



Fiosrú

Oifig an
Ombudsman
Póilíneachta

Office of
the Police
Ombudsman

Strategy Statement

2026-2028



Contents

Fiosrú is an Irish word meaning inquiry.
Our logo combines three themes of visual inspiration:



An Iris:
Our observant
position and
objective
perspective



A compass:
Our obligation to
guide communities
and help navigate
situations



A shining light:
Our commitment
to create clarity,
certainty, trust and
confidence



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Foreword by Police Ombudsman



I am pleased to present Fiosrú's first strategy statement which will guide our work for three years from 1 January 2026.

As a new public body, the development of our first strategy comes at an interesting juncture as we complete the transition from the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission to Fiosrú - Office of the Police Ombudsman. Fiosrú has new and enhanced legal powers and processes and a new organisational governance structure.

With these changes and enhanced independence, we are keen to use this opportunity to take a fresh and considered approach to our role in policing oversight. We aim to do so in ways that respect and protect the rights and dignity of the public we serve and An Garda Síochána. This ambition flows through our new strategy.

This three-year strategy is the result of careful consideration, in-depth analysis, and valuable input from staff and stakeholders. We also undertook a statutory public consultation which provided us with further valuable insights on our proposed priorities. We are truly grateful to everyone who contributed their time

and insights and we have listened carefully to what they have had to say.

For the next three years, this strategy will direct our efforts, inform our decisions, influence our culture and support us in monitoring progress towards our three strategic objectives of: 1) improving public understanding of Fiosrú's role; 2) dealing with complaints in a timely, efficient, effective and fair manner; and 3) promoting confidence in the processes for resolving complaints and in our investigations.

As Police Ombudsman, I will place particular emphasis on upholding human rights and I am keen to share insights from data and research, including through the publication of systemic recommendations, to support and enable An Garda Síochána to deliver high standards of policing in this country.

Emily Logan
Police Ombudsman

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Introduction

Who we are

Fiosrú is the Office of the Police Ombudsman in Ireland and was established in law under the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024. The Police Ombudsman, Emily Logan, is independent in the performance of her functions and reports directly to the Oireachtas.

The Police Ombudsman was appointed on 2 April 2025 by President Michael D. Higgins and is supported by the Deputy Police Ombudsman, Brian Doherty and Fiosrú's Chief Executive Officer, Ms Sheila McClelland.

An ombudsman is an independent office holder that investigates complaints from the public about public authorities.

Fiosrú provides independent oversight of policing through the investigation of complaints made by the public concerning acts or omissions by gardaí. We also investigate incidents involving gardaí that may have resulted in the death or serious harm of any person.

Independent means that the oversight role is provided by people who are not part of An Garda Síochána. The goal is to make sure the police act fairly, follow the law, and are held accountable if they do something wrong.

Having a Police Ombudsman supports the building of trust between the Garda and society by ensuring transparency, fairness, and accountability.

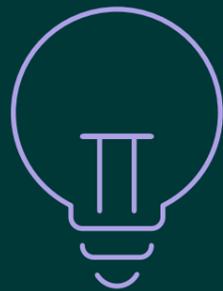
What has changed

Fiosrú was established in 2025 as part of wider statutory changes to policing and community safety in Ireland.

The new policing oversight structure delivered by Fiosrú is:

- **Simpler and clearer** - led by a single Police Ombudsman supported by a Deputy Police Ombudsman and Chief Executive Officer;
- **Stronger** - with greater powers to compel cooperation, access evidence, and initiate investigations without a complaint having been made;
- **Broader** - with a remit that extends beyond individual complaints to include examination of systemic issues in policing;
- **More independent** - directly accountable to the Oireachtas, with a focus on greater transparency and building public trust and confidence;
- **More accessible** - designed to make it easier for the public, including those who may be vulnerable and experiencing disadvantage, to bring forward complaints;
- **Based on a human rights approach** - ensuring that respecting and protecting human rights is at the core of everything that we do.

