



AN TÚDARÁS PÓILÍNEACHTA  
POLICING AUTHORITY

01/02/2018

**Statement regarding Garda Síochána classification of homicide data**

The Policing Authority is aware of recent media reports regarding material relating to the issue of the classification of homicide data and for this reason thought it might be useful to set out its oversight work on this matter.

The Policing Authority has persistently engaged with the Garda Síochána on the issue of the classification of homicide data, since the matter first came to its attention on 31 March 2017. The Authority's focus has been on two key questions – was there misclassification of data and if so has it been rectified in a comprehensive way, and secondly whether there were any implications for the nature and quality of investigation carried out in the cases identified as having been misclassified. The Authority has stressed that these questions are critical to public confidence in policing.

The pace at which this issue has been addressed by the Garda Síochána has been frustrating for the Authority, in particular the delay in getting comprehensive information on the matter. In early April 2017 while it became apparent that there was misclassification of data, the extent was not clear. Indeed the lack of information and certain tensions between different services within the Garda Síochána were publicly played out during the Authority's meeting on 27 April and in the media in the days following that meeting.

Engagement over the past ten months has been conducted through the routine Authority meetings with the Garda Commissioner, held in public or in private, as well as through meetings conducted by the Authority's Policing Strategy and Performance Committee with Garda representatives. The Authority has sought and received assurances on a number of occasions from the Garda Síochána, twice in public, that their investigations into the deaths were effectively investigated. At no time has the Garda Síochána demurred from that position. The Authority is seeking to understand and confirm these Garda assurances, but questions remain from information and reports received by the Authority to date. These questions have been explored in detail during many meetings with the Garda Síochána and will continue to be explored until the Authority's questions are answered satisfactorily.

The Authority received some partial material from the Garda Síochána late on the evening before its 27 April 2017 meeting. This was not considered, firstly due to its late receipt and also because it transpired that the Garda Analysis Service had not been involved in its preparation. The Authority received a report dated 21 September 2017 that set out the outcomes of the review of the recording and classification of 41 homicide incidents on PULSE for 2013-2015. The Garda Síochána stated to the Authority that the classification issue relating to these 41 cases identified has been resolved in full and that all of these incidents are now correctly classified on PULSE. The Garda Síochána has also consistently confirmed in public and private its assurance that all investigations were

appropriate to that classification and that an effective investigation in line with Article 2 of the European Convention on Human rights was carried out in each case.

Having clarified with the Garda Síochána the process used to determine its final classification and the process used to review and assure itself that the investigations into each of the cases in question were appropriate, it was the Authority's view that further work was required by the Garda Síochána in order for the Authority to be satisfied with the assurances given.

As set out in minutes published on the Authority's website, regarding classification, the Authority has asked the Garda Síochána to revert with:

- an explanation as to why there are some discrepancies between the material received on 26 April 2017 and the report on 21 September 2017 report with regard to classification;
- a process and timeframe for dip sampling to establish the degree to which PULSE is being updated in a timely manner with the outcomes from the Higher Courts. A court outcome may require a reclassification within a homicide, for example from murder to manslaughter and this updating is essential to ensure accurate classification; and
- A process and timeframe for the review of all homicides cases from 2003-2017.

The Authority has also asked the Garda Síochána to revert with a process and timeframe for a peer review of the quality of the investigations carried out in those of the 41 cases where the investigations have not yet concluded or reached the courts.

These matters will be considered again at the Authority's meeting with the Garda Commissioner, to be held in public on 22 February 2018 and the expectation that the above actions will be addressed at that time.

**\*END\***