An Garda Síochána's response to the Central Statistics Office to support the Review of the Quality of Recorded Crime Statistics.

An Phríomh-Oifig Staidrimh Central Statistics Office

Internal Control Questionnaire

Data quality assurance at An Garda Síochána

Submitted by Crime Section, Central Statistics Office
Purpose: Review of Quality of Recorded Crime Statistics
Submitted by An Garda Síochána in October 2023

Introduction

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) compiles and publishes Recorded Crime statistics in Ireland. Recorded Crime statistics provide information relating to the frequency, type and distribution of crime as recorded by An Garda Síochána (AGS) on its PULSE database system.

CSO will carry out a further review of the quality of Recorded Crime statistics in Quarter 3 of 2023. The purpose and scope of the review will be to further assess the suitability for official statistics of the source data used to compile Recorded Crime statistics.

Previous reviews have been carried out in 2021 (based on 2020 data), 2018 (based on 2017 data), in 2016 (based on 2015 data) and in 2015 (based on 2011 data). The most recent report is available at: https://www.cso.ie/en/csolatestnews/presspages/2018/reviewofthequalityofrecordedcrimestatistics2020/ .

As part of the 2023 review, CSO will carry out an evaluation of the data collection and review process within AGS in respect of ensuring good quality data for statistical purposes. The evaluation will consider the operational and data governance controls which form part of a broader data quality management framework, as described in the Quality Improvement Proposal shared by CSO with AGS in July 2018 (see https://www.cso.ie/en/methods/crime/methodologydocuments/qualityimprovementproposaljuly2018/).

The CSO will also be revisiting the two key recommendations from the 2021 report, namely that

- a suite of documented systematic data quality checks be carried out by AGS on PULSE data and transparently communicated to users.
- a comprehensive end-to-end review of the incident reporting and data recording process is needed

Progress in relation to the transparent reporting of data quality checks will be evaluated along with consideration of the findings of the independent review by an independent consulting organisation of the data quality controls in place for recorded crime on PULSE.

The following Internal Control Questionnaire (ICQ), set by CSO, asks AGS to demonstrate how the procedures which underpin data collection and management within the organisation can assure statistical users that the data used to compile official statistics are of good quality and are fit for purpose – that they are trusted to be complete, accurate and consistent.

The questionnaire references relevant recommendations from the Police Inspectorate report of 2014. This is for background information only and this document does not purport to be a direct follow up on those Police Inspectorate recommendations. Any such follow up would be a matter for the Police Inspectorate.

Part A - Data Governance & Oversight

Effective data governance is essential for assuring the quality of crime data. This section examines the high-level controls in place to ensure data is of good quality. It explores the extent to which risks associated with the recording and use of crime data are established and documented, and then managed and mitigated in a systematic way. It asks how data recording rules are maintained. It looks at how data quality is monitored on a continuous basis to minimise errors and to guard against risks to data quality. An independent internal audit function, which assesses the effectiveness of the controls in place to achieve system objectives, is seen to be an important feature of quality management systems.

Please, in all cases, provide documentation if available in support of your response.

A1. Can you outline the specific risks to data quality that have been identified and what controls are in place to manage those risks?

Answer to A1:

An Garda Síochána is an information driven organisation, reflecting the 8th Principle of the Commission for the Future Policing in Ireland that policing should be "Information Led". The risks around the quality of the data supporting information led policing are fully understood, identified and are mitigated. Data related risks are incorporated in the overall risk management process for An Garda Síochána. Risks are recorded by each function directly involved in the data lifecycle (GISC, GSAS and ICT) in the risk register for their unit and also at local Divisional and National levels. These risks are in turn considered by the Chief Information Officer (CIO) when preparing a monthly assessment of data quality overall which is reported to the Garda Risk Management Unit, the Audit and Risk Committee and the Policing Authority.

Data risks are also considered by support functions within the Data and Technology Branch such as the Garda National Data Protection Office, which provides advice and guidance to business areas on ensuring compliance with the key principles and requirements of data protection legislation (in the main Part 5 of the Data Protection Act 2018 which applies to processing of personal data for law enforcement purposes), including effective measures to ensure the accuracy of data collected and processed by An Garda Síochána.

The key data quality risks are then summarised in Corporate Risk CRR 7/17 – "Challenges Surrounding Data Quality and Data Management". CRR 7/17 includes but also goes beyond risks relating to data quality to cover those that relate to the implementation of the 8th principle of the Commission for the Future of Policing in Ireland – that policing should be "Information Led". It is actively managed by its owner, the Chief Information Officer (CIO), based on reviews with his Data and Technology senior management team. This includes regular monthly revisions of the Risk Causes, Consequences, Controls and Actions as well as the overall risk rating. The controls and actions represent the key mitigations needed to ensure data quality and deliver on data aspects of Information Led Policing.

These Risks and their mitigations are constantly evolving and being updated, reflecting ongoing monitoring of the risks alongside identification of new risks within the organisation.

The Corporate Data Risk outlines that the data quality process within AGS is effective but requires a faster turnaround on resourcing issues (specifically improvements in approval and recruitment cycles) to fully realise the benefits of Information Led Policing.

In 2022, AGS commissioned an external review by an independent consulting organisation consultants of data quality processes in respect of PULSE. an independent consulting organisation has taken a largely risk-based approach to this review, the details of which are outlined in question A5 below.

Although there has been negative commentary based on anecdotal evidence or historical events from some stakeholders and commentators on Garda data quality, there has been no actual events attributed to poor quality since before 2020. This is a testament to both improved data management practices and repeated early interventions such as the above. Any of these had the potential to cause reputational damage to the organisation and crime data quality.

The Key Risks to the PULSE Crime Incident Recording process (and therefore to data quality) are:

1. PULSE Crime Incidents not being recorded on PULSE in a timely manner

Relevant incidents (including all crime related incidents) are transferred from the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system to PULSE upon closure in Command & Control Rooms. The new Garda SAFE (CAD II – see below) system provides additional supports and controls to ensure the quality of data from first entry by control room operators, which is then passed to PULSE.

PULSE incidents are reviewed at Performance Accountability Framework (PAF) meetings for timeliness. PAF meetings are direct operational reviews by Garda management (usually at Superintendent level).

PULSE Policy & Procedure outlines 139/03 & 25/2018 records policy on Incident Recording.

The Garda SAFE system has been deployed in three regions (Southern, Eastern and North Western) as of June 2023. The remaining DMR region will be deployed in Q4 2023.

The Investigation Management System digitalises crime investigation files and processes and is in the process of being rolled out to all Garda Divisions.

These two new systems complement PULSE and allow it to return to its core function of recording crime incidents; non-crime incidents will be recorded more comprehensively by Garda SAFE at source and criminal investigations will be recorded by IMS.

2. PULSE Crime Incidents are not being recorded to the correct standard

There are three stages to the incident creation and validation process that ensure proper recording:

1.The majority of Crime Incidents are recorded by the Garda Information Services Centre (GISC). GISC incident creation representatives are highly trained on PULSE and the crime counting rules. GISC incident creation rates are reported monthly by the CIO to the Garda Senior Leadership Team as well as being flagged in Corporate Risk CRR 7/17.