Our Vision, Mission and Values



Our Vision

Independent, accessible and effective policing oversight that has the trust and confidence of the public, the Oireachtas and the Gardaí.

Our Mission

To deliver independent policing oversight, that is accessible to all and has the confidence of the public, through quality investigations that are timely, efficient, effective and fair.



Our Values

Independence

We will deliver our functions in a manner that is free from the influence of others. We will be independent in our evidence gathering, independent in our analysis of that evidence, independent in our evidence-led decision making and independent in our reporting.



Impartiality

We will act in a balanced, unbiased manner in undertaking our statutory functions.

Integrity

We will act honestly, ethically, fairly and will adhere to the highest standards of behaviour in accordance with our Code of Ethics and the Civil Service Code of Standards of Behaviour.

Trusted

We will build confidence in our work through high professional standards and the high quality of our work.



Our Statutory Functions

The main statutory functions of the Police Ombudsman are as follows:

The Police Ombudsman receives and investigates:

- Complaints from members of the public;
- Referrals by the Garda Commissioner relating to incidents where the conduct of a garda member may have resulted in the death or serious harm of a person. These types of referrals also include circumstances where the person may have been the victim either of a sexual offence or an abuse of power for a sexual purpose;
- Referrals and notifications from the Garda Commissioner of incidents of concern in relation to Garda members;
- Protected disclosures.

The Police Ombudsman also:

- Engages with An Garda Síochána to promote public understanding of processes in place for the resolution of complaints by An Garda Síochána;
- Reports the results of investigations undertaken including making recommendations to the Garda Commissioner, the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, or the Policing and Community Safety Authority;
- Conducts research and analysis to identify trends and patterns arising from complaints and investigations.

The full list of Fiosrú’s statutory functions are contained in section 173 of the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024.

Timely, efficient, effective and in accordance with fair procedures

The Police Ombudsman shall ensure that her functions are performed in a timely, efficient and effective manner and in accordance with fair procedures.

A timely investigation:

- Is initiated promptly upon receipt of a complaint or referral;
- Is conducted with momentum, and with no unnecessary delay;
- Ensures prompt preservation and collection of evidence;
- Ensures witnesses are interviewed at the earliest opportunity;
- Provides frequent, meaningful updates to parties;
- Results in the submission of a high-quality report to the relevant authority without delay.

An efficient investigation:

- Has a clear investigative strategy from the outset;
- Remains focused on gathering the best available evidence in compliance with proper procedures;
- Utilises appropriate resources including personnel, technology, forensics and peer review;
- Ensures ongoing quality communication with all parties;
- Results in accurate recording and presentation of the facts established.

