinary

Complaints received by GSOC involving alleged breaches of discipline were investigated under section 94 or 95 of the Act, 2005. Under the legislation, breaches of discipline have been investigated in one of these ways:

- **GSOC-led disciplinary investigations** have been carried out by GSOC's own investigators. Such investigations have arisen where disciplinary or systemic policy matters were identified during the course of a criminal investigation and which required separate follow-up. These were dealt with under section 95 of the Act, 2005.

- **Unsupervised investigations** were referred for investigation to An Garda Síochána and managed by Garda Senior Investigations Officers (GSIO) as set out in the Act. Unsupervised investigations were subject to review mechanisms if the complainant was unhappy with the result. A request could have been made to review the investigation under s94(10) of the Act.
- **Supervised investigations** have been conducted by a member of Superintendent rank within An Garda Síochána and were supervised by GSOC.

The case studies in the following sections include examples of some disciplinary investigations.

S102 Referrals

Section 102 of the Act, 2005 provided for independent investigation of any matter that appeared to indicate that the conduct of a member of An Garda Síochána may have resulted in the death of, or serious harm to, a person.

Public Interest Investigations

Section 102(4) of the Act, 2005 provided for GSOC to undertake investigations in the public interest outside of the usual complaints or referrals processes.

Our Local Intervention Initiative

The Local Intervention Initiative was aimed at resolving more minor service-level complaints at a local level, without the need for a formal investigation. Such complaints tended to relate to allegations of discourtesy or failures that would represent lower level examples of neglect of duty. Under this process, nominated Garda Inspectors contacted complainants who indicated that they wished to engage in the initiative, and sought to address the issue through dialogue. The focus of the process was on addressing the problem, rather than apportioning blame.

If the intervention was not successful, the complaint returned to GSOC, and was assessed for admissibility.

The initiative was launched to reduce the time taken for complaints to be addressed, by identifying cases where the launch of an investigation under section 94 of the Act, 2005 was not in the best interest of the complainant.

Local Intervention saw good engagement by An Garda Síochána, and had a positive impact for Gardaí, GSOC and complainants alike, providing a more efficient means of addressing service-level complaints.

Key Facts and Figures for Complaints in the period 01 January to 01 April 2025

Volume of queries

In the first instance, queries and complaints were handled by GSOC's Casework Unit.

In the period 01 January to 01 April 2025 caseworkers dealt with **1,005** queries. Initially each contact was recorded as a query on our system, until there was sufficient information to upgrade it to a complaint to assess it for admissibility.

GSOC received **682** calls to the lo-call number from 01 January to 01 April 2025. Some **95.5 per cent** of the calls received were answered within 60 seconds.

Volume of complaints

A total of **352** complaints were opened in the period 01 January to 01 April 2025. A complaint could contain more than one allegation, and the 352 complaints received in the period 01 January to 01 April 2025 contained **443** separate allegations.

The most common circumstances which gave rise to complaints in the period 01 January to 01 April 2025 were conduct of Gardaí during arrest at 22%, when carrying out investigations at 15% and customer service at 14%.

Common circumstances about which people complained to GSOC about included -

- **Customer Service** - This concerned the treatment by Garda members when interacting with the public.
- **Arrest** - This concerned any complaint arising from or relating to an arrest. The complainant did not have to be the person who was arrested.
- **Investigation** - This concerned any complaint about a Garda investigation. It included, for example, quality and timeliness of the investigation and lines of inquiry established.
- **Road Policing** - This concerned any complaint relating to any road or traffic scenario involving the Gardaí.

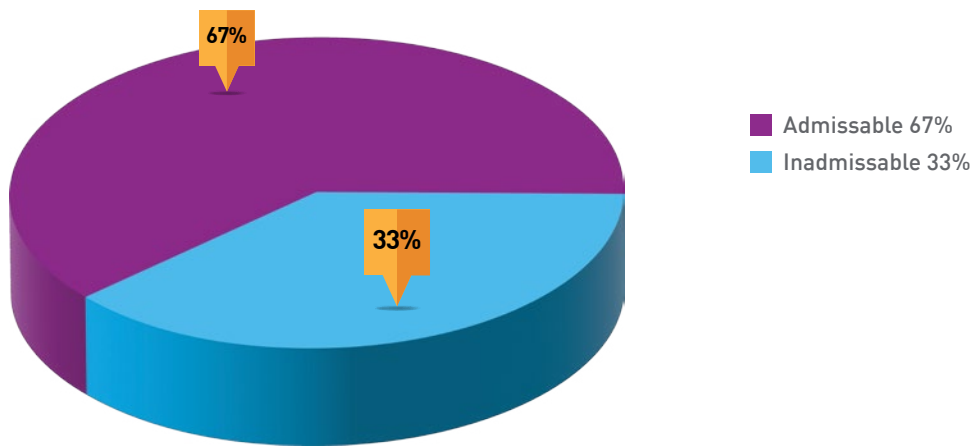
Table D: Circumstances of complaints established on receipt of complaint (Total complaints: 352)

	Complaints	%
Arrest	77	22%
Investigation	54	15%
Customer Service	48	14%
Other	46	13%
Road Policing	42	12%
Search (Person / Property)	22	6%
Civil Matter	13	4%
Public Order Policing	11	3%
Property Issue	10	3%
Court Proceedings	9	2%
Disclosure of Information	7	2%
Domestic Incident	7	2%
During Police Custody	6	2%

Admissibility decisions

In the period 01 January to 01 April 2025, a total of **352** complaints were received, of which 237 (67 per cent) were admissible (containing at least one admissible allegation). A total of 115 (33 per cent) were inadmissible.

Chart 2: Complaint Admissibility (Total Complaints: 497)

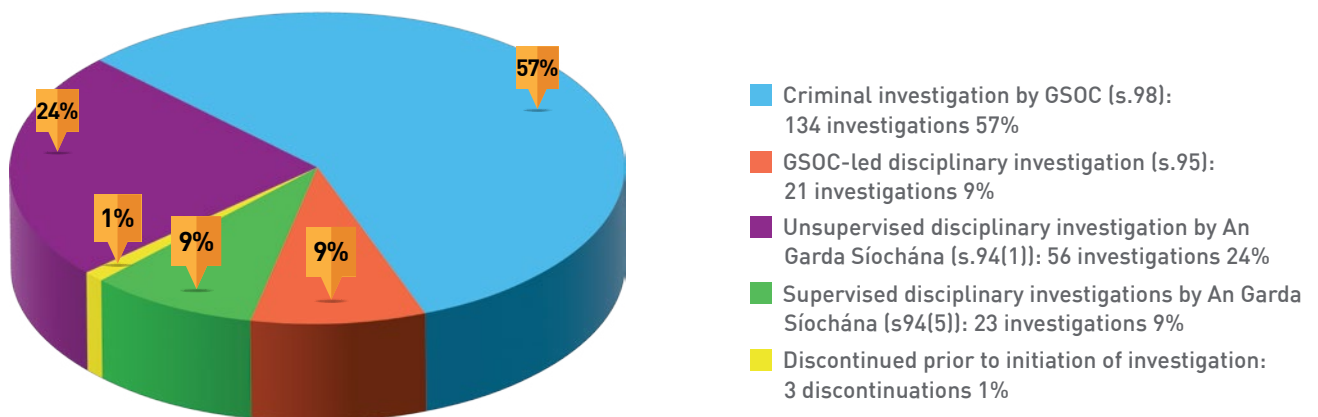


Types of complaints

Table E: Allegation Types in Admitted Complaints - 237 Admitted Complaints containing 326 allegations

	Allegations	%
Neglect of Duty	114	35%
Non-Fatal Offences	102	31%
Abuse of Authority	49	15%
Discourtesy	26	8%
Criminal Damage	9	3%
Road Traffic Infringement	8	2%
Other	8	2%
Discreditable Conduct	3	1%
Falsehood or Prevarication	3	1%
Discrimination	2	1%
Sexual Offences	2	1%

Chart 3: Investigations Opened by Type (Total Complaints Admitted for Investigation: 237)



Common matters about which people complained to GSOC included:

- **Neglect of Duty** – allegations that a garda omitted to take an action that could have been reasonably expected – such as returning a phone call at one end of the scale, or properly investigating an alleged serious crime at the other end of the scale – would be typical examples of ‘neglect of duty’.
- **Non-Fatal Offences** – these were allegations of a criminal offence listed in the Non-Fatal Offences against the Person Act, 1997 and included, for example, assault.
- **Abuse of Authority** – excessive use of force, or an instruction to do something which the person making the complaint believed was beyond the Garda’s authority to instruct, were the main types of allegation categorised as ‘abuse of authority’.
- **Discourtesy** – complaints around how a Garda spoke to or behaved towards a person.