2.Every incident is reviewed, usually by a GISC Reviewer, who has both experience as a call taker and has received additional training on reviewing PULSE incidents.

3.Incidents are reviewed locally at a Daily, Weekly and Monthly PAF.

PULSE has a number of inherent controls built within the system that mandate the minimum level of data that is required for an incident to be recorded. The system also provides reminders and guidance to users in the form of prompts. For example, where the "Member Attended Scene" box is ticked on an incident, it is not possible for a PULSE user to close out of the incident without entering GPS coordinates on the incident. Another example is where a Suspect is added to an incident, the user is prompted to complete the Victim-Offender Tab on the Victim Assessment Screen. A further example is where a user seeks to remove the Domestic Motive from an incident, the system will display a prompt reminding the user that a relevant Victim-Offender relationship has been ticked on the Victim Assessment Screen.

This combination of joint recording (where the GISC call taker and Garda jointly record the incident), secondary reviews and tertiary reviews complemented by system levels supports ensures the quality of recorded crime incidents. Quality is further assured by the ongoing use of the data in PULSE incidents, which has been extended further by the use of mobile devices and the person search application, which allows Garda users access to PULSE even when remote from stations.

This "closed loop" process has been essential to the creation of a data culture in AGS. The same data collected from Garda members is used to provide them with information to do their work through mobile applications. Garda members publically credit the mobile apps with detections on a daily basis (for examples through Tweets from the official Garda account). The increasing demand and usage of apps is only possible because of high quality data in PULSE.

Over 13,000 mobile data stations have been deployed to date. All Garda members will be equipped with a mobile data station and apps by the end of 2023. The increasing usage of apps (most of which disseminate PULSE data) is also key to cementing the value of data as a core policing asset.

3. PULSE Crime Incidents are not being reviewed or quality assured in a timely fashion

There is a well-established process for reviewing incidents is in place with the operational targets as outlined above. The target is that each incident receives an initial review within 3 days. This target is monitored and reported at the Deputy Commissioner Policing and Security's Monthly Performance Assurance Framework alongside reporting at GISC.

4. PULSE Crime Incidents are incomplete or not accurate

PULSE has a quality assurance review process and each incident has a data quality incident lifecycle.

Subsection 2 above describes the stages of the incident creation process designed to ensure quality. In the event there are data quality issues with an incident, it is placed on Review Clarification. This generates an action for the Garda member responsible for the incident to correct it – directly or through GISC. It is then reviewed again.

Incidents on review clarification cannot be marked resolved and will continue to be flagged to the Garda until addressed. Each supervisor receives a report on the number of outstanding clarifications on their team as part of the PAF process.

5. PULSE data is incoherent and conflicting

PULSE has a number of inherent controls built within the system to ensure the data is coherent. In particular, around Deaths on PULSE and Victim Offender Relationship recording alongside mandatory recording on key incidents e.g. MIT recordings.

GISC has introduced a number of coherency controls to ensure the data is coherent. The entire PULSE database is loaded into a Hadoop based big data analytics platform nightly. Automated checks are then carried on the entire database using the Microsoft Power BI based tools. Any errors are automatically flagged for review to be placed on Review Clarification. Metrics on error rates are published monthly on the Garda website. An example of this is the Reported Date versus created date representing an error rate 0.040%. It is worth noting that these automated checks are carried out on the entire PUSLE database, not a sample of incidents. The published results indicate a low error rate, which are then resolved by GISC Reviewers or marked for Review by the Garda Member on Review Clarification as outlined in Subsection 2 above) which further builds confidence in the quality of PULSE data.

The coherency checks are currently carried out on a monthly basis, though it is envisaged that GISC will in future move to carrying out the checks on a rolling basis. The power of the Power BI tools means that searches can be carried out across the PULSE database without restriction in terms of timeframes. However, timeframes can be put in place according to the preferences or requirements of the user.

Data Coherency Checks focusing on 11 aspects of data quality have been developed using the Hadoop and Microsoft Power BI tools. These coherency checks are built to run monthly ensuring the data, when shared with the CSO, has been corrected and is coherent:

1-Date Fields: Reported Date later than Created Date

2-Victims: Crime Incidents where an Injured Party has not been recorded

3-MO Feature 'Weapons/Instruments Used': data coherency checks to identify incidents where an MO Feature of 'Weapons/Instruments Used' needs to be recorded

4-Hate Crime Incidents/Hate Incidents: data coherency checks to improve the accuracy around the recording of Hate Crime Incidents and Hate Incidents

5-Use of Force-Keyword search of Incident Narratives for Use of Force

6-Incident Classification- Theft from Person incident and Assault- Same time and date suggesting possible Robbery Incident

7-Incident Classification - Discharge of Firearm incident with an Injured Party recorded

8-Incident Classification -Traffic Collision Fatal- Keyword search for Dangerous Driving

9-Incident Classification -Sudden Death (non-crime) - Keyword search for Criminal Investigation

10-Incident Classification – Keyword Search of Narrative for key crime words e.g. Attack

11-Incident Classification - Assault Minor and Keyword search for Assault Causing Harm words

The implementation of the developed coherency checks is progressing, subject to resourcing at GISC. It is envisaged, subject to resourcing, that the coherency checks will be fully operational by the end of Q4 2023

Further coherency checks will be introduced as we highlight trends from Data Quality reviews or through the GISC Data Quality Assurance process (Call Listening and Review the Reviewer) demonstrating an ongoing Data Quality Assurance and Learning process ensuring the capturing of high quality data prior to sharing with the CSO.

6. PULSE Crime Data is not recorded in line with Policy (Casing & Crime Counting Policy)

Cased incidents are reviewed by the GISC Data Quality Section (with metrics published on creation rates). The Section also reviews a wider range of incidents, of potential incidents requiring casing, to establish whether they should have been cased, thereby having a further control ensuring adherence to the Crime Counting Rules. This work is carried out on a quarterly basis, with data from each quarter being checked during the middle of the following quarter.

For example, GISC checked a total of 12,547 Cases from Quarter 1 of 2023. Of these, 2,393 (19.1%) had to be amended to comply with the Crime Counting Rules.

The Potential Casing Report generated 1,837 incidents for the same Quarter which needed to be checked for potential casing, of which 1092 (59.4%) incidents had to have a new case created or had to be added to an existing case.

Casing is a particularly complex and resource intensive area. The allocation of additional resources to GISC in late 2022 allowed the Centre to address the issue of casing in a comprehensive way for the first time. The new checks which are now in place have already made a very significant difference in terms of identifying issues with casing and addressing them. A PULSE change, which involved presenting cased incidents for review in a similar way to individual PULSE incidents, has also made a significant difference.

It is expected that the correction rate will decrease as casing becomes established practice and as further training in casing is provided to GISC staff. IMS is also encouraging good casing practice since cased incidents generate one set of investigation tasks instead of repetitively creating tasks for each incident, reducing the overhead on Garda members.

7. Quality of GISC Call Takers and Reviewers.

GISC has in place a comprehensive training programme for new Call Takers involving (i) three weeks in the classroom, (ii) two weeks taking calls and creating incidents assisted by experienced members of staff and (iii) further coaching and feedback after joining shift team.