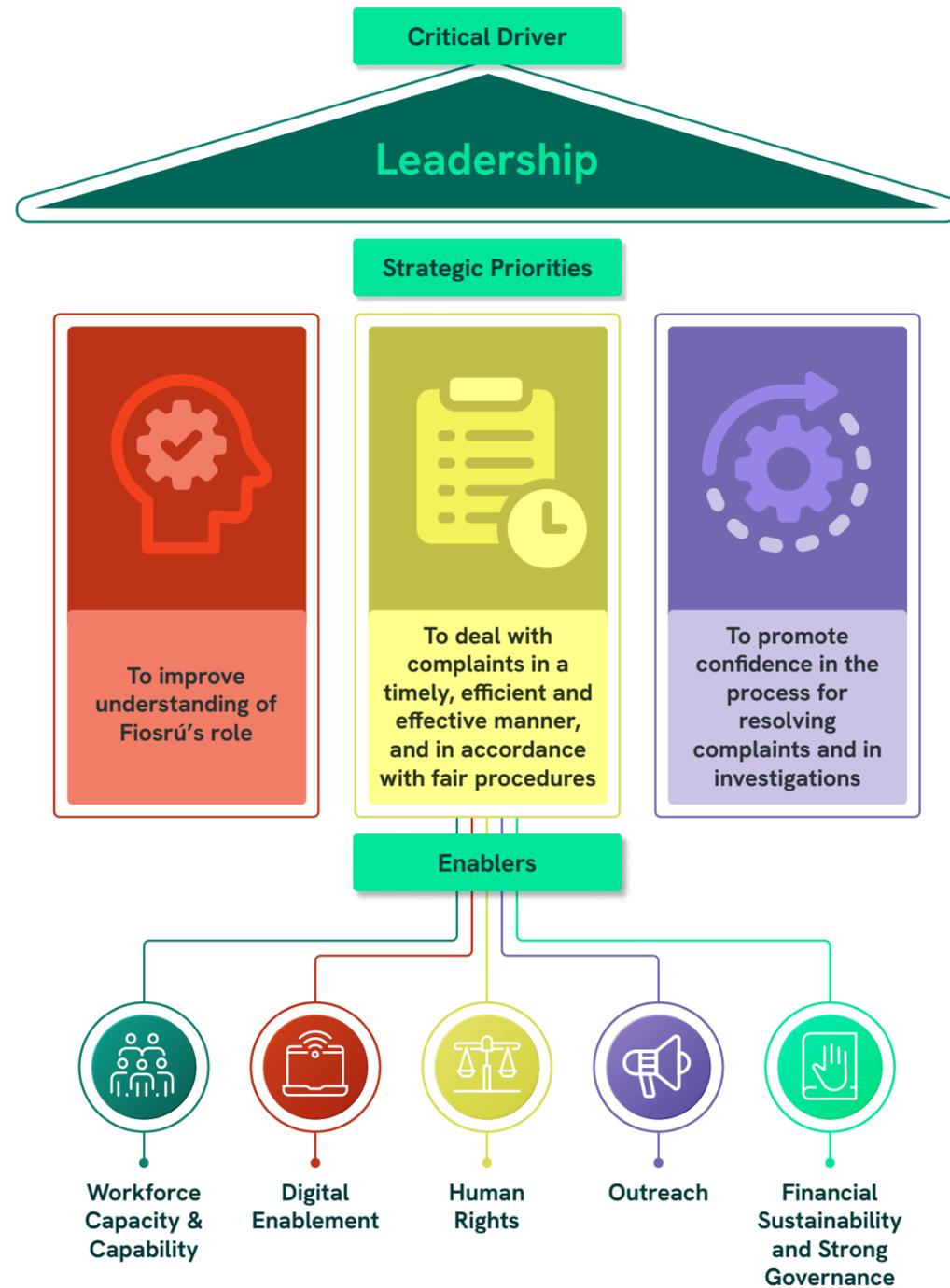
An effective investigation:

- Delivers accurate and evidenced based findings in a fair and independent manner;
- Results in actionable outcomes and recommendations;
- Concludes in the transparent communication of those outcomes to all relevant parties;
- Reinforces trust in the police complaints process;
- Delivers lessons for organisational growth and learning where identified.

In conducting our functions in accordance with fair procedures we will:

- Provide those against whom a complaint has been made with sufficient details of the complaint;
- Ensure that all Fiosrú decision-makers are independent, unbiased and free from any conflict of interest in any matter in which they have to make a decision;
- Ensure that those who have had an allegation made against them are given an opportunity to respond to that allegation;
- Provide reasoned and evidenced based rationales for the decisions that we take;
- Take a proportionate approach in all investigations we undertake;
- Where a right of review exists, ensure that the person who made the complaint is made aware of their right to request a review and the process of requesting a review, that the person against whom the complaint has been made is aware that a review has been requested and that all parties are made aware of the outcome.

Our Strategic Priorities



Strategic Priority 1

To improve understanding of Fiosrú's role

Fiosrú deals with complaints from the public where they have concerns about gardaí. We also investigate referrals by the Garda Commissioner, the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, and the Policing and Community Safety Authority.

By providing independent civilian oversight of policing, Fiosrú, in turn, supports transparency, accountability, and public trust in policing. Ombudsman institutions are regarded internationally as upholding the rule of law and strengthening democracy by protecting and respecting human rights, and acting as a watchdog for public authorities.

