

# Garda action plan cites civilianisation, technology changes

## COLMAN HIGGINS

### **Civilianisation of public office roles in Garda stations is continuing, according to a progress report and action plan under Building Momentum for the Justice sector.**

The report states that under the Workforce Modernisation Initiative, as of November 30, 2021, 839 Garda members have been reassigned to operational roles and their previous roles assigned to Garda staff (civilians), “inclusive of 93 (2021)”.

It adds that there is now a “focus on the reassignment potential” from the public office roles in Garda stations, as well as the dispatch function in the regional control rooms.

Assigning Garda staff into public offices “is being progressed on a phased basis”, taking into account candidate availability and complexities around assignments, in conjunction with the rollout of the new Garda operating model.

To date, 229 posts at front counters in public offices have been identified and from the existing internal candidates for these posts, 37 Garda staff have been assigned as of December 2021. A small number of further internal candidates are yet to be assigned, with the remainder to be recruited externally.

In the regional control rooms, as of November 30, 2021, 66 approved Garda reassignments have been identified.

## **DISPUTE PROCEDURE**

On the industrial relations side, the new Disputes Resolution Procedure (DRP) is being utilised by both Garda management and the representative associations, with a review of the DRP to be carried out in 2022.

The new rules for the Garda Conciliation Council were agreed between the parties and the first meeting of the Council was held in June 2021, with further meetings on an ongoing basis.

On promotional procedures, new regulations for Garda to Sergeant promotions have been published and interviews were held in January 2022, with appointments to follow by March. The syllabus for Sergeant examinations were also revised, with a new multiple choice format.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

As far as the use of technology is concerned, the new Roster Duty Management System (RMDS) is live in the two central Dublin regions, Dublin South, Cork, Limerick and Kerry. This improves availability of data on working hours and overtime, reducing the administrative burden for senior and middle-ranking members.

A new Investigative Management System (IMS) was deployed in Clare and Wicklow in November 2021. The IMS tracks evidence and generates reference numbers. New frontline mobility devices are also continuing to be deployed.

The new Schengen Information System II has enabled the sharing of real-time police data and intelligence, leading to 126 arrests in the six months to September 2021, or double the number for the same period last year.

The implementation of the new Garda Operating Model is also continuing, with pilot programmes started in the Eastern and Southern regions and 16 divisions starting to implement Business Services standardised approaches.