GISC also provides ongoing training and updates for all Call Takers and Reviewers on a variety of matters, including PULSE changes.

Calls are listened to GISC are listened back to by GISC's Data Quality Section. Since this programme of work resumed in autumn 2022, approximately 900 calls have been listened to covering around 111 GISC Call Takers, with a focus on call handling. Feedback is provided to staff and issues identified are addressed. Phase 2 of the call listening initiative will commence in autumn 2023, with the focus now

extending to cover data quality as well as call handling. The number of staff engaged in call-listening is being increased from three to six.

In 2021, GISC introduced a programme, Review the Reviewer, which involves the checking of reviews by GISC Reviewers by more senior staff (at HEO) grade attached to GISC's Data Quality Section. This involves the checking of 50 incidents per Reviewer at a time. Since autumn 2022, 39 Review the Review exercises have taken place (not including checks on the work of new Reviewers). Feedback is provided in a timely manner. A log is kept of issues identified and this in turn informs Data Quality Notices which are issued to Reviewers as well as being incorporated into staff training where appropriate.

Capacity within the Data Quality Framework

The benefits of GISC's service are well established in An Garda Síochána – both improving data quality and freeing up Garda members for frontline policing work. GISC capacity is carefully monitored by GISC management, the Garda CIO and Deputy Commissioner Policing and Security as well as the wider Senior Leadership Team.

The key metric of the percentage of crime incidents created by GISC is published externally and reviewed by monthly at the Commissioner's Senior Leadership Team meeting.

GISC resources are prioritised to focus on data quality issues.

The primary cause of the rating for the Corporate Risk on Data Quality and Management is GISC capacity – the data quality framework operates effectively but is inefficient As identified in the Corporate Risk, the underlying root cause is the lengthy approval and recruitment cycle and this is seen as the single biggest risk factor to the organisation leveraging data assets both effectively and efficiently.

AGS Risk Management Framework

In addition to the above in 2010, An Garda Síochána introduced a formal risk management process. An updated Risk Management Framework was implemented in March 2017, reflecting best practice in governance, accountability and transparency.

An Garda Síochána's Risk Management policy, procedures and training outlines that Risk Management is everybody's responsibility. Key elements of the Risk Management Framework manage risks include:

-Deputy Commissioner, Strategy, Governance & Performance is the Chief Risk Officer for An Garda Síochána, on behalf of the Commissioner, and chairperson of the Risk & Policy Governance Board.

This role includes the identification of corporate risks, holding risk owners to account, championing risk management at all levels in the organisation and advising the Commissioner on the status and effectiveness of risk management.

-The Garda Risk Management Unit support the Chief Risk Officer in this process. The Corporate risks facing An Garda Síochána fall under a number of categories including Operational, Technological, Financial, Innovation, Infrastructure and numerous other categories.

-The Chief Risk Officer appoints a Corporate Risk Owner, usually of Assistant Commissioner rank or Executive Director grade, and assigns them responsibility to manage specific corporate risks. The Chief Risk Officer presents the Corporate Risk Register, with assigned Corporate Risk Owners, to the Risk and Policy Governance Board for consideration and approval.

-The Risk and Policy Governance Board, chaired by the Chief Risk Officer, has overall responsibility for the risk management process and for certifying its continuation and effective functioning. The Board meet at least quarterly and provide an annual assurance statement to the Garda Commissioner. The Board also has responsibility for approving corporate risks, managing the Corporate Risk Register, assigning risk owners to manage corporate risks and monitoring the effectiveness of risk controls for each corporate risk. The CIO is a member of the Risk and Policy Governance Board, referenced above, and provides direct updates. Updates are also provided monthly to the Senior Leadership team and as requested to the Audit and Risk Committee.

A2. What is the Maintenance Framework for the publicly available Crime Recording Rules document?

Answer to A2:

In August 2020 AGS published '*A guide to how crime is counted and recorded*'. This Public Facing Document outlines for users of crime statistics (both internal and external) how crime is recorded, counted and marked as detected.

The Framework for maintaining the Crime Recording Rules document, was approved by the Data Governance Board (DGB) in 2019 and involves an annual review of the document by GISC, in consultation with the CIO, GSAS and other interested parties, with any proposed changes to be submitted to the Data Governance Board (DGB) for approval. The Framework provides that following approval by the DGB, the updated document will be published on AGS's website.

In the event of the view being taken, following the annual review, that the document does not need to be updated, the Data Governance Board is to be advised accordingly.

In the event of the Crime Recording Rules document having to be updated outside of the annual review process, the Framework provides that GISC will make a submission to the Data Governance Board requesting the Board to approve the proposed changes. Again, following approval by the Board, the updated document is to be published on AGS's website.

GISC's Business Plan for 2023 includes a target of reviewing the Crime Recording Rules document and submitting any proposed updates to the document to the Data Governance Board for approval in late 2023.

A3. What processes exist to engage with data users and to identify data needs and priorities?

Answer to A3:

AGS has a large number of data users. Our primary data users are internal users who use the data for operational matters, including the prevention, detection and investigation of crimes alongside

management decisions and performance review. External data users include other law enforcement agencies, Interpol etc., alongside Government departments and agencies, responding to press queries and PQs on a regular basis. AGS continues to expand both its use of data for internal decision making and the supply of data to external stakeholders. This includes high levels of participation in various forums/workshops to increase visibility, gather requirements on user needs, set priorities and to provide and explain policing data. Extensive engagements have been established with users in the following areas to the point where data is embedded in decision making and performance monitoring:

1. Operational Use of Data
2. Operational Performance and Management Decisions
3. Reporting to External Stakeholders
4. External Data Users

The table below summarises the engagements and formal structures in place to identify needs at all stages of the data lifecycle from initial acquisition, to data management, to analysis to dissemination and usage. Many of these engagements are also important in identifying data quality issues – increased usage and discussion means quality issues are more likely to be flagged.

Data Usage	**Process / Examples**
Operational Use of Data	
Policing	The primary purpose of the recording of data on PULSE is to support policing objectives. PULSE data is utilised across the organisation to prevent, investigate and detect crime. Incident data recorded on PULSE is reviewed by Garda Members and Garda Staff, Supervisors (Sergeants/Inspectors) and Superintendents and Chief Superintendents daily, and in formal reviews through the PAF process.
Mobile Data Stations	Over 13,000 Garda personnel have been issued with mobile devices and associated apps since 2013. All Garda personnel that require them will have one by the end of 2023 (approximately 15,000 data app users). Secure Smartphones with Garda developed apps and connectivity to backend data sources (primarily PULSE) are a major aspect of improving frontline information led policing. The devices and apps have also contributed greatly to Garda data culture, with a growing appreciation of the value of data to frontline policing (on the street) and consequent importance of correct recording. For example, the new Garda SAFE system automatically flags incident history at an address to first responders, further emphasising the importance of accurate data to Garda member and public safety. (*Press Release : GardaSAFE Technical Briefing: An Garda Síochána's New Computer Aided Dispatch System - Garda*) The devices are secure devices supported by clear policy & procedure on their use by Garda Members and underpinned by the AGS Code of Ethics.