Fiosrú is a public service. To make a difference, people need to know we exist, what we do, how they can contact us, and how they could be supported through the process of making a complaint.

Through our actions:

- We will promote greater visibility and understanding of the role of the Police Ombudsman among the public in general and, more specifically, in areas of our society that may not know that Fiosrú exists or how to access our services.
- We will proactively deliver our messages with confidence, simplicity and clarity;
- We will support partner organisations to signpost our services and direct complaints to us appropriately; and
- We will ensure that our powers, which have recently changed, are understood by our stakeholders and the public.

The actions we will take:

- Develop and implement a comprehensive and wide-reaching communications strategy including a public information campaign.
- Invest in partnerships and outreach with the voluntary sector and NGOs.
- Actively engage and consult with stakeholders.
- Upgrade our website, digital presence and information materials.
- Roll out training and education.
- Be transparent, proactive and visible.

Strategic Priority 2

To deal with complaints in a timely, efficient and effective manner, and in accordance with fair procedures

Under our new structures and powers, Fiosrú has several new pathways through which we can deal with complaints, incidents of concern and referrals in a robust and proportionate way.

We aim to continually monitor, review, reflect on and improve our processes to ensure optimal performance of our functions, that the case handling and investigation techniques we employ are robust and that the proper outcomes are reached.

We will ensure that complaints receive an appropriate and proportionate response and that our investigative resources are used efficiently. We will properly engage Fiosrú's powers to refer matters to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions or to the Garda Commissioner where appropriate and ensure that all investigations have an appropriate and effective outcome. We will make appropriate recommendations for systemic reform where the evidence supports such action.

We will use our resources conscientiously and deliberately to ensure that investigations are undertaken with urgency and with sustained momentum.

Through our actions:

- We will set and manage expectations from the outset about what complaints we can and cannot deal with, how they will be handled, and what a complainant can expect;
- We will respect that the process of investigation can potentially have repercussions for an individual garda or An Garda Síochána, should a complaint be upheld;
- We will provide appropriate support throughout the investigation process to those making a complaint, and those complained against;
- We will ensure that our staff have the training, skills and knowledge required so they can deal with complaints with empathy and provide, or refer complainants to, additional support should they need it;
- We will make our complaints process as accessible as possible. A person may submit a complaint online or through their preferred channel, with respect for their decision-making capacity; and
- We will perform our functions in a timely, efficient and effective manner and in accordance with fair procedures.

The actions we will take:

- Publish clear standards as to what defines a timely, efficient, effective and fair investigation and measure our performance against those standards.
- Keep all parties to a complaint regularly informed, in plain language, about what is, and is not, happening in an investigation and manage expectations on an ongoing basis.
- Adopt an information gathering and investigation strategy proportionate to each individual complaint and complaint handling pathway being pursued.
- Execute that strategy by having the right skills, procedures, technology, and equipment in place including enhanced training in ethical investigation, trauma informed practices and setting and providing or coordinating availability of wraparound services like social care.
- Ensure that the new right to request a statutory review of a decision on admissibility or discontinuation is considered in a timely way and that the organisation monitors and learns from decisions.
- Continually streamline the processing of cases through investment in our Complaints Management System and other digital tools.

Strategic Priority 3

To promote confidence in the process for resolving complaints and in investigations

We will build trust and confidence in the process for resolving complaints and in our investigations by being accountable for our actions. We will move from an organisation that has been perceived as insular to a stronger position of accountability and transparency.

We will ensure that we are transparent about our processes, our actions, our decisions and the outcomes that flow from them.

We will be a reflective organisation. We will seek feedback and we will use it to evaluate our performance and the service that we deliver.

We will ensure that we use our powers in a fair and proportionate way that delivers effective outcomes.