8 INVESTIGATIONS ON FOOT OF COMPLAINTS: OUTCOMES IN THE PERIOD 01 JANUARY TO 01 APRIL 2025

8. INVESTIGATIONS ON FOOT OF COMPLAINTS: OUTCOMES IN THE PERIOD 01 JANUARY TO 01 APRIL 2025

Overview of Investigations

In the period 01 January to 01 April 2025,

- GSOC submitted 17 files to the DPP following criminal investigations which is where GSOC considered that a criminal offence may have occurred.
- GSOC received 23 directions from the DPP. Of these, the DPP directed the prosecution of 2 offences arising from investigations submitted to the DPP in 2024. The DPP directed no prosecution in relation to 21 investigations. This statistic relates to 15 files that were submitted by GSOC in 2024 and 6 files that were submitted in the period 01 January to 01 April 2025.
- On 01 April 2025 there were 23 cases awaiting direction from the DPP.
- Three (3) Public Interest Investigations were opened and 2 were closed.
- GSOC made 35 court appearances for criminal prosecutions. GSOC was represented in court by a GSOC investigator and/or legal representative.
- GSOC made 22 court appearances for civil cases for example, Judicial Reviews, Non-Party Disclosure. GSOC was represented in court by a GSOC investigator and/or legal representative.
- Following the conclusion of disciplinary investigation, GSOC investigators sent 15 reports to An Garda Síochána recommending breaches of discipline in six of the investigations.
- Five (5) sanctions were imposed by the Garda Commissioner following the conclusion of GSOC disciplinary investigations.
- GSOC deployed 1 Family Liaison Officer (FLO) to a family dealing with loss and/or serious injuries.
- GSOC investigators were involved in 3 Coronial inquests in 2025 (01 January – 01 April). The role of GSOC in the Coroner's Court is explained in further detailed on page 51.
- Thirteen (13) external Protected Disclosures received, 26 closed and 43 were on hand on 01 April 2025.

8.1 Time Taken to Close Investigations

8.1.1 Criminal investigations

Criminal investigations

In the period 01 January to 01 April 2025, GSOC concluded 148 complaints that had been deemed admissible and investigated as a criminal matter at some stage of the process.

On average, GSOC investigators spent 174 days investigating the criminal part of the above complaints.

GSOC led disciplinary investigations

GSOC led investigations were undertaken by GSOC investigators and dealt with under Section 95 of the Act, 2005.

In the period 01 January to 01 April 2025, GSOC closed 27 complaints that had been deemed admissible and investigated as a GSOC led discipline matter at some stage of the process.

On average, GSOC investigators spent 295 days investigating the disciplinary aspects of the above complaints.

Unsupervised and supervised disciplinary investigations

Unsupervised disciplinary investigations were undertaken by An Garda Síochána Investigating Officers (GSIOS).

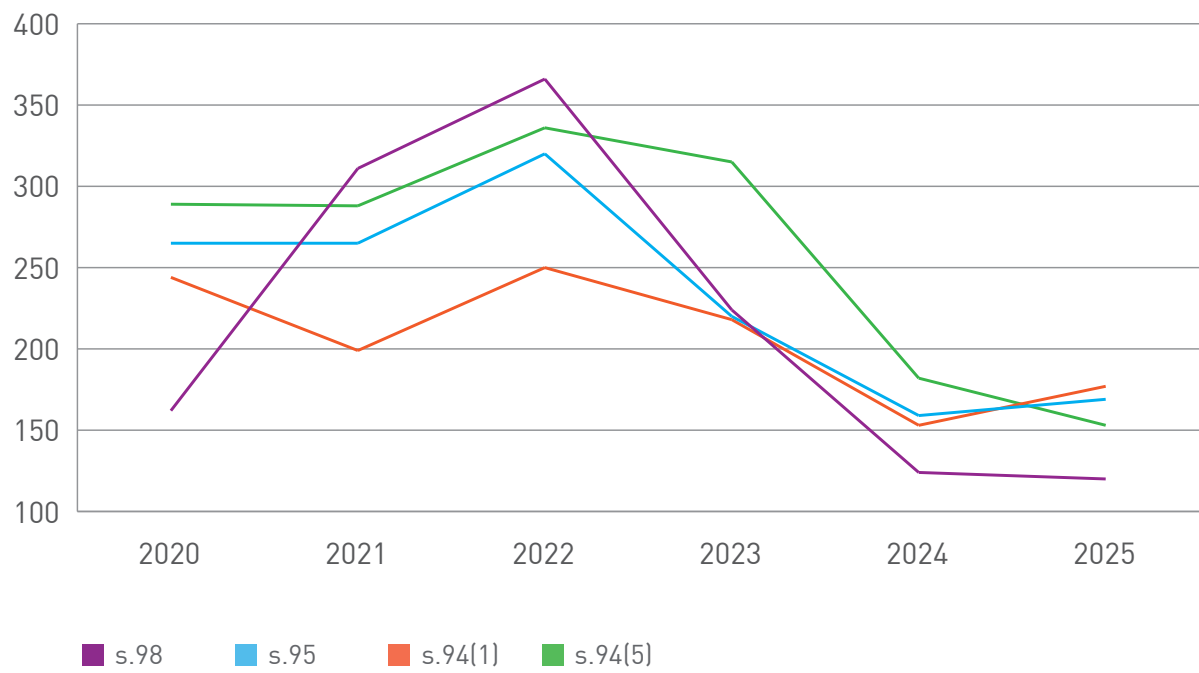
In the period 01 January to 01 April 2025, GSOC closed 143 complaints that had been deemed admissible and investigated as unsupervised discipline matters at some stage of the process.

On average, the unsupervised investigative process took 192 days.

Supervised disciplinary investigations were undertaken by An Garda Síochána Investigating Officers (GSIOS) supervised by GSOC Investigations Officers.

In the period 01 January to 01 April 2025, GSOC closed 11 complaints that had been deemed admissible and investigated as supervised discipline matters at some stage of the process.

On average, the supervised investigative process took 225 days.

Chart 4: Median Time in Phase

Investigations on Foot of Complaints: 2025 Case Studies

Investigations on foot of complaints: examples where sanctions resulted

CASE STUDY 1

The complainant was involved in a road traffic collision (RTC). The complainant stated that he had called An Garda Síochána multiple times and had written numerous emails to get an Abstract Garda Report for the RTC. The complainant was informed he would receive contact from An Garda Síochána however no contact was received. The complaint was admitted and forwarded for investigation in accordance with Section 94 (1) of the Act, 2005.

During the Section 94 (1) investigation, the Garda Síochána Investigating Officer (GSIO) found that the Garda member conducted minimal investigative steps in relation to the RTC and there was a delay in forwarding the Garda Abstract Report. The GSIO also found out that there was no victim contact entries recorded on The Pulse Investigation Report and no evidence was provided as to contact with the complainant.

The member was found “In Breach” of the allegations that a member of An Garda Síochána failed to investigate an RTC in a timely manner and has failed to produce an abstract report which was dealt by way of Reprimand. The GSIO also found that the member failed to respond to correspondence, telephone messages, and failed to provide any updates regarding the case which was dealt by way of a monetary fine.

CASE STUDY 2

A member of the public made a complaint to GSOC, alleging that the daughter of her landlord, and another woman, broke her gate and broke into her rented house to carry out an inspection without being authorised to do so.

The complainant alleged the women forcefully entered the house against her will, verbally abused her, and physically assaulted her, causing injuries. The complainant alleged that during the incident, Gardaí were impatient and rude to her. She alleged that a Garda member snatched her phone from her hand and threatened to take her phone if she didn't provide the password to it. The complainant also alleged that Gardaí broke her gate, entered her house against her will, and refused to take her report of assault.

The complaint was admitted and forwarded for investigation in accordance with Section 94 (1) of the Act, 2005. During the Section 94 (1) investigation, the Garda Síochána Investigating Officer (GSIO) found no evidence to substantiate the allegation that any Garda member snatched the complainant's phone and forced her to provide a password, while being rude to the complainant.

The GSIO obtained a video recording of the incident. On the video recording the members of An Garda Síochána present could be heard answering questions, giving advice to the complainant and explaining that it will be necessary to take a statement at the station. There was no evidence to substantiate that Gardaí refused to take the report of "assault, entering her house against her will and breaking her gate". To the contrary, two voluntary cautioned statements were made which were included in a comprehensive investigation file to the Director of Public Prosecutions. The investigation was subsequently discontinued in accordance with Section 93 (1) (c) of the Act, 2005.

CASE STUDY 3

The complainant made a report to a member of An Garda Síochána after they were threatened by a third party. A statement of complaint was obtained from the complainant and CCTV footage of the incident was also provided. The matter proceeded to court.