	The devices are primarily used for data dissemination, for example allowing Gardaí to link vehicle registration to NCT, insurance and motor tax status. Garda members now scan vehicle number plates at checkpoints using mobile phone or in car Automated Number Plate Recognition technology which in turn flags issues of concern with the vehicle or driver. The use of unique identifiers such as Eircodes and driver licence numbers has been essential, with their use further enhancing data quality. Following successful testing the Person Search App has been rolled out to all Garda members. The App enables frontline Gardaí to carry out a PULSE person search and retrieve details directly to their mobile device**.** For example, a Garda Member can now identify, via the Person Search App on their mobile device, if there is an outstanding Domestic Violence order, should they observe persons arguing on the street while on patrol thereby increasing effectiveness and efficiency of policing. Mobile apps to issue motoring fixed charge penalty notices have largely eliminated paper based and handheld unit issued fines. This has in turn eliminated quality related "send backs" to Garda members due to handwriting or address matching issues. The direct provision of information back to Garda Members through apps (such as the person search) is a key component in "closing the loop" and demonstrating the value of thorough and accurate recording. Data culture will be further enhanced by the nationwide deployment of the Garda SAFE app (currently deployed to 500 Gardaí). This will allow Garda members to receive dispatch calls on their mobile device along with directions (demonstrating the value of Eircodes being attached to all addresses in SAFE) and highlighting risk factors such as firearms, Domestic Violence Act Orders orders and previous incidents at the address. All of these enhance the value of data to member and public safety, again promoting the value of correct recording.
GISC and the PULSE user community	GISC has established a community of PULSE users, especially the Performance and Accountability Framework (PAF) administrators, who support local Garda management reviews of recorded crime. Since March 2022, GISC has facilitated the holding of training webinars on PULSE for PAFs nationwide, dealing with data quality matters. Examples of the topics discussed include the recording of domestic abuse incidents, youth referrals and incident detection. Feedback is requested from all attendees of webinars/training/refresher courses to help identify data needs and priorities. Suggestions are sought internally in GISC on improvements to PULSE, to be sent to GISC's Data Quality and Systems sections for consideration in future PULSE releases.

	This community is aware of and reports issues to the GISC Data Quality Section. GISC also engages with frontline Garda Members seeking feedback on the GISC service alongside feedback for PULSE changes. GISC has attended the GRA Conference on a number of occasions, most recently in April 2023, to meet with large numbers of frontline Garda Members.
Training as a source of requirements	Bespoke training on recording specific crime types or motivations is being developed by specialist Garda Units. For example, Garda National Diversity and Integration Unit has provided training to GISC Incident Creation Representatives on hate motivation recording. In March 2023, the Garda National Economic Crime Bureau and GISC delivered training on recording fraud.
Data and Technology Vision	Information Led Policing is one of 5 strategic enablers in the Garda Strategy Statement 2022-2024. It explicitly commits the organisation to *"increased collaboration and partnership opportunities supporting greater efficiencies, consistency and confidence in our data collection and quality".* The creation of the Garda data and Technology Vision with key stakeholders including Garda leadership and the Policing Authority highlighted requirements and actions all stages of the data lifecycle. The Vision is also intended to demonstrate to each function involved in data quality how they contribute to the overall goal mission of achieving Information Led Policing. The Data and Technology Branch achieved the highest scores of any Garda Branch in every area of the 2022 Garda Culture Audit (employee satisfaction survey), including measures of "engagement". Although agreed with stakeholders in 2020 and shared with selected partners, the Vision has not been widely communicated externally. The Garda Data & Technology Vision was published and launched as part of media briefings on Garda SAFE on Wednesday 23rd August 2023. The Garda Data and Technology Vision will be discussed again with external stakeholders in September 2023 as part of media briefings for the Request for Information (RFI) on Body Worn Cameras, Digital Evidence Management and Facial Recognition Technology. The Vision is used as a tool with both data suppliers and customers to explain how AGS processes data into information and insight.
Human Rights Data	Over 3,100 Garda personnel have completed the University of Limerick Level 8 qualification in Human Rights Policing. This has helped identify areas where additional data may need to be recorded in order that the organisation can monitor and report on compliance with internal, national and international regulations, policies and guidelines on human rights. The course also covers the importance of data and statistics in monitoring policing performance and for evidence based policy making.

GSAS/Operational Analysis	GSAS is the centre of expertise for turning internal and externally sourced data into information and insight that both directly supports investigations and management decisions. GSAS Analysts are embedded directly as part of investigation teams across the crime, policing and intelligence spectrum. GSAS also publishes reports based on data analytics to support specific discussions with key stakeholders which will form the basis for the direct publication of open data and related analysis in the future. In late 2021, GSAS allocated an AP with responsibility for GISC Liaison and Data Quality. This is in recognition of the crucial importance of PULSE data quality in particular to GSAS. GSAS Analysts may identify data quality issues or anomalies as part of their routine work supporting operational policing. There is close liaison between GISC and the GSAS AP on a regular basis to discuss a wide variety of data related issues. Any data quality issues noted by any personnel across GSAS are routed through the AP for review by GISC allowing for a co-ordinated response. Any such issues, which are low in volume, generally affect a very small number of records and are resolved promptly. The lessons learned are also then shared by GISC with all call takers to improve awareness and prevent recurrence.
Operational Performance and Management Decisions	
Information Led Policing Operations	Major Policing Operations are initiated at the Operational Performance Governance Board (OPGB), chaired by the Deputy Commissioner, Policing and Security. These are attended by all Assistant Commissioners, the Chief Information Officer and other members of the Senior Leadership Team. Information led policing operations use data and technology to drive efficiencies, effectiveness and decision-making. The collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of data in support of these operations is assigned by the CIO. Operation Tara, for example, aims to tackle drug dealing and drug related intimidation nationwide. GSAS were involved from the initial stages of the development of the operation and utilised PULSE data to provide an evidence base of existing crime trends. GSAS also produce a monthly report to support the Operation, whilst this is primarily focused on operational policing insight there is also a review of data recording, such as, the association of incidents with 'Operation Tara'. Associating incidents and activity with the operation is important to support analytical work (and the ease with which relevance records can be identified). GNDOCB co-ordinate any data recording issues which need to be addressed and the internal reports consistently show high compliance for incidents created by GISC. **<u>Detection Rates</u>** Detection rates are part of the monthly performance review at the D/Com's PAF Meeting. Discussions during 2020 highlighted the possibility of reviewing how detections are analysed to provide managers a more in-depth insight. The current binary detection rate (detected or not-detected) does not provide sufficient insight for policing managers of the outcomes of all investigations.