Through our actions:

- We will strive to ensure that there is a high level of public trust and confidence in what the Police Ombudsman does and the way we work;
- We will ensure that all of our engagements are trauma-informed, human-rights aware and victim-centered;
- We will be approachable and responsive;
- We will make it easier for people to raise concerns, regardless of their background, language, or abilities, including decision-making capacity;
- We will be mindful of the needs of people affected by our new legal powers, especially victims who may be under threat, at risk of harm or living with coercion or control;
- We will handle complaints in a respectful manner that upholds the dignity and rights of the people involved;
- We will be transparent, open and accountable in relation to the number of complaints received, how they are resolved, the timelines involved, and the lessons learned; and
- We will publish a variety of research reports, including special reports to the Oireachtas, systemic reports on policing practices, policy and procedures, and complaint trends.

The actions we will take:

- Map the experiences of those who use our complaints services and gather feedback to continuously improve what we do so that our services are people-focused, grounded in a human rights approach and are efficient, effective and timely.
- Enable access to support services for those involved in a complaint.
- Develop support aids in multiple languages and media to explain our role, how to make a complaint and what to expect from us.
- Draw lessons from our own work and from reviews that we conduct using these insights to continually improve and inform how we carry out our responsibilities.
- Publish our Human Rights Framework.
- Publish a new Victims of Crime Charter.

Leadership and our Five Strategic Enablers

Our leadership will set a clear direction, culture and tone for Fiosrú and steer the delivery of our three strategic priorities.

Our leadership will set the standard for a rights-based culture, ensuring that fairness, dignity and accountability guide all aspects of our work. By leading from the top, we will embed human rights principles into our investigations, decisions and services, so that every person who engages with us is treated with respect and equity. In turn, this approach will strengthen our ability to hold policing

to account, ensuring that high standards of service and respect for human rights are upheld across the system.

Delivering on the strategic priorities that we have set ourselves is predicated on having the resources and supports in place to enable us to perform our functions in a credible manner. We have identified five essential strategic enablers that will support the execution of this strategic plan and the achievement of our strategic priorities.

Enabler 1: Workforce capacity and capability

We will support our people, their development and their potential to meet the needs of the organisation.

Of particular focus will be:

- Ensuring we deploy our staffing resources optimally to maximise efficiency and meet our statutory objectives;
- Ensuring that staff are trained around the delivery of the powers in the Policing Security and Community Safety Act 2024 and have a deep understanding of their roles in the organisation;
- Further developing our trauma informed investigative skills;
- Investing in staff to accelerate development of their digital capability with a focus on not just tools but how to maximise their use;
- Ensuring that our staff have the confidence and ability to engage with and support stakeholder organisations and the public in understanding the role of the Police Ombudsman;
- Adopting and continuously improving our ways of working so that we can deal effectively with new volumes of complaints and our expanded remit.

Accountability and transparency will be at the heart of our governance structure and management processes.

Enabler 2: Digital Enablement

We will advance our digital and data systems to drive secure, efficient, and innovative service delivery. Our goal is to be digital by default.

Of particular focus will be:

- Accelerating delivery of our Digital Roadmap including a new complaints management system;
- Developing our organisational approach to the appropriate use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in line with our AI policy and the National AI Strategy;
- Continuing to audit our resilience to cyber weakness/attacks and our ability to properly protect the data that we hold.

Enabler 3: Human Rights

Fiosrú is committed to providing a service to all members of the public that respects human rights and the right to equal treatment and we have adopted a proactive approach to meeting our obligations under the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.

We have established a Public Sector Duty Project Group to assess the human rights and equality issues which arise in relation to our functions, and to produce and implement a detailed action plan.

In parallel with the development of this strategy, we have been developing a Human Rights Framework to inform and guide the work that we do. All our processes will be aligned to this Human Rights Framework. We will report on developments and achievements in relation to our Public Sector Duty in our annual reports.

Further detail on how Fiosrú will meet our Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty is outlined later in this document.

Enabler 4: Outreach

Fiosrú, while an independent body, is part of a policing and community safety ecosystem.

There are other actors such as non-governmental organisations, IHREC, Tusla, and health and social care providers who play roles in observing policing behaviour and in some cases guiding the public to Fiosrú. Critical to developing best practice is our interaction with Ombudsman colleagues both nationally and internationally.