The complainant, however, alleged that it was subsequently thrown-out after the Investigating Garda member failed to share CCTV evidence with the defence. The complaint was admitted and forwarded for investigation in accordance with Section 94 (1) of the Act, 2005.

Following the investigation, the Garda Síochána Investigating Officer (GSIO) found the Garda member in breach of discipline in relation to one count of Neglect of Duty. This was dealt with by way of a Caution.

CASE STUDY 4

A member of the public made a complaint to GSOC alleging significant use of force was deployed by Gardaí at a street party in Dublin. The complainant alleged he witnessed Gardaí assault members of the public. The complaint was deemed admissible and a GSOC criminal investigation commenced.

The GSOC investigator sought CCTV, bodycam footage, documentation, and reports from members of An Garda Síochána. A statement of complaint was required to progress the complaint made by the member of the public. The complainant, however, would not engage with investigators despite numerous attempts to contact him.

All the materials received from An Garda Síochána were reviewed and no Garda wrongdoing could be identified. The bodycam footage and CCTV captured a large-scale event with a violent crowd. One arrest was captured in the footage which was conducted with reasonable force.

As the complainant failed to engage with GSOC, and a meaningful investigation could not be conducted without the complainant's co-operation, the case was closed under Section 93(1) of the Act, 2005.

CASE STUDY 5

A referral was made under Section 85 of the Act, 2005, following a Garda investigation conducted by a Superintendent. The investigation followed a TUSLA referral prompted by a member of the public, who alleged that her child was hit twice on the back by a Garda during a family visit.

The Garda investigation report was received and reviewed by the GSOC investigator. The complainant was interviewed, her child was interviewed by Specialist Garda Interviewers in a Specialist Interview Suite, and witness accounts sought. No CCTV or medical reports were available. The Garda member was interviewed under caution by GSOC investigators. The member refuted the allegations.

A file was sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions and they directed no prosecution as there was insufficient evidence to prove the allegations. There was no evidence of a breach of Garda Síochána (Discipline) Regulations 2007. As such, the case was closed.

CASE STUDY 6

The complainant alleged that while merging onto the M50 he observed a Garda vehicle travelling alongside him. He sounded his car horn to alert the Gardaí to his presence, as he believed the driver was using a handheld device and not paying due attention to the road. He also noted that a second Garda member was in the passenger seat and believed he could have operated the device instead.

The driver of the Garda vehicle subsequently activated the blue lights and sirens and signalled the complainant to pull over. A verbal exchange followed in which both parties asserted their views. The Gardaí stated they were responding to a call and, as such, were exempt under road traffic legislation from restrictions on handheld device use. They requested the complainant's driving licence and proof of insurance.

The complainant explained that the vehicle was a company car and presented a company insurance certificate. This was deemed insufficient by the Gardaí, who requested additional documentation confirming that he was a named driver on the policy. This led to a delay, and the complainant questioned how Gardaí had time to stop him if they were responding to an emergency call.

At the scheduled interview to record his statement, the complainant stated that he worked in roads policing in London. He expressed concern regarding the blanket exemption allowing Garda members to use handheld devices while driving, particularly when a passenger is present who could perform the task and allow the driver to give full attention to the road.

GSOC officers explained Section 3 of the Road Traffic Act 2006, which states that Subsection (1) does not apply to members of An Garda Síochána, ambulance services, or fire brigades who are acting in the course of their duties and holding a mobile phone in relation to that duty. Following this explanation, the complainant chose to withdraw his complaint.

9

INVESTIGATIONS ON REFERRAL UNDER S102 (DEATH OR SERIOUS HARM)

- DIVISIONAL H.Q.
- ▲ DISTRICT H.Q.
- SUB - DISTRICT
- SUB - STATION

9. INVESTIGATIONS ON REFERRAL UNDER S102 (DEATH OR SERIOUS HARM)

When is a Referral made to GSOC by An Garda Síochána?

Section 102 of the Act, 2005 provided for independent investigation of any matter that appeared to indicate that the conduct of a member of An Garda Síochána may have resulted in the death of, or serious harm to, a person. The provision formed an important element of the State's framework for the guarantee of compliance with its obligations under Article 2 and 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

The power to refer was delegated by the Garda Commissioner to superintendents whose responsibility it was to decide if it was appropriate to refer an incident, in order that it be investigated independently.

How GSOC Investigates matters under Section 102 of the Act, 2005

Once GSOC received a referral from An Garda Síochána, we investigated the matter.

We aimed to respond proportionately, according to the circumstances. It was sometimes the case that, following the initial examination, it was clear that there was no evidence of misbehaviour or criminality. In other cases, it was appropriate to undertake a full criminal investigation and refer the case to the DPP.

If there had been a fatality, there must be particular consideration given to the State's obligation under Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Article 2 states that everyone's right to life shall be protected by law. The European Convention on Human Rights Act, 2003 requires that Irish state bodies including An Garda Síochána, perform their functions "in a manner compatible with the State's obligations under the convention provisions".

To be compliant with Article 2, investigations into deaths following police contact should adhere to five principles developed by the European Court of Human Rights. These are:

- Independence
- Effectiveness
- Promptness
- Public scrutiny
- Family Involvement

These principles were at the heart of GSOC's approach to investigating fatalities.

Referrals Received in the period 01 January to 01 April 2025

GSOC received **9** referrals in the period 01 January to 01 April 2025. Compared with 37 in all of 2024, and 35 in 2023.

Seven (**7**) of the referrals received in the period 01 January to 01 April 2025 related to fatalities. A breakdown of the circumstances is below.

Chart 5: Circumstances of Referrals [Total Referrals Received: 9]

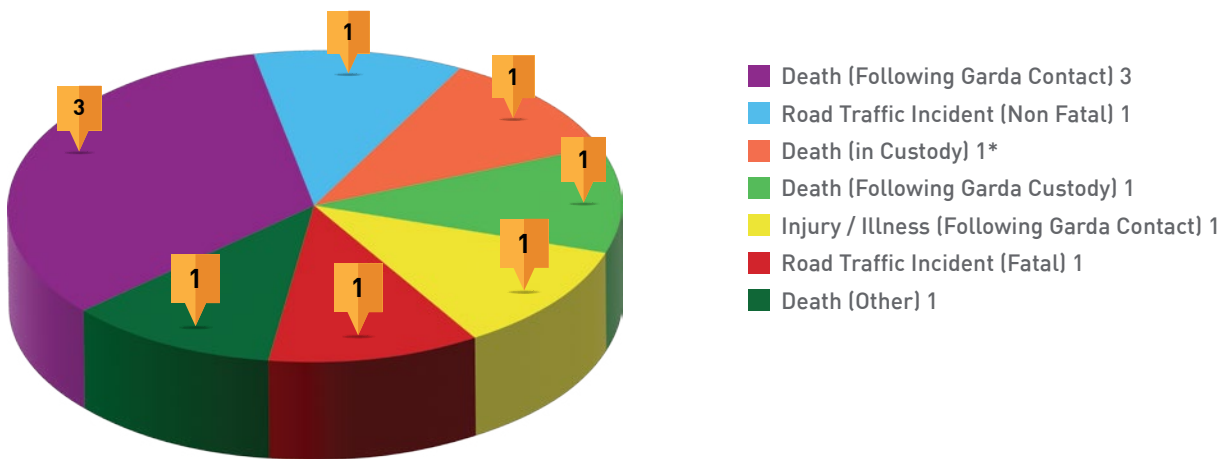
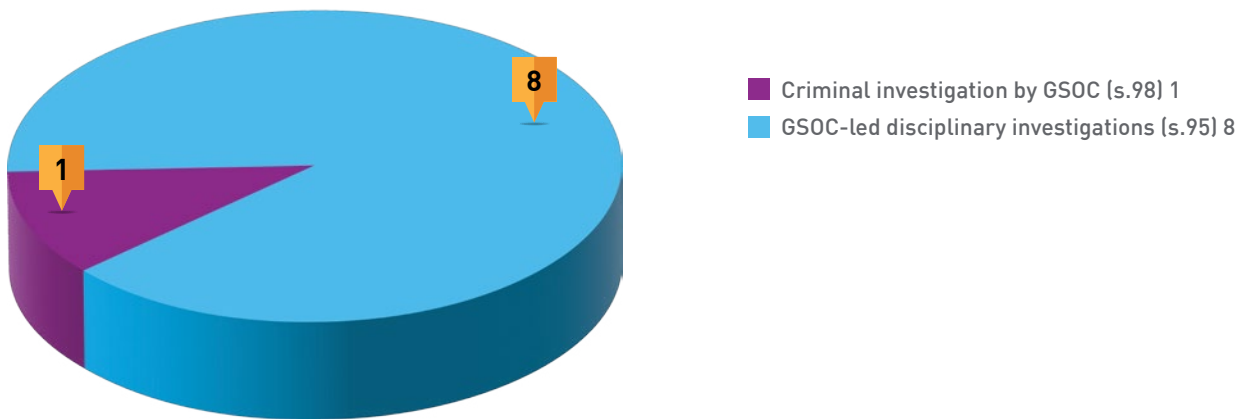


Chart 6: Investigation Types in Referrals (Total Referrals Received: 9)



*Note: Death in Custody (1) includes an incident where a person later died in hospital.

Investigations Following Referrals Completed in the period 01 January to 01 April 2025

A total of 13 investigations arising from referrals were closed in the period 01 January to 01 April 2025. These investigations were received in 2025 and in previous years.

Table F: Types of investigation and their outcomes (investigations in the period 01 January to 01 April 2025)³

Type of investigation and outcome	Cases
Further investigation not necessary or reasonably practicable	7
Reduction in pay – not exceeding two weeks	1
Garda Commissioner identified no breach of Discipline Regulations	2
Criminal investigation undertaken and concluded - referred to the DPP – No Prosecution	3
TOTAL	13

GSOC'S ROLE IN CORONER'S COURT

Coroners are independent judicial officers whose role is to determine the cause and circumstances of a death. Only a Coroner can order an inquest. Whenever the cause of someone's death is unknown, violent or unusual, there will be an inquest which is a legal enquiry into the death.

GSOC and the Coroner both played crucial roles in the investigation of deaths in Ireland, particularly when those deaths involved the Gardaí. When a person died in circumstances involving Gardaí and where there had been Garda contact prior to the death, GSOC was notified immediately and may have taken the lead in investigating the incident.

GSOC gathered evidence, interviewed witnesses, and assessed whether Garda actions were appropriate. The Coroner will typically hold an inquest into any death involving Gardaí and where there has been Garda contact prior to the death, particularly if the death occurred under suspicious or violent circumstances and will review evidence gathered by GSOC investigators during their investigation.

The Coroner determined the cause of death and an inquest can clarify the circumstances of a person's death. While GSOC investigated the actions of the Gardaí, the Coroner investigated the cause of death. These two bodies operated separately but may share information, and their findings could complement each other.

For inquest cases, GSOC Designated Officers prepared an investigation report for the Coroner. The content of the GSOC Designated Officer's report varied depending on the complexity of a case. The designated officer liaised with the Coroner early in the investigation and established what was required. Statements taken by GSOC during the investigation into the death were transcribed in the form of depositions to be read into evidence at the inquest.

As well as this, GSOC assisted the Coroner where necessary with the administration of the jury selection process. GSOC investigators were involved in 3 Coronial inquests in 2025 (01 Jan – 01 Apr).

Fiosrú will continue to assist the Coroners Court in its role in determining the circumstances of a person's death.

3. Referral closed in period 01 January to 01 April 2025 may have been received in 2025 or previous years.

10 GSOC'S LEGAL UNIT: ENGAGING WITH THE COURTS

10. GSOC'S LEGAL UNIT: ENGAGING WITH THE COURTS

Legal Activity Following Criminal Investigation

As outlined in previous sections, GSOC conducted criminal investigations on foot of both complaints and referrals, as well as in the context of public investigations.

Upon completion of a criminal investigation, where GSOC was of the opinion that the conduct under investigation constituted an offence, a file was prepared and sent to the Office of Public Prosecutions (DPP).

Further, where there had been a death in Garda custody, or where a person has died following interaction with a Garda member, and GSOC has carried out a criminal investigation, GSOC may have sent a file to the DPP, in order to comply with its obligations under Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). GSOC may have also sent a file to the DPP, where the Ombudsman Commission determined that it is in the public interest to do so.

Section 110 of the Act, 2005 also created the offence of providing false or misleading information to the Ombudsman Commission in relation to a complaint or investigation whether by a member of An Garda Síochána or a member of the public.

In all cases, it was for the DPP to determine whether or not to prosecute a case in court.

DPP directions to prosecute 2025

GSOC sent a total of 17 files to the DPP within the period 01 January to 01 April 2025.

GSOC received 23 directions from the DPP within this period.

Of these:-

- The DPP directed the prosecution of 2 offences arising from investigations submitted to the DPP in 2024 - one related to assault⁴ and one related to careless driving.⁵
- The DPP directed no prosecution in relation to 21 investigations. This statistic relates to 15 files that were submitted by GSOC in 2024 and 6 files that were submitted in 2025.

On 1st April, there was 23 cases awaiting direction from the DPP.

4. One count of Assault, contrary to Section 2 of the Non Fatal Offences Against the Person Act, 1997 (summary charge only) in respect of one Garda member.

5. One count of careless driving causing serious bodily harm contrary to Section 52(2)(a) of the Road Traffic Act 1961, in respect of one Garda member.

Criminal Cases decided in court within the period 01 January to 01 April 2025

There were 5 cases concluded before the courts.

The following occurred in each case:

District Court Appeal:

1. An appeal against conviction for two offences (an assault contrary to section 2 of the Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act and an offence of perverting the course of justice where the accused received 80 hours community service in lieu of 2 months imprisonment) was withdrawn by the accused.

District Court matters against Garda members:

1. In two cases the defendants were acquitted by the relevant Judge following a full hearing of the evidence. Both cases involved prosecutions for assault. One for an assault contrary to section 2 of the Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act, 1997 and the other for an offence of assault causing harm contrary to section 3 of the Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act, 1997.
2. In another case the matter was struck out by the Judge following the entry of a guilty plea by the defendant. The accused was charged with possession of a controlled drug contrary to Section 3 of the Misuse of Drugs Act, 1977. The defendant resigned from AGS and made a voluntary contribution of €500 to a drug rehabilitation centre.

District Court matters against civilian complainants:

1. The prosecution of a civilian complainant for an offence of providing false or misleading information contrary to Section 110 of the Act, 2005 was dismissed by the Court where a key prosecution witness was on long term sick leave with no return date available and the prosecution could not proceed without the witness.

Cases pending before courts on 01 April 2025

Garda members are facing charges before the courts in **21** separate investigations and the range of offences include:

- Assault, contrary to section 2 of the Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act, 1997;
- Assault Causing Harm, contrary to section 3 of the Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act, 1997;
- Criminal Damage, contrary to section 2(1) of the Criminal Damage Act, 1991;
- False Imprisonment, contrary to section 15 of the Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act, 1997;
- Careless Driving causing serious bodily harm, contrary to section 52 of the Road Traffic Act, 1961;
- Dangerous Driving, contrary to section 53 of the Road Traffic Act, 1961;
- Harassment, contrary to section 10 of the Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act, 1997;
- Endangerment, contrary to section 13 of the Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act, 1997.

Non-Party Disclosure

GSOC Legal Services Unit also coordinated the Non-Party Disclosure (NPD) of evidence in criminal proceedings, in conjunction with the Operations Directorate.

Within the period 01 January to 01 April 2025

Nineteen (19) files regarding requests for non-party disclosure were prepared and issued to the DPP. GSOC also received 7 non-party disclosure privilege review requests from the DPP.

Note: A summary offence is an offence which can only be dealt with by a judge sitting without a jury in the District Court.

Note: A summary disposal is when the case can be heard in either the District or Circuit Court, but the DPP instructs that the matter should be heard in the District Court. The Judge then hears a summary of the facts and if the Judge agrees with the DPP, the matter will remain in the District Court.

11 INVESTIGATIONS IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

11. INVESTIGATIONS IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

The Garda Síochána Act, 2005, provided for GSOC to undertake investigations in the public interest. Such investigations could commence a number of ways.

GSOC-initiated public interest investigations (Section 102(4), of the Act, 2005)

Misconduct by a Garda or Gardaí came to the attention of GSOC outside of the usual complaints or referrals processes. Such matters could come to the attention of GSOC, for example, via media reports, or via details contained in an otherwise inadmissible complaint. On such occasions, GSOC had the power to commence an investigation in the public interest where it appeared that the conduct of a member of An Garda Síochána may have committed an offence, or that their behaviour may justify disciplinary proceedings.

Ministerial request to undertake public interest investigations (Section 102 (5) of the Act, 2005)

The Minister for Justice could refer any matter to GSOC concerning the conduct of a member of An Garda Síochána, if it appears that a member of the Garda Síochána may have committed an offence or behaved in a manner that would justify disciplinary proceedings. GSOC is legally obliged to investigate such referrals. This includes referrals made to GSOC under the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) established by the Minister in 2014. A total of 21 referrals were received by the Minister between 2015 and 2016 and the remaining two investigations were closed in 2023. In the period covered by this report, GSOC did not receive any referrals from the Minister.

Public Interest Investigations on request of Policing Authority or Minister (Section 102 (7) of the Act, 2005)

Both the Policing Authority and the Minister could refer a matter to GSOC to consider whether it should investigate it in the public interest.

Public Interest Investigations Commenced and Closed in the period 01 January to 01 April 2025

Three **(3)** Public Interest Investigations were opened in 2025 while **2** were closed. The closed investigations included investigations which commenced in previous years.

There were no requests made to GSOC to investigate a matter in the public interest under Section 102(5). There were no public interest investigations opened following a referral from the Minister for Justice under Section 102(7) in this reporting period.

12. PROTECTED DISCLOSURES

Under the Protected Disclosures Act, 2014 and associated amendment legislation, workers of the Garda Síochána, including Garda members, Garda staff and Garda Reserve could confidentially disclose allegations of wrongdoing within the Garda Síochána to GSOC.

GSOC had a dedicated Protected Disclosures Unit (PDU) to handle such protected disclosures. Under Section 22 of the Act, each public body was required to publish an annual report outlining the number of protected disclosures received in the preceding year and the action taken.

GSOC, as Prescribed Persons under section 7 of the Act, could receive disclosures from workers of An Garda Síochána including serving and former Garda members, Garda Civilian staff, Garda Reserve, Garda trainees and contractors of An Garda Síochána, in addition to transmissions of reports of wrong doing from the Office of the Protected Disclosures Commissioner under section 10 of the Act and from other Prescribed Persons under section 7 (b)(vi) of the Act. GSOC established external reporting channels in accordance with the Act. Information, including how a report of wrongdoing, could be made to the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission as Prescribed Persons was provided on the GSOC website for members off Garda personnel.

Public Interest Consideration

GSOC, having considered the facts of a disclosure in accordance with section 5(3) (a) to (i) of the Act, relevant wrongdoing, also considered if launching an investigation was in the Public Interest or not. This consideration applied to each disclosure made to GSOC. This was a unique statutory requirement imposed on GSOC stemming from the Act, 2005.

Protected Disclosure Unit Caseload (01 January to 01 April 2025)

The below table details the caseload of protected disclosures commenced and progressed by the Unit in the period 01 January to 01 April 2025.

Table G: GSOC Protected Disclosures Caseload 2025 (01 January to 01 April 2025)

Matters on Hand on 02/04/2025	
Matters remaining on hand on 31/12/2024 and carried into 01/01/2025	56
Reports received 01/01/2025 - 01/04/2025	13
Matters closed 01/01/2025 - 01/04/2025	26
Matters remaining on hand on 02/04/2025	43
Reports Received and Requiring Assessment (01 January to 01 April 2025)	
Reports Received Through External Reporting Channels	11
Transmissions of Reports from Office of the Protected Disclosures Commissioner	2
Transmissions of Reports from other Prescribed Persons	0
Total Number of Reports for Assessment (01 January to 01 April 2025)	13

Policing, Security & Community Safety Act, 2024

In accordance with section 206 of the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act, 2024 the Police Ombudsman shall consider any disclosure of relevant wrongdoing relating to An Garda Síochána that is made to her by a worker of An Garda Síochána under section 7 of the Protected Disclosures Act, 2104 (as amended). The Police Ombudsman shall also consider any disclosure transmitted to her by the Protected Disclosures Commissioner, or by another prescribed person. An assessment is carried out by the Fiosrú Protected Disclosures Unit of all disclosures received before they are submitted to the Police Ombudsman. The Police Ombudsman may, if it appears to her to be in the public interest, commence an investigation into a disclosure.

13. INFORMATION REQUESTS

GSOC’s Data Protection and Freedom of Information (FOI) Unit dealt with the majority of requests for information received by GSOC every year. Within the Unit, there was a dedicated team of staff who deal with requests made under the Data Protection Act, 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act, 2014.

This team was responsible for ensuring these requests were responded to within the required time limits, promoting awareness of data protection, FOI and privacy matters within GSOC, providing data protection advice to staff and ensuring that GSOC adhered to its statutory obligations under the legislation.

Thirteen (13) FOI requests were received within the period 01 January to 01 April 2025. There were forty-nine (49) FOI requests received in 2024, and sixty (60) in 2023. Most requests related to information held in GSOC case files. As records contained within an investigation or complaint files (that is, related to an examination or investigation under Part 4 of the Act, 2005) were not covered by the FOI Act, these requests were refused.

The remaining FOI requests related to complaint statistics and administrative statistics. GSOC received no requests for internal reviews in the period 01 January to 01 April 2025 into decisions relating to the refusal to provide access to records contained in investigation or complaint files.

In the period 01 January to 01 April 2025 there was one (1) appeal made to the Office of the Information Commissioner (OIC).

The number of data access requests received within the period 01 January to 01 April 2025 was twenty-five (25). The majority of these requests were from complainants who were seeking access to their personal data held on GSOC complaint and investigation files. This involved the review and processing of over sixty (60) separate files.

In the period 01 January to 01 April 2025, the Data Protection Unit dealt with twelve (12) requests for advice on data protection matters from staff across GSOC business units. Most of the issues raised concerned disclosure of information to third parties, advice on policy and procedures and advice sought in relation to Data Sharing Agreements.

The GSOC Secretariat Unit responded to three (3) information requests from the Department of Justice, eighteen (18) submissions in response to parliamentary questions and one (1) representation from members of the House of the Oireachtas.

Requests for information from journalists, outside of the FOI process, were dealt with by GSOC’s Communications Unit which provided a 24-hour a day on call service. The Unit responded to 17 queries received from the media in the period 01 January to 01 April 2025.

Table H: Information Requests Processed within the period 01 January to 01 April 2025

Subject	Number
Requests under the Freedom of Information Act, 2014	13
Requests under the Data Protection Act, 2018	12
Information Requests from the Dept of Justice	3
Submissions in response to Parliamentary Questions	18
Representations from members of the Oireachtas	1
Media Enquiries	17

14. CHILD PROTECTION

GSOC had legal obligations in relation to child protection under both the Children First Act, 2015, and the Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children.

Staff may have become aware of situations in which children may have been harmed or may be at risk of being harmed during the course of their work taking complaints from members of the public, or conducting investigations.

Under the Children First Act, certain GSOC staff, namely Designated Officers (investigators and Child Protection Team members) were mandated persons.

As a mandated person, the Designated Officer was obliged to make referral to Tusla if he or she knew, believed or reasonably suspected that a child had been harmed, is being harmed or was at risk of being harmed, or if a child disclosed harm. The obligation to refer also arose if a child disclosed a belief that they were at risk of harm.

GSOC Designated Officers made **16** mandatory referrals to Tusla within the period 01 January to 01 April 2025. In addition, GSOC made **13** non-mandatory referrals within the period 01 January to 01 April 2025. These related to matters which came to the attention of GSOC staff in the course of their work, but not in the course of a criminal investigation.

Non-mandated persons were required to notify GSOC's Designated Liaison Persons of issues that may have related to child protection and/or welfare while fulfilling their official duties through raising alerts on the organisation's case management system.

A total of **119** such Child Protection alerts were made on the case management system within the period 01 January to 01 April 2025. These alerts were reviewed by the Designated Liaison Persons. Trained members of staff decided whether or not to make a referral to Tusla. During the same period, **130** decisions not to refer were made.

GSOC's obligations to child protection and welfare under the Child Care Act and Children First will continue as we transition to Fiosrú.

Key Figures

119 NEW CHILD
PROTECTION
ALERTS

NON-
MANDATORY
REFERRALS

13

MANDATORY
REFERRALS

16

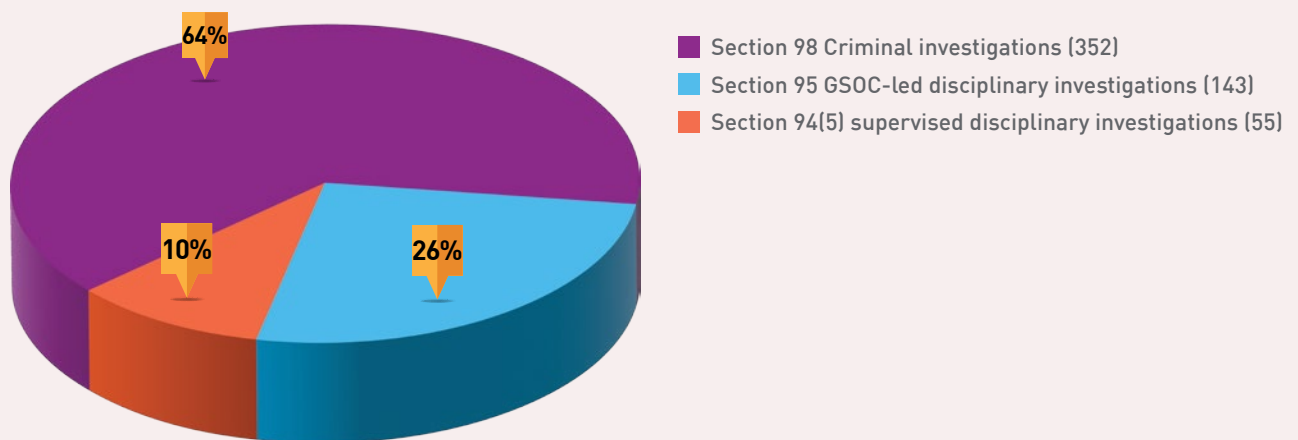
130

DECISIONS
NOT TO
REFER

APPENDIX 1: GSOC INVESTIGATIONS ON-HAND WITHIN THE PERIOD 01 JANUARY TO 01 APRIL 2025

In the period 01 January to 01 April 2025, the GSOC Investigations Unit had a total of 550 investigations ongoing.

Chart 7



In addition to these investigations, **210 unsupervised disciplinary investigations by An Garda Síochána**, arising from complaints to GSOC, were ongoing. A further 8 such cases, while complete, were under review by GSOC, at the request of the complainant.

Approximately 152 further cases were in various other 'phases' of the case management process.

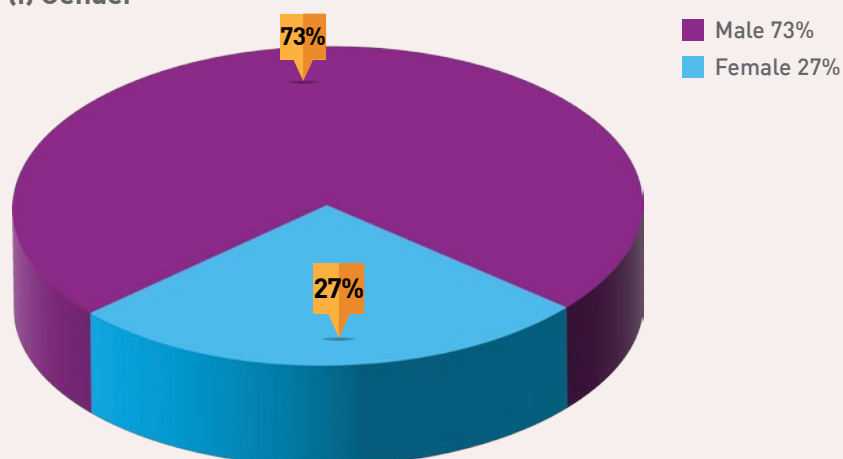
APPENDIX 2: PROFILE OF COMPLAINANTS IN THE PERIOD 01 JANUARY TO 01 APRIL 2025

On submission of a complaint to GSOC, complainants were invited to complete an anonymous survey on a voluntary basis in order to provide GSOC demographic data on those who seek our services.

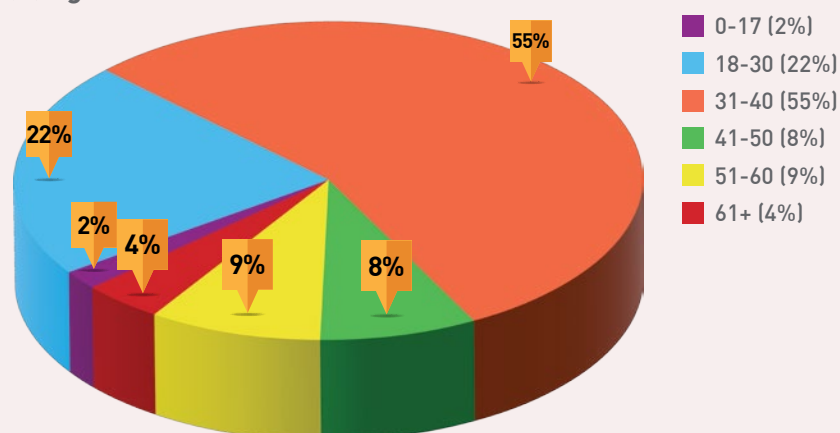
In the period 01 January to 01 April 2025, 113 complainants responded to the survey. This represents a response rate of approximately 33%.

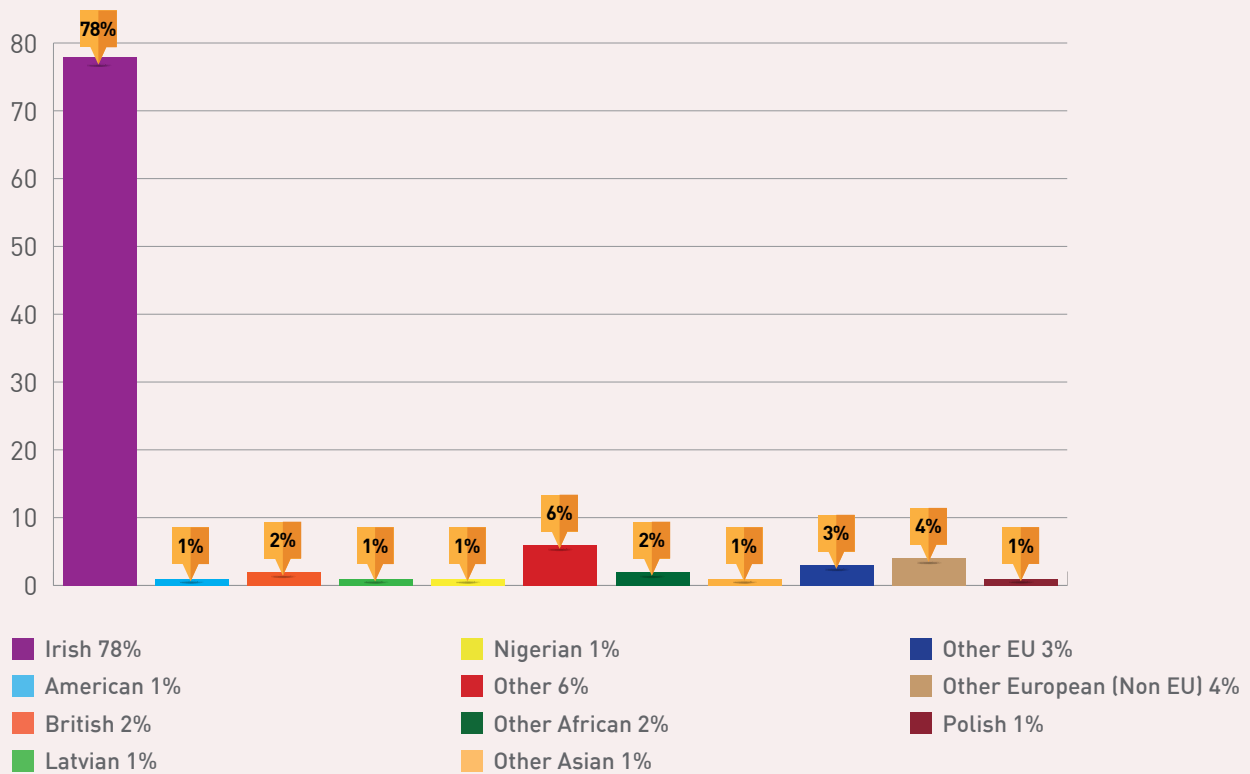
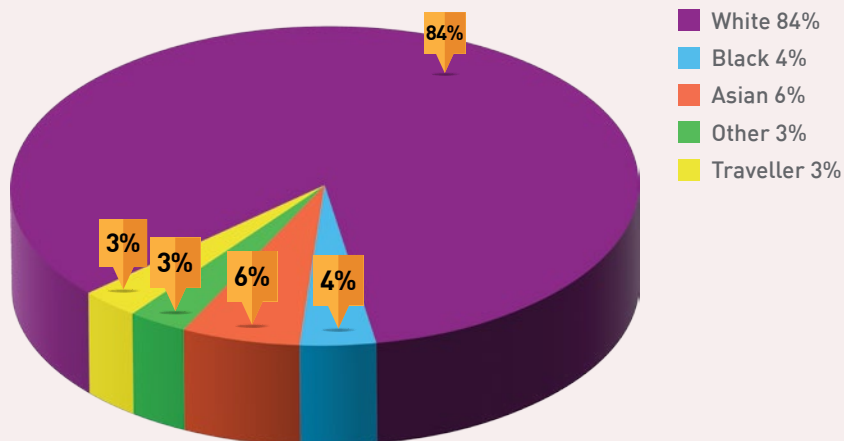
The charts below outline the profile of complaints who answered the survey, across a number of demographic categories.

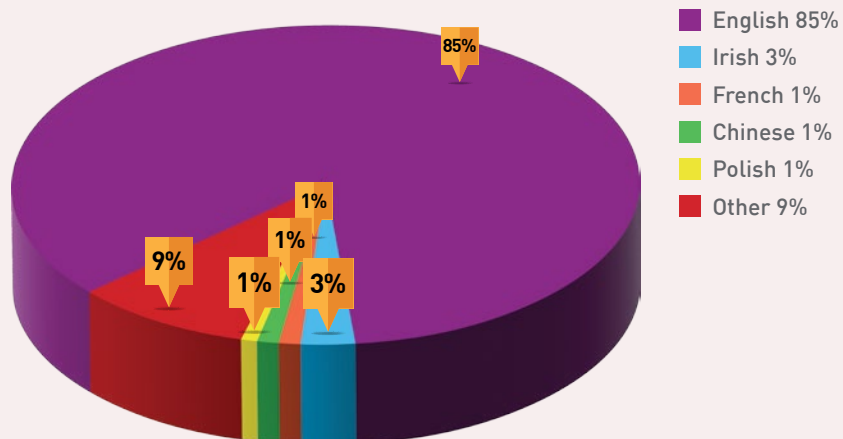
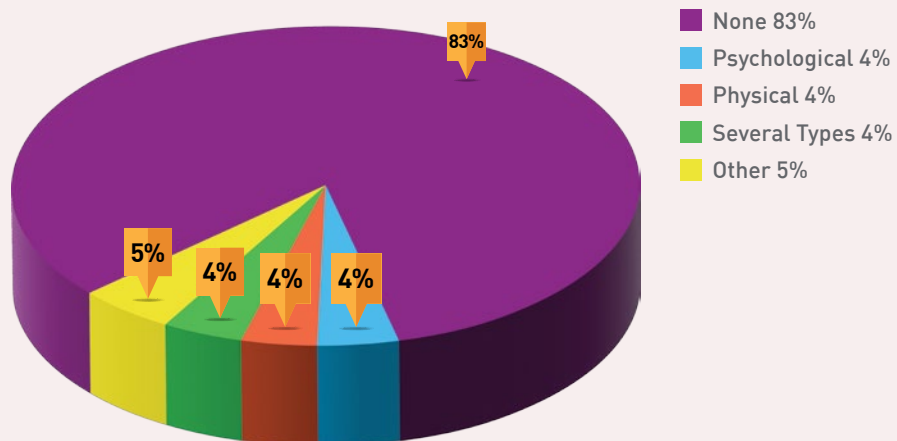
(i) Gender

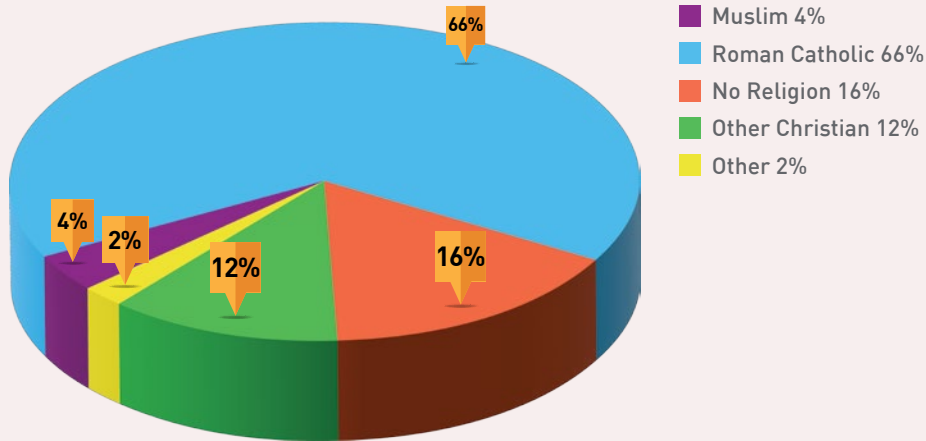
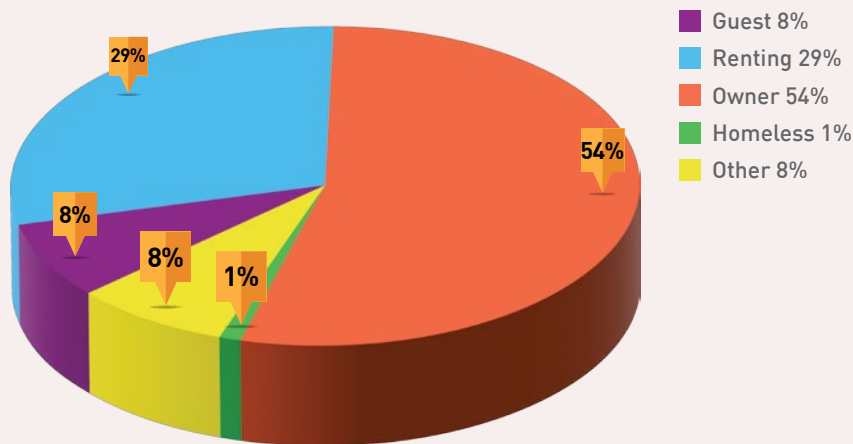
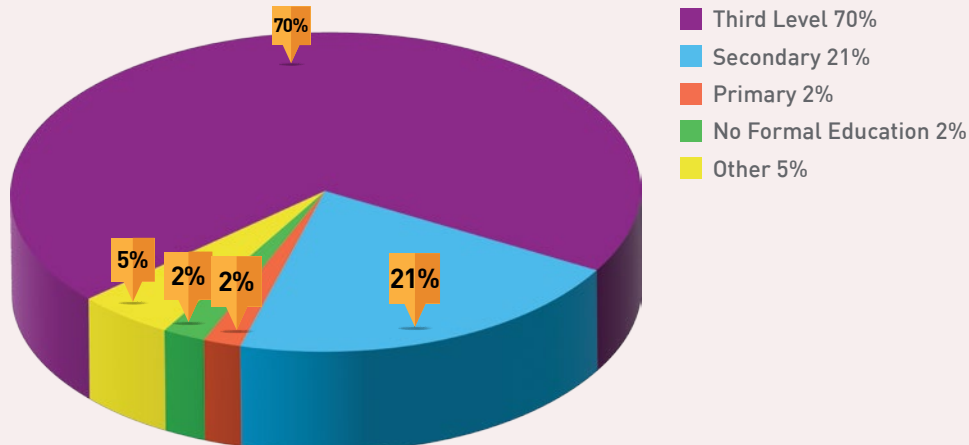


(ii) Age



(iii) Origin or nationality**(iv) Ethnicity**

(v) Language**(vi) Disability**

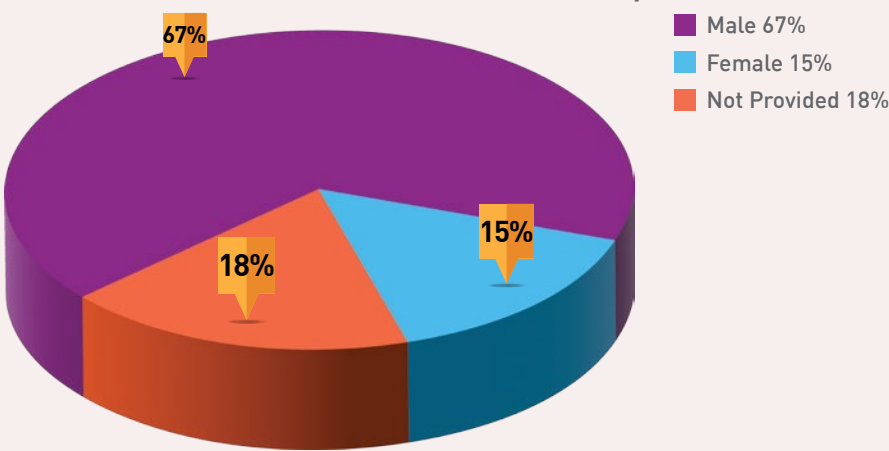
(vii) Religion**(viii) Housing status⁶****(ix) Educational attainment**

6. In this survey complainants were asked to identify as one of the following options. Guests taken to mean non home owner and non home renter.

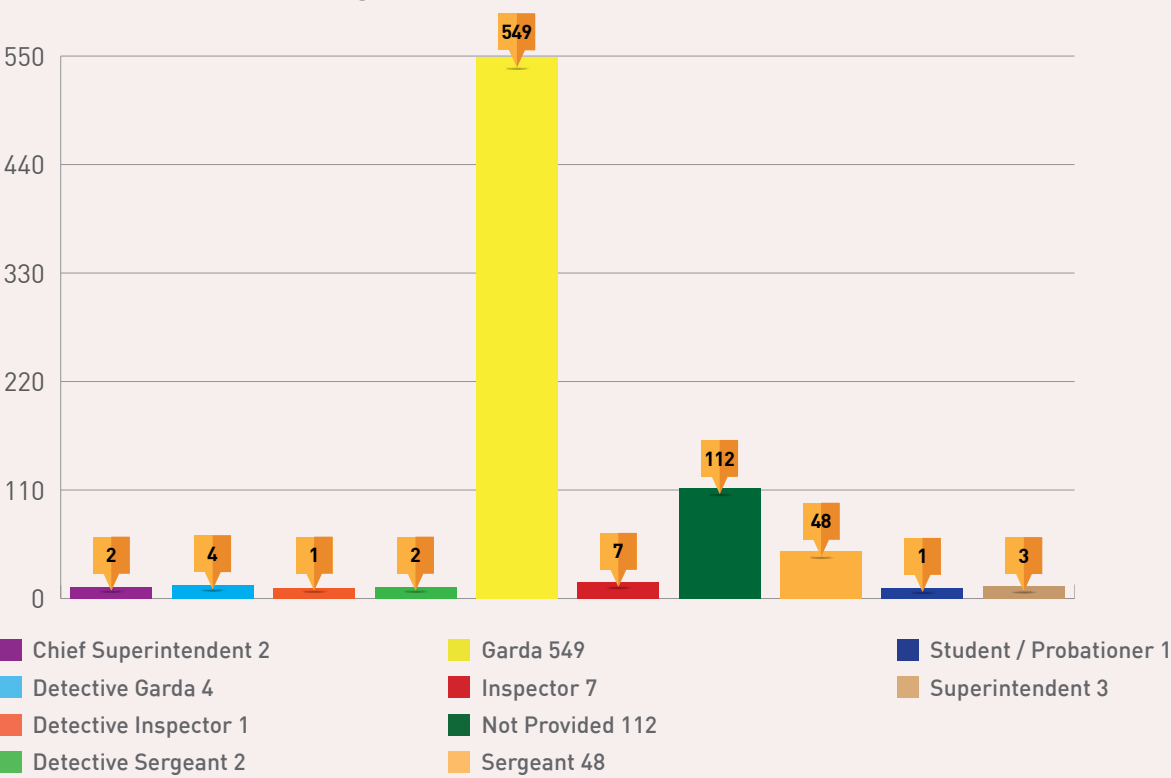
APPENDIX 3: GENDER AND RANK OF GARDAÍ SUBJECT TO COMPLAINTS IN THE PERIOD 01 JANUARY TO 01 APRIL 2025

The following charts show the breakdown of gender and rank of Gardaí subject of complaints received in the period 01 January to 01 April 2025 where this information is known. Both pie charts account for the admitted allegations in the period 01 January to 01 April 2025.

(i) Gender of members of An Garda Síochána in complaints admitted in the period 01 January to 01 April 2025



(ii) Rank of members in allegations admitted in 2024



APPENDIX 4: GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF COMPLAINTS AND ALLEGATIONS

The table shows the geographical distribution of all complaints made concerning Gardaí in the period 01 January to 01 April 2025. They show the number of complaints that have been determined to be admissible, inadmissible, and those on which admissibility decisions had not yet been made by 01 April 2025. Excluded are 8 complaints for which Garda divisions had not yet been established by the end of the first quarter.

The greatest number of allegations recorded against Gardaí were in the Dublin Metropolitan Region (DMR). This would be expected given the concentration of the population and policing activity in the capital. Within the DMR, the highest number came from DMR South Central, with **36** complaints and DMR West, with **24** complaints. In 2024, DMR NORTH and DMR West had the highest number of allegations.

Outside the DMR, Meath / Westmeath (**21**) and Louth / Cavan / Monaghan (**21**) respectively were the divisions with the highest number of complaints against Gardaí in 2025. In 2024, Meath / Westmeath and Galway had the highest number of allegations outside the DMR.

Table I: Complaints by Garda division (excluding the Dublin Metropolitan Region)

Garda Division:	Number of Complaints:	Garda Members
Clare / Tipperary	11	14
Cork City	16	17
Cork County	11	8
Donegal	12	18
Galway	16	16
Kerry	5	6
Kildare	7	4
Kilkenny / Carlow	12	13
Laois / Offaly	8	13
Limerick	10	8
Louth / Cavan / Monaghan	21	28
Mayo / Roscommon / Longford	10	12
Meath / Westmeath	21	45
Sligo / Leitrim	7	11
Waterford	7	11
Wexford / Wicklow	20	27

Table J: Complaints by Garda division - Dublin Metropolitan Region (DMR)

Garda Division:	Number of Complaints:	Garda Members:
D.M.R East	10	15
D.M.R North	22	22
D.M.R North Central	21	24
D.M.R South	16	16
D.M.R South Central	36	46
D.M.R West	24	51
D.M.R Traffic	3	3
Garda Headquarters Phoenix Park	16	8
Harcourt Square	2	1

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Term	Meaning
The Act	The Garda Síochána Act, 2005, as amended, is the principal act governing the functioning of GSOC. This can be seen at: http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2005/act/20/enacted/en/print
Admissibility	All complaints are assessed against the criteria listed in section 87 of the Act to decide whether they can legally be admitted for investigation or not.
Advice	This is a sanction, which may be applied by the Garda Commissioner, for breach of the Discipline Regulations – it can be formal or informal.
Allegation	Each complaint is broken down into one or more allegations, which are individual behaviours being complained about. For example, if a person said that a Garda pushed them and used bad language, this is one complaint with two separate allegations.
Article 2	Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) states that everyone's right to life will be protected by law.
Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction made to GSOC by a member of the public, about the conduct of an individual member of An Garda Síochána. A complaint may contain one or more allegations against one or more Gardaí. Each allegation against each Garda is assessed individually for admissibility.
Council of Europe's "Venice Principles"	The 'Principles on the Protection and Promotion of the Ombudsman Institution', adopted by the Council of Europe's Venice Commission in March 2019. The Venice Commission is the Council of Europe's Commission for Democracy through Law providing legal advice to its Member States. The 25 Venice Principles represent the first independent set of international standards for Ombudsman institutions.
Custody Regulations	Criminal Justice Act, 1984 (Treatment of persons in Custody in Garda Síochána Stations) Regulations, 1987 – regulations related to the detention of people in Garda Stations. It can be seen at http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1987/si/119/made/en/print
Discipline Regulations	The Garda Síochána (Discipline) Regulations 2007, as amended. These can be seen at: http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2007/si/214/made/en/print
Disciplinary Action	Sanction which may be applied by the Garda Commissioner following an investigation. There are two levels of action provided for by the Discipline Regulations, relating to less serious breaches and serious breaches of discipline respectively.
Disciplinary Proceedings	These were proceedings that may be instituted by the Garda Síochána following a disciplinary investigation. Recommending the institution of such proceedings is the limit of GSOC jurisdiction. Any sanction arising is a matter for the Garda Commissioner.
DMR	Dublin Metropolitan Region

DO	Designated Officer
DPP	Director of Public Prosecutions
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
FRTC	Fatal Road Traffic Collision
GSIO	Garda Síochána Investigating Officer
GSOC	Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission
IO	Investigations Officer
Local Intervention	The local intervention process was aimed at resolving certain service-level types of complaints against members of An Garda Síochána at a local level without the need for the matter to enter a formal complaints process. The process entailed nominated Garda inspectors contacting the person making the complaint, establishing what the issues are, and attempting to resolve matters to the complainant's satisfaction.
Median	When numbers are listed in value order, the median value is the number at the midpoint of the list, such that there is an equal probability of falling above or below it.
Member in charge	The member of An Garda Síochána who is designated as being responsible for overseeing the application of the Custody Regulations, in relation to people in custody in the Garda station. This can be a member of any rank. The full legal definition and list of duties of a member in charge can be seen in sections 4 and 5 of the Custody Regulations (see above).
Ombudsman Commission	The three Commissioners of the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission.
Out of time	A complaint made more than twelve months after the incident being complained of.
PDA	Protected Disclosure Act, 2014
PD/PDU	Protected Disclosures/Protected Disclosures Unit.
PSCS Act	The Policing, Security and Community Safety Act was enacted in February 2024. The text of the Bill can be found on www.irishstatutebook.ie .
Restorative justice	Restorative justice occurs when both the victim of a crime and the offender agree to communicate in relation to what occurred. This is a voluntary process and both parties must agree to it. The communication gives the victim the opportunity to relay to the offender the impact that the crime had on them and provides an opportunity for the offender to acknowledge the wrong they committed and take responsibility for their actions. A report is prepared by an independent person as to the outcome of the communication. This report is then put before the Court.
Summary disposal	Summary disposal is when the case can be heard in either the District or Circuit Court but the DPP instructs that the matter should be heard in the District Court. The Judge then hears a summary of the facts and if the Judge agrees with the DPP the matter will remain in the District Court.



**Garda
Ombudsman**
INQUIRY INDEPENDENCE IMPARTIALITY

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