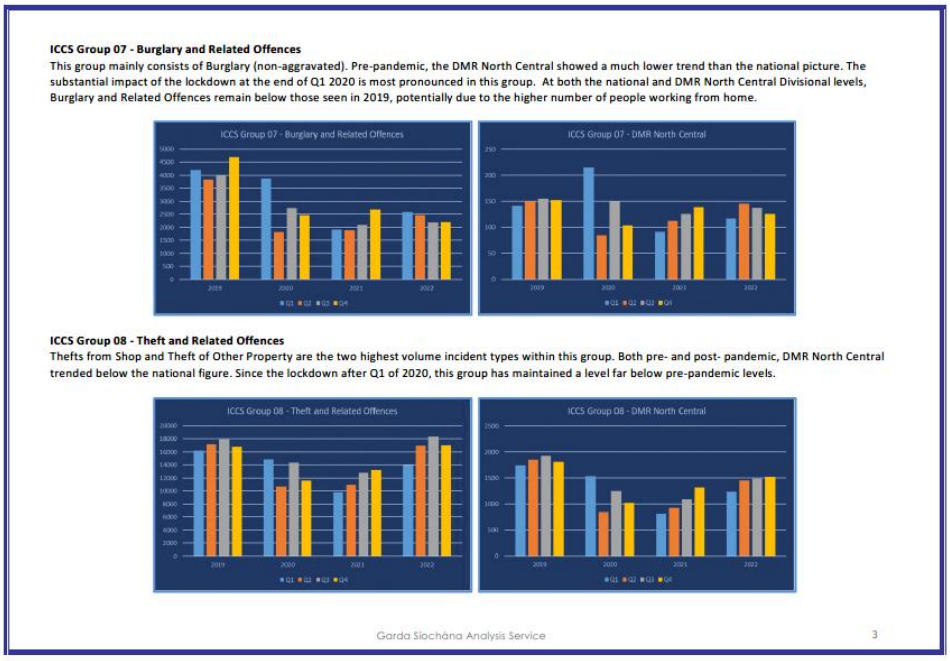
	There is a need to understand why incidents are not detected, which investigations remain actively on-going and investigations which are technically closed as all investigative actions have been completed. Work is ongoing between ICT, GISC and GSAS to move to an incident outcome based approach to detections, similar to that used in the PSNI as well as forces in England and Wales. Incident outcomes will provide greater insight and will augment management information and inform policy and operational guidance in a number of key areas in crime investigation. Once published, this data will also be used by government departments and other agencies to inform debate and policy development to develop a joined up approach to dealing with issues such as domestic abuse, hate crime, sexual and violent offences. The development of outcome based reporting will provide another importance dimension to recorded crime statistics. Outcomes based recording has been piloted in the Galway Division since Q4 2022. Over 5,000 non-sanction detection outcomes have been recorded and this has informed the national rollout which will commence in November 2023 following the release of PULSE 7.8.3. The incident outcomes from the Galway pilot have been presented to the Deputy Commissioner's Policing and Security PAF meetings. This project is discussed in more detail in section C10 below.
Monthly Operational Performance Review	Our data must support internal requirements both from an operational and also from a management decision making (information led policing) perspective. Monthly operational performance meetings are chaired by Deputy Commissioner Policing and Security where emerging trends are reviewed, data gaps highlighted and actions agreed to address. This may in turn highlight requirements for thematic reports (for example on catalytic converter thefts). The CIO and GSAS Management attend the monthly Operational Policing Performance meetings. Each meeting begins with a GSAS presentation of monthly tactical assessment data and emerging crime trends/more detailed analysis of particular areas of note. The presentation of data and associated discussions account for at least half of meeting duration. The reliability and visualisation of crime related data and statistics underpin all performance discussions and decisions on new initiatives to address emerging trends. Data quality and accuracy is essential for these meetings to be effective. The GSAS presentation also provides the opportunity for data related items to be discussed by the D/Com's senior leadership team. A recent item proposed was consideration of new incident types to be added to PULSE to capture particular types of offending. It was highlighted by GSAS that we have the current capacity to record and retrieve details from the existing incident types combined with the location of the incident and the relevant MO. This led to a reconsideration of the proposal and further engagement with GISC and other relevant sections before any action is taken to amend PULSE. This will ultimately improve data coherency and consistency through agreed, formalised approaches to recording rather than

	changes to underlying databases which can cause issues with comparability over time.
GSAS Management meetings	All data analysis requirements are routed through GSAS, either directly or through the Office of the CIO. Data needs are also identified in the course of routine, operational analysis of data, primarily within GSAS. GSAS reports to the Chief Information Officer (CIO), who oversees the Data and Technology Region, and sits under the remit of Deputy Commissioner Policing and Security (Operations). GSAS provides support across the organisation including at regional level for the four geographic regions of An Garda Síochána and also across national and specialist units including: Garda National Crime & Security Intelligence Service (GNCSIS) and Organised and Serious Crime (OSC) which includes the National Bureau of Criminal Investigation (NBCI), the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) and the Drugs and Organised Crime Bureau (DOCB). As analysts are co-located with the operational teams they are assigned so they are able to support data quality goals across the organisation. Areas for improvements or current data gaps may be identified which are escalated through GSAS management to the Chief Information Officer and/or the relevant business area owner. Knowledge sharing across the GSAS management team means there is capacity to assess whether an issue is isolated/confined to one area or a more general issue. There is a weekly meeting of all senior managers in Data and Technology to address dependencies between functions. This meeting provides a forum for GISC and GSAS to highlight any potential data issues which may arise, for example, from new ICT initiatives. GSAS also utilise these meetings to highlight and cross branch or national data issues of significance. Priorities are determined in accordance with the annual Policing Plan and operational need as they arise.
Reporting to External Stakeholders	
Policing Authority (PA)	GSAS provides detailed data reports on policing performance to the Policing Authority as part of the Commissioner's monthly report and in response to specific PA requests. In August 2023, the format and content was updated to include more detail in the trend information provided. This new format has also generated efficiencies for GSAS as it is generated from a Power BI dashboard drawing data directly from the Data Hub. The CIO and/or GSAS management routinely attend meetings of the PA Policing Strategy and Performance Committee, the PA Organisational Development Committee and the main Policing Authority meeting with the Commissioner. A copy of the report will be available here in due course: Commissioner's Monthly Reports to Policing Authority - Garda These meetings include discussions on data provided, additional requirements and more detailed thematic reviews (such as knife related crime and CAD Review.

PA Briefings	Detailed data briefings take place with PA staff and members of the authority as needed – for example on Hate Crime data and the Domestic and Gender Based Violence Report (link An Garda Síochána Publishes Analysis of Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence Incidents - Garda). These include Garda personnel from Data and Technology, specialist national units and frontline policing management.
External Data Users	
External Data Requests	All Parliamentary Questions, research, press queries and other external requests for (numeric) data are routed through the Office of the CIO. These in turn may drive requirements for more detailed thematic reports into actual or perceived trends such as knife related crime based on media queries and bicycle thefts based on a PQ. These thematic report requirements are ratified through and reported back to one of the operational performance boards above. All responses provide information on the methodology including any limitations or caveats. GSAS monitor all requests received from the Garda Press Office, PQs and any other external requests for data. The most common queries received are used to inform the key priorities for information to be proactively published and made available on the Garda website. This is dependent of necessary data hub and mining tools being in place as well as increased resources for GSAS – both in progress. The intention here is to provide the commonly requested statistics on a routine basis (monthly/quarterly) so that it is publicly available. Previous examples of such publications include figures throughout late 2021 and early 2022 providing details of the COVID related fines issued. The Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence thematic report was published in late 2022. The priorities nearing completion for release in 2023 are Roads Policing statistics, high volume property crime types and an update to the knife related crime figures (last produced in 2021). The Garda Research Unit (GRU) is a specialised section that sits within GSAS. Established in 1994 in order that research in AGS would become increasingly systematic and strategic, the unit now provides a dedicated research function which conducts police-related research, supports research by others and makes research findings widely available. At present, the GRU is staffed by two researchers with plans to expand capacity. Specifically, their role involves conducting research relevant to An Garda Síochána, its practices and operations, thus contributing to the organisation's strategic direction. The core responsibilities are to conduct evidenced-based research which will inform decision-making at senior Garda level and support the Strategy Statement and Policing Plan. In addition, the unit produces An Garda Síochána's Public Attitudes Survey and liaises with researchers (including universities, government departments, non-state bodies and individual third-level researchers) and AGS employees seeking access to An Garda Síochána for research purposes. The GRU also represent AGS at CEPOL (European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training) and are involved in training. The varied role provides opportunity to