We can amplify our impact and the value we deliver for the public by investing in cross sector collaboration and contributions.

This can be done in many ways but a particular focus for this period will be the data we gather and the research we undertake, and investing in face-to-face engagement with others in the ecosystem.

Enabler 5: Financial sustainability and strong governance

We will work with the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration and with the Oireachtas to ensure that Fiosrú has the resources necessary to maintain our independence, uphold high standards of investigation, and respond to future demands on the organisation.

Accountability and transparency will be at the heart of our governance structure and management processes. We will deliver value for taxpayers' money and comply with all rules and principles of public financial management. We will ensure that we attain the highest standards of governance.

This will include ensuring that we meet our obligations including under the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, the Climate Action Plan 2025 and the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.

Implementation of our Strategic Priorities

Delivery of this strategy will be supported by an annual business planning process. Each business unit will develop plans that set out the actions, resources and timelines needed to advance the strategic priorities. These will be aligned with our statutory remit, our budgetary framework, and, where appropriate, wider Government priorities. Clear accountability for delivery will rest with senior managers, with progress cascaded into team and individual objectives.

Progress on implementation will be reported in our Annual Reports which are laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas. Key performance indicators and outcome measures will be published to ensure transparency and accountability. Periodic evaluations will also be undertaken to ensure the strategy is delivering meaningful public value.

Our approach to risk

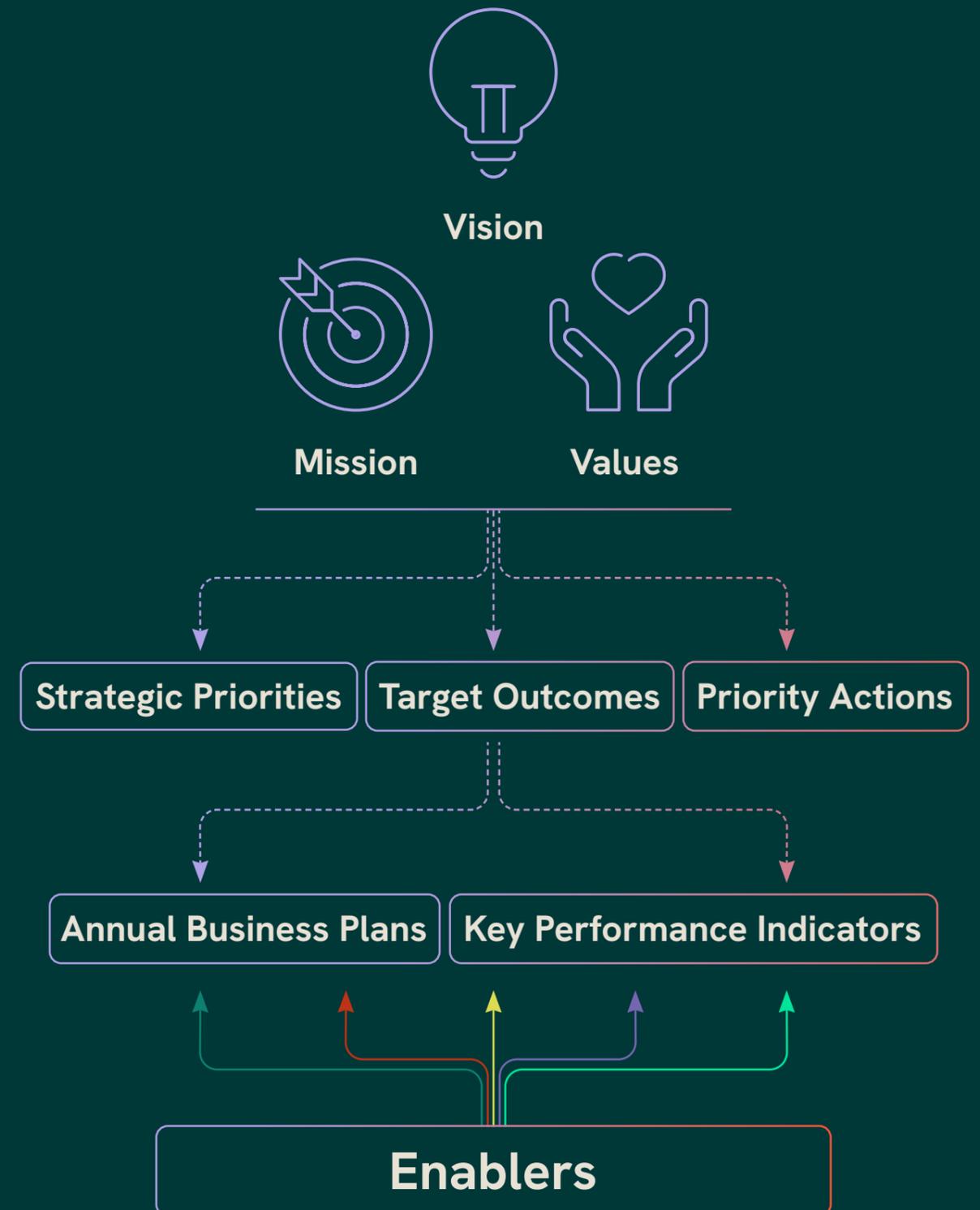
Risk management is a key element of the strategic planning process both in terms of identification of risk, which affects the formulation of strategic priorities, and in how Fiosrú's management of risk affects the performance of Fiosrú in delivering those priorities. The role of risk management throughout all cycles of the strategic planning, performance and reporting cycle is set out in Fiosrú's Risk Management Policy.

Fiosrú has in place a Risk Management System as part of its governance framework to identify, assess and mitigate risk and to ensure the ongoing review and improvement of our risk management approach having regard to the operating environment. Our corporate risk register specifically links each organisational risk to any strategic priority identified in this statement upon which it may impact.

The risk management process in place includes:

- A Chief Risk Officer to oversee the management of risk and keep the Police Ombudsman, Deputy Police Ombudsman and Chief Executive Officer informed of high-level risks and their mitigations;
- A Risk Management Policy which sets out the processes in place for the identification, assessment, management and mitigation of risks in the organisation;
- A Risk Register which contains details of risks and their mitigation and which is kept up to date on an ongoing basis;
- A Risk Monitoring Group, responsible for ensuring that the Risk Management System is subject to ongoing review, in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team and the Chief Risk Officer; and
- An Audit and Risk Committee established to oversee the management of risk and internal controls in the organisation and to advise the Police Ombudsman in relation to matters of audit, governance and risk.

Statement of Strategy 2026-2028



Our Commitment to Human Rights and Equality

Fiosrú is committed to the delivery of a service for all that eliminates discrimination, promotes equality of opportunity and protects the human rights of all staff and the people to whom the service is provided. This is known as the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty (the Public Sector Duty) and is set out in section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014.

Fiosrú, guided by our core values, is committed to fulfilling our Public Sector Duty by assessing all of the human rights and equality issues relevant to the delivery of our remit, addressing and prioritising those issues appropriately and reporting on our progress in an open and transparent way.

In order to embed a robust human rights and equality culture across Fiosrú, we aim to ensure that the fundamental rights of all those we engage with are protected, and that our decision-making processes remain fair, balanced, and carefully considered.

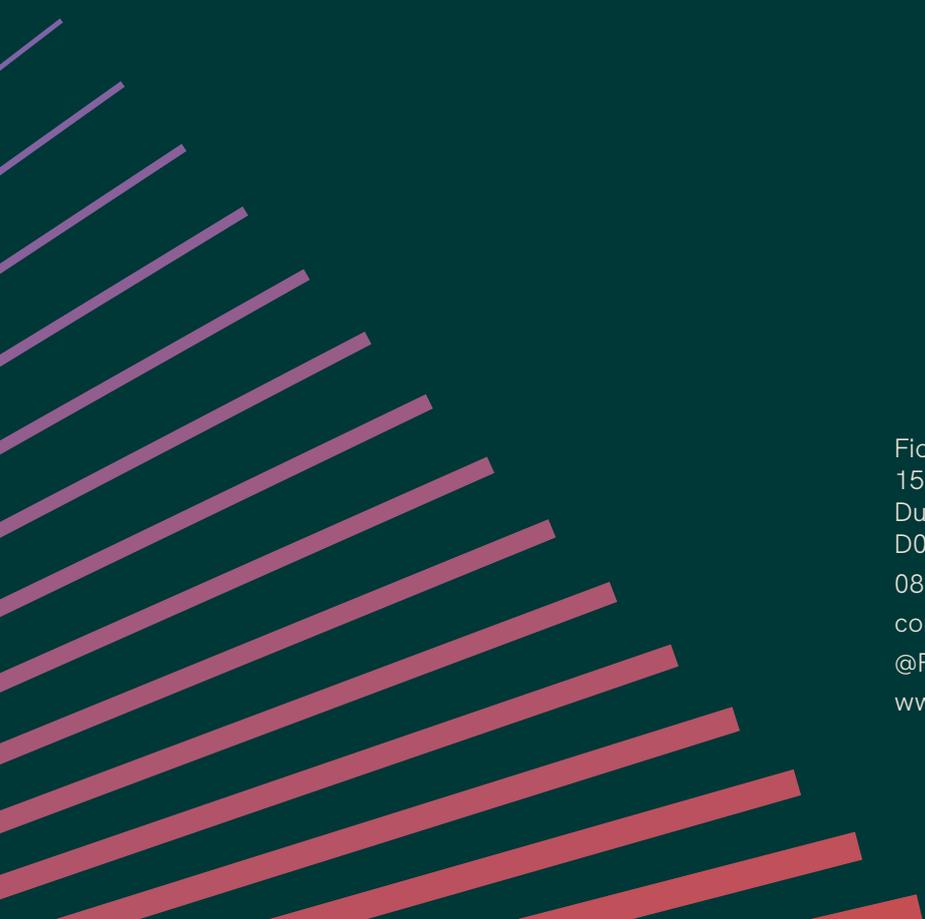
To support this commitment, Fiosrú is collaborating with human rights experts to develop a dedicated Human Rights Framework and screening tool for use by all staff in all of their functions. This initiative will form a cornerstone of our future work and, once completed, will become an integral part of our daily practice.

In developing this framework, our experts have drawn on models created by comparable organisations across Ireland and the UK. They have also engaged with a wide range of key stakeholders, including An Garda Síochána, the Policing and Community Safety Authority, the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, and the Irish Council for Civil Liberties. In addition, they have consulted with the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors, the Garda Representative Association, as well as solicitors who represent An Garda Síochána members under investigation by Fiosrú.

We have identified the following actions to address over the lifetime of this strategy:

- We will develop and launch a Human Rights Framework for Fiosrú
- We will deliver organisation wide training on the Human Rights Framework
- We will implement a Human Rights Screening Tool for all Fiosrú policies and practices
- We will ensure that our new website is accessible to all users
- We will ensure that all our guides are in Plain Language
- We will provide our guides in Irish and other languages
- We will carry out periodic reviews of all of our correspondence with complainants to ensure that we are communicating in an accessible and understandable way
- We will engage with representatives from some of the nine protected groups to better understand how the people they represent experience and interact with our services*
- We will provide assistance to complainants with literacy or language difficulties
- We will ensure our office premises are accessible to all service users
- We will ensure appropriate assistance is provided for those with additional needs that may affect their ability to access our services
- We will make available and promote appropriate services for the use of Irish Sign Language
- We will review our programme of outreach events and stakeholder engagement to ensure that we are reaching all of Ireland's increasingly diverse population including marginalised groups
- As a high-performing, independent police oversight organisation, we will endeavour to reflect the diversity of society and promote opportunity for all of our staff
- We will report on our developments and achievements in relation to our Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.

*The nine grounds of discrimination in Ireland (known as the protected grounds) are: Gender; Civil status; Family status, Sexual orientation; Religion; Age; Disability; Race; Membership of the Traveller Community.



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