



AN TÚDARÁS PÓILÍNEACHTA  
POLICING AUTHORITY

**Minutes of Code of Ethics Committee**

**Date: 14 September 2017**

**Venue: 90 North King Street, Dublin 7**

**Attendance**

**Authority:** Pat Costello (Chair), Bob Collins, Judith Gillespie

**Executive:** Catherine Pierse, Annie O'Malley

**Secretary:** Seán Carpenter

No conflicts of interest were declared in relation to any matters for discussion

**Part A Meeting of Code of Ethics Committee**

**1** The following items were considered and discussed as set out in the agenda for this section of the meeting:

- 1.1 Chairperson's opening remarks
- 1.2 Minutes of last meeting
- 1.3 Discussion on the plan to embed the Code of Ethics provided by the Garda Síochána on 23 August

**2. Actions and matters of note:**

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting on 13 July 2017 were agreed.
- 2.2 During their initial discussion the Committee expressed the view that it would be important that ultimately the Garda Síochána would be able to confirm that all staff have received a Code of Ethics booklet, have taken part in a Code of Ethics training course and have signed a declaration stating they will abide by the Code. The Committee also wishes to have sight of the completed Code of Ethics training materials at the earliest opportunity.
- 2.3 Committee Members discussed the use of "Ethics Officers" or "Ethics Champions". It was agreed that while it can be useful to have a designated point-of-contact for staff to seek

advice and to discuss ethical dilemmas, it is important to avoid a situation where designated staff members are seen as the individuals with responsibility for ethical behaviour because all staff within the organisation are responsible for upholding the Code of Ethics. It was acknowledged that in certain occupations such as the medical and legal professions, "Ethics Committees" can provide a useful source of guidance and advice and a support mechanism for staff.

## **Part B Meeting with Garda Síochána representatives**

### **Attendance**

**Authority and Executive:** As above

**Garda Síochána:** Patrick Leahy (Assistant Commissioner DMR, Community Engagement and Public Safety), Ken Ruane (Head of Legal Services), Johanna O'Leary (Superintendent HRPD), Michael Donlon (Sergeant HRPD), Fiona Broderick (Sergeant HRPD).

**3** The following items were considered and discussed as set out in the agenda for this section of the meeting:

- 3.1 Discussion on the plan provided
- 3.2 Update on the progress of the plan

### **4 Actions and matters of note:**

- 4.1 Assistant Commissioner DMR, Community Engagement and Public Safety confirmed that the Code of Ethics has been aligned to the Modernisation and Renewal Programme under the National Policing Programme Board and that Johanna O'Leary (Superintendent HRPD) has been chosen as the project's Business Owner.
- 4.2 A discussion took place as to whether there would be an opportunity for Senior Garda Management and the Policing Authority to have sight of the questions in the upcoming Cultural Audit. The Executive agreed to follow-up on this matter.
- 4.3 Updates on Code of Ethics training were provided by Assistant Commissioner DMR, Community Engagement and Public Safety:
  - An external expert will train a Superintendent or Assistant Principal in each Division as an "Ethics Champion" who will then deliver training to their divisional staff members,
  - 160 ethical scenarios have been developed so far and when completed, these will be sent to the Authority,

- It is estimated that staff will be placed into separate groups of 20 to 25 people for training to take place.
  - Ethics Training for Senior Garda Management has been scheduled for 29 September and 10 October.
- 4.4 The Committee highlighted the importance of an ‘Integrated Learning’ approach so that different ranks and grades were able to discuss their experiences of ethical dilemmas together. It was suggested that this would allow different ranks and grades to see matters from a variety of perspectives. Assistant Commissioner DMR, Community Engagement and Public Safety highlighted that there were practical restrictions on the extent to which an ‘Integrated Learning’ approach (i.e. a mixture of ranks and grades) could be applied due to the large numbers that were scheduled to receive training within a relatively short time frame and also emphasised the importance of ensuring that the individuals being trained felt free to speak up and openly discuss ethical problems that they had experienced. However, the Assistant Commissioner indicated that he had taken on board the comments of the Committee and would give further consideration to what possibilities exist for an integrated learning approach.
- 4.5 The Committee questioned whether the Project Team had requested any documents from police services in other jurisdictions that related to the roll-out of ethics training or material. Assistant Commissioner DMR, Community Engagement and Public Safety confirmed that this has not occurred but that the suggestion would be taken into consideration.
- 4.6 Assistant Commissioner DMR, Community Engagement and Public Safety confirmed there are 8 garda staff members with a Masters qualification in Ethics and consideration was being given about how best to make use of this expertise. The Garda Síochána are considering but have not reached a decision yet on what approach is to be taken with regards to “Ethics Officers / Champions” or “Ethics Committees”. A decision has not also not yet been made on whether an “Ethics Office” should be created but this is being considered.
- 4.7 The Committee welcomed the draft posters and decision making models provided by the Garda Representatives and agreed to provide feedback on their design and wording. The Committee also indicated that while it is happy to make observations on material provided,

it does not want to give the impression that it was involving itself with “signing-off” on these or other garda documents.

- 4.8 Assistant Commissioner DMR, Community Engagement and Public Safety confirmed that the Garda Síochána have printed their Code of Ethics booklets and that distribution to staff members will take place before the next Ethics Committee meeting.

## **Part C Meeting of the Code of Ethics Committee**

### **Attendance**

**Authority and Executive:** As above

- 5 The following items were considered and discussed as set out in the agenda for this section of the meeting:
  - 5.1 Committee discussion regarding further steps
  - 5.2 Any other business