	support operational policing and to collaborate with external stakeholders. This allows further insight into any areas where there is particular demand for data from the broader external academic and research community.
CJOH Board CJS Data Group, Data as a Driver Sub-Group	The Garda CIO is a member of the Criminal Justice Operational Hub (CJOH) Board. The Head of GISC is a member of the 'Data as a Driver' Sub-Group for the implementation of the Data as a Driver Criminal Justice Sectoral Strategy 2022-2024 actions. AGS is involved in discussions with the CJOH and Data as an Enabler on the possible introduction of unique identifiers across the Criminal Justice Sector. In relation to data sharing projects, the electronic transfer of Charge Sheet data from AGS (PULSE) to the Court Services (CCTS) was rolled out successfully nationwide in June 2022. The Higher Court Outcome project – data from the Court Services (ICMS) to AGS (PULSE) - formally ceased in January 2023. The basis of this decision concerned the need to safeguard data quality – i.e. reliable outcomes data linked back to the original crime incident(s) could not be sourced from existing courts systems. The Court Services have made a strategic decision to replace their ICMS system and, as part of that project, to put measures in place with a view to supporting access to linked outcomes data by AGS.
Open Data Governance Board	The Chief Information Officer is a member of the Government's Open Data Governance Board. AGS is committed to publishing relevant, anonymised data as open data as per the Data and Technology Vision. Currently published data is available only at one-star level. This will mature to deliver on requirements such as those referenced above under *External Data Requests.*
Courts Service	Representatives from the Garda Data and Technology Region (Data Engineering, Data Protection and the CIO) hold regular meetings with the Courts Service to discuss improvements to the exchange of data between AGS and Courts.
Department of Justice	The Department of Justice will often seek representation from the CIO branch on their own working groups/project areas. Any relating to data will require GSAS representation to engage with the Department on the questions they are trying to address and the information required.
REPPP, University of Limerick	The Research Evidence into Policy, Programmes and Practice project at the University of Limerick aims to improve the evidence base in relation to youth crime policy in Ireland. REPPP engages in primary research and also has a number of contracts from DoJ to conduct research relating to its Youth Justice Strategy. Significant GSAS support has been required to provide analysis to deliver the Greentown study and the team from UL also periodically engage with GSAS to request data for other on-going research and evaluations.

Youth Diversion Projects	Every year the Youth Diversion Projects funded by DoJ are required to compile reports/service plans. GSAS provides the necessary statistical and trend information to the relevant Juvenile Liaison Officers to inform the development of these plans.
International Law Enforcement Agencies and Police Services	GSAS regularly engage with and provide data for research/queries from international policing partners including Europol, Interpol, UNODC and police services in other jurisdictions. This work includes information required to compile comparative European reports and to see if emerging crime trends in the country of request origin are being seen in Ireland.
Cross Border Joint Agency Task Force	The Cross Border Joint Agency Task Force consists of representatives from policing agencies, law enforcement and Revenue/Customs in Ireland and Northern Ireland. GSAS collaborates closely with analysis colleagues in the PSNI to contribute to strategic and operational meetings held under the auspices of the JATF on a variety of cross border organised crime thematic areas. Every two years the JATF prepares a Cross Border Organised Crime Threat Assessment which also requires significant analytical input on emerging trends and MOs in Ireland and Northern Ireland.
Maintaining Data Integrity	There are a small number of instances where external users have identified data requirements to which we are not in a position to accede. This can be for a variety of operational or other reasons but is essentially about our desire to protect the integrity of our data and ensure it is of a high standard. For example, during the COVID pandemic, some stakeholders had sought to be provided with details of the numbers of directions issued by Garda members in relation to the public health regulations. This was not provided for two reasons. Firstly, as in many instances and in-line with a four Es (engage, educate and encourage, and only where provided for and as a last resort, enforcement) approach, people brought themselves into compliance therefore no offence had been committed. Secondly, and following formal engagement with data experts across the public sector, including from the CSO, there was no way to verify the data or have any quality control process so it was deemed it did not reach the threshold required to be suitable for reporting/publication. In other cases, an external organisation may seek access to personal data held by An Garda Síochána in circumstances where the underpinning legal basis or necessity or proportionality of the request is not sufficiently clear.
CSO	Regular meetings between the CSO and AGS are an important source of discussion and requirements on recorded crime statistics.
NGOs and Public	Individual NGO relationships are managed by specialist Garda units supported, when required, by members of the Data and Technology teams. One such example is in preparing for the publication of the analysis of recorded Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence incidents in September 2022. The Garda National Protective Services Bureau (GNPSB) had been key participants on the internal working group. Once the report with all the data findings was

	available, GNPSB had updated all their partner agencies (NGO and voluntary) to inform them the report was going to be published. A briefing session was also held by GNPSB and GSAS for representatives of all the key partner agencies in advance of the publication of the report. At the briefing a detailed overview of all the key findings was provided to the representatives so they could understand the data, ask questions and help prepare to support their service users following the release of the report. Community Engagement is at the heart of policing. Members of An Garda Síochána interact with the public in the performance of all their tasks. Needs from members of the public feed directly into the consideration of the data requirements alongside the communication to members of the public. More formally, Data and Technology teams support the Joint Policing Committees and are supporting the Local Community Safety Partnerships where data directly from PULSE is utilised to provide the wider community with update on policing, trends and activities. For the three new LCSP areas a standardised reporting template has been developed for all areas. The template was agreed after significant consultation between the office of A/C RPCE, representatives of each pilot area LCSP, the Dept. of Justice and GSAS. Data protection considerations are covered in the report so they can be shared with the LCSP, media and public. Each report contains crime trends at the national and LCSP area levels. The focus is on trends and seasonal patterns – this enables the LCSP to focus on the implications of the crime statistics and planning for the coming months (rather than only reflecting on the past). Each LCSP is provided with a report each quarter to support their meetings. The screenshot below shows an example of one of the pages from the LCSP template.  **ICCS Group 07 - Burglary and Related Offences** This group mainly consists of Burglary (non-aggravated). Pre-pandemic, the DMR North Central showed a much lower trend than the national picture. The substantial impact of the lockdown at the end of Q1 2020 is most pronounced in this group. At both the national and DMR North Central Divisional levels, Burglary and Related Offences remain below those seen in 2019, potentially due to the higher number of people working from home. ICCS Group 07 - Burglary and Related Offences ICCS Group 07 - DMR North Central **ICCS Group 08 - Theft and Related Offences** Thefts from Shop and Theft of Other Property are the two highest volume incident types within this group. Both pre- and post- pandemic, DMR North Central trended below the national figure. Since the lockdown after Q1 of 2020, this group has maintained a level far below pre-pandemic levels. ICCS Group 08 - Theft and Related Offences ICCS Group 08 - DMR North Central Garda Síochána Analysis Service 3
Recording of Ethnicity	There are long running requests and recommendations from data users and stakeholders for Gardaí to report on the ethnicity of suspects and victims (for

	example the Policing Authority and IHREC). Recording and reporting ethnicity would provide valuable insight into potential bias and under or over policing of certain communities. However, the collection of ethnicity data is cases where it is not directly relevant to the incident (e.g. hate crime) is highly problematic for reasons including • It changes the nature of the interaction between the Garda and the suspect/victim; • People may not be willing to provide this information leading to an even more unreliable approach of recording perceived ethnicity; • It provides no value to individual investigations, only aggregate level measures; • Collecting ethnicity data would inevitably be followed by requests for other sensitive demographic and personal information variables such as disability, deprivation status, employment status etc.; • The recording of this data can itself lead to allegations of bias. An Garda Síochána has promoted an approach of anonymously linking rather than collecting sensitive demographic information. Use of a single unique identifier would allow reporting of aggregate figures on the demographics of victims and suspects to be reported without the need to collect it. This approach has been proven to work in the published successful collaboration between the CSO and AGS to measure the diversity of Garda personnel across a range of protected demographic characteristics by anonymous data linking without the need for new primary data collection (i.e. a survey). This proposed approach is supported by the CJOH and Data as an Enabler Groups and promoted by the Garda CIO in forums such as the Association for Criminal Justice Research and Development conference in June 2023 where the Garda methodology was well received.

A4. Is there a specific unit within the organisation charged with prioritisation and monitoring of data quality on an ongoing basis? If yes, please give details including what other units report to this unit?

Answer to A4:

Overall responsibility for monitoring and improving data quality rests with the Chief Information Officer (CIO). The Office of the CIO includes overall responsibility for all Data and Technology functions in An Garda Síochána (GISC, GSAS, ICT, Data Architecture, Data Protection Office, Freedom of Information and the Garda National Vetting Bureau). Having all relevant functions within the same branch enables a holistic approach to data quality at all stages of its lifecycle.

The Garda Inspectorate Recommendation 4.18 is considered here. This Recommendation provides as follows: 'The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána creates a robust internal governance practice by establishing a Standard Operating Procedure for PULSE record entries and their audit and review'.

Quality assurance of the recording of crime data is built around three main pillars:

1. Collection: Primary collection of incident data is carried out by GISC Incident Creation Representatives (ICRs, Clerical Officer grade). Automated collection also takes place in certain instances from CAD and FCPS, and subsequent updates are carried out by GISC. To assist ICRs in the accurate creation and update of incidents, they refer to the PULSE Incident Creation Manual which details all Incident Categories/Types and mandatory information required. The Manual is maintained by GISC, with input from relevant AGS sections (for example from the Garda National Roads Policing Bureau regarding road offences and the Garda National Protective Services Bureau regarding incidents involving domestic abuse.)

2. Review: GISC reviewers (Executive Officer grade) assesses the quality of created incidents, highlighting issues requiring clarification or updates required by placing the incident on "Reviewed Clarification". This requires the Garda member to contact GISC to resolve the issue before the incident is marked reviewed. It should also be noted that various PULSE incident categories/types require mandatory information to be recorded before the system allows the incident to be marked 'Reviewed'. An incident may be reviewed multiple times based on updates/further information required. Per HQ Directive 15/2018, GISC is responsible for the classification of PULSE incidents, and therefore, based on information provided within the incident narrative, may reclassify an incident, if deemed appropriate.

3. PAF Process: The Performance Accountability Framework (PAF) includes PULSE crime incidents forming the basis for regular (at least weekly) operational performance reviews by local Garda management. Data quality issues are flagged back to GISC for review.

As part of establishing a data culture, multiple other units are involved in monitoring and addressing data quality issues:

- **Processing:** The ingestion of external data is the responsibility of the Data Architecture function. The Data Architect, who reports to the Chief Information Officer, is responsible for highlighting quality issues in inbound data back to suppliers. One example of this was the quality of data received on new arrivals to Ireland who were required to quarantine at home as part of COVID-19 restrictions in 2021. Garda coherency checks that over 50% of the data records received were unreliable, diminishing the value of enforcement;

- **Analysis:** Dashboards and reports created by GSAS analysts may highlight individual or systemic data quality issues.

- **Frontline Data Usage:** The electronic distribution of data to frontline members primarily through specialist apps on the mobile data stations, such as the Person App, increasing the usage and therefore quality of data. Garda members can report data quality issues directly to GISC or through their management.

- **Garda Management:** Flags data quality issues to the Chief Information Officer. Joint investigations with Garda units (such as control rooms and specialist units) usually take the form of a cross functional team from GISC, Data Architecture, GSAS and ICT.

- **GISC Data Quality Section:** Investigates data quality issues flagged by downstream users of data as above. There is a dedicated mailbox for reporting data quality issues to the Section. For example, over 50 queries received via this mailbox were dealt with during the week 3-9 April 2023. The Section also considers applications by Divisional/District Officers for PULSE incidents to be marked detected under the DS1/DS2 process as provided for under HQ Directive 25/2018.

- **Dissemination:** The Office of the CIO (and usually GSAS directly) is responsible for all external publication of aggregate data from the annual report to stakeholder reporting to PQs and media queries.

New policing operations are designed with data quality and reporting at every stage of the lifecycle, with monitoring built in from the outset.

The creation-review-PAF data cycle represents a "closed loop" process where incident data reported by Garda members goes through multiple checks including being presented back to local management for performance monitoring and operational decisions. A new PAF online App, which is currently being piloted in Mayo/Roscommon/Longford Division, is detailed later in the document.

The data quality process was the subject of an external review by an independent consulting organisation consultants which identified a range of controls in place to support the PULSE Data Quality processes.

A review of Classification of Crime Incidents was carried out by the Garda Professional Standards Unit (GPSU) in 2019 and found internal controls implemented since the Garda Inspectorate Report of 2014 are robust, and fit for purpose.

In addition to the above robust internal controls, the Garda National Data Protection Office manages centrally any requests for personal data made by data subjects under Part 5 of the Data Protection Act 2018 or the GDPR, as applicable. This includes any requests for rectification made in line with the provisions of Section 92 of the Data Protection Act 2018 or Article 16, GDPR.

A5. Is data quality independently internally audited? If so, can you provide any details of previous audits and the status of audit findings or recommendations? How are audit findings communicated to key data users?

Answer to A5:

As noted above, a review of Classification of Crime Incidents was carried out by the Garda Professional Standards Unit (GPSU) in 2019 and found internal controls implemented since the Garda Inspectorate Report of 2014 are robust, and fit for purpose.

In 2022, AGS commissioned an independent consulting organisation to review the Data Quality Framework. The review noted that AGS had made significant strides to improve data quality in PULSE since challenges were first identified. The review also noted that plans are in place, as part of ongoing data quality enhancements and the Data & Technology Vision.

The review by was commissioned as part of an overall effort by AGS to identify improvement opportunities within the quality assurance processes.

The review included mapping the end-to-end process for the identification, creation, and processing of crime records on the PULSE system, articulating the risks to data quality dimensions at each stage of this process and the existing or potential controls that could be put in place to mitigate these risks.

The review identified and documented key controls and related risks, noting opportunities for automation and/or improvements to the control environment.

The review identified a significant number of controls in place and a number of areas for opportunities for further enhancements including extending automated controls, extending the use of PowerBI dashboard reporting, more triaging of the GISC reviewing process including a clear delineation as part of that review process.

The review also noted there is an opportunity to further improve technology so that PAF meetings are driven by system reporting which the PAF E-tool, as noted in C4 will address.

Separate from the functions of GPSU, the Garda National Data Protection Office (GNDPO) provides an advice and support function to business areas to ensure their processing of personal data is in line with the requirements of data protection legislation. This includes development of Data Protection Impact Assessments and Data Sharing Agreements, management of Subject Access Requests made by data subjects, and liaison with the Data Protection Commission (DPC) to address and resolve complaints by data subjects, notify personal data breaches and assist with audits and inquiries carried out by the DPC as the relevant supervisory authority for processing of personal data by An Garda Síochána in the exercise of its functions.

In August 2023, An Garda Síochána completed and published a *Review of the Quality of PULSE Crime Data for 2022*, available at the following link: AGS Review of the Quality of PULSE Crime Data for 2022 (garda.ie). This review was carried out by the Garda Information Services Centre (GISC) with the support of the Garda Síochána Analysis Service (GSAS), and it examines key aspects of data quality, including, *inter alia*, the timeliness of the recording of crime incident records on PULSE, adherence to crime counting rules and the recording of victims in PULSE incidents.

Among the positive findings of the review were:

100% of sampled non-crime PULSE incidents that were examined were deemed to have been correctly classified as non-crime incidents.

97% of sampled PULSE cases created post-01/07/2022 were found to comply with the crime counting rules (combining the original and additional samples).

In the review of the extent to which an injured party had been recorded in incidents, it was found that an injured party was associated with 100% of sampled homicide offences, 99% of sampled physical and sexual assault offences, 99% of sampled Robbery from the Person incidents, and 99% of sampled Theft from Person incidents.

Insights gleaned from the review are already informing data quality work programmes in GISC. For example, in response to the finding that 8% of 'Assault Minor' crime incidents (original and additional samples combined) were found to be classified incorrectly, GISC has implemented a data quality coherency check focusing on 'Assault Minor' incidents (for further information on data quality coherency checks, please refer to section A1 of this questionnaire).

The purpose of the review is to share additional information in relation to the quality of our data, inform users of crime statistics about the quality of the underlying PULSE data alongside demonstrating the effectiveness of our Data Quality Framework.

It is planned that GISC will undertake a review of the quality of PULSE crime data on a biannual basis initially, moving to an annual basis over time.

Part B – Data quality improvement initiatives

This section examines the commitment by AGS to ensure that those with responsibility for data recording understand the value and relevance of good quality data and are up-to-date on policy and procedural best-practice in relation to data management. It asks whether there is a clear understanding within AGS of what constitutes "good quality data" as it pertains to recorded crime and looks at how such an understanding is communicated across the organisation. It also looks at the specific data management and quality actions and initiatives which have been implemented, what their purpose is and how effective they have been in ensuring good quality data.

Please, in all cases, provide documentation if available in support of your response.

B1. How does AGS show its commitment to data quality as a core value of the organisation and its people?

Answer to B1:

AGS communicates its commitment to data quality at multiple levels, with an emphasis on practical measures that prove the value of quality data to police work:

- **United Nations' Fundamental Principles on Official Statistics**. In the first instance, An Garda Síochána takes its responsibilities for ensuring the accurate recording and dissemination of crime related data very seriously. This includes playing close attention to appropriate aspects of the United Nations' Fundamental Principles on Official Statistics. In line with Principle 5 (suppliers of data) and Principle 7 (correct interpretation of data), AGS has engaged with upstream and downstream partners to promote a strong crime data ecosystem and ensure the integrity and quality of crime related data:
- April 2020 – in response to stakeholder requests for data on the number of people turned back from Garda COVID checkpoints, AGS convened an expert group to examine methodology options, including representatives from the Department of Health and the CSO. The group determined that the collection of this data would represent an excessive burden on frontline Gardaí, would create public concern and would be difficult to validate. AGS subsequently declined to collect and publish data on "turnarounds" from checkpoints given these risks to data quality and respondent burden.
- July 2021 – September 2022: Engagement with partners to correct political and media commentary that the cancellation of Computer Aided Dispatch incidents had impacted on the quality of official crime statistics. The Penman report (Oct 2022) specifically complimented AGS on the quality of its methodology to systematically identify the number of incorrectly recorded crimes from 1.4M CAD incidents. AGS also consulted the CSO on its approach before concluding in September 2022 that 141 crime incidents had been incorrectly recorded over 21-month period – a negligible impact on statistics overall. Although the Penman report, highlighted instances of poor supervision and call taker communication, it found no evidence of poor data management practices.
- June 2023: AGS engaged with partners including the CSO to agree the reporting of low volume (<10) statistics, balancing the need for transparency and an informed society with

minimising the chances of identifying victims in figures. There was no disclosure risk but adjustments addressed concerns about potential self-identification by victims.

• **Chief Information Officer**: A Chief Information Officer (CIO) of An Garda Síochána was appointed in November 2019 with responsibility for data quality and the functions most directly involved in the creation, processing, management, analysis and dissemination of data. This met the Garda Inspectorate's Recommendation 4.4 – *'The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána designates one senior manager as the lead for both crime counting rules and the Garda Information Service Centre'.*

• **Organisational**: The Data and Technology (CIO) Branch commenced reporting to the Deputy Commissioner, Policing and Security in June 2021. This reflects the increased importance and direct participation of data and technology in frontline policing. Data and Technology functions work (literally) side by side with Garda members to promote and provide quality data to enable Gardaí to keep people safe.

• **Data and Technology Vision** and associated plans and strategies have been communicated extensively internally and externally (e.g. Policing Authority and the Implementation Group on Policing Reform). The Vision document defines data quality as fitness for purpose and clearly articulates the importance of data quality to achieving Information Led Policing. By taking ownership of the 8th principle of the Commission of the Future of Policing in Ireland, this document and vision embeds data quality as essential to the overall transformation of An Garda Síochána. An updated Data & Technology Vision is being published in Q3 2023.

• **Organisation Development Plans and Expansion of key functions involved in promoting data usage and quality.** Initial steps include the growth of GSAS and GISC by 30 staff (to over 70 and 280 respectively), the appointment of a Data Architect with ongoing investment in mobile data stations that "gives back" data to frontline policing; the establishment of the policy, advice and compliance section with the Garda National Data Protection Office; and the development and implementation of a "GardaSAFE", also known as CAD 2.

The data architecture function has led on the creation of a Hadoop based big data analytics platform, data ingestion and the selection of data analysis and visualisation tools such as Power BI.

• **Training:** GISC Staff receive extensive training upon commencement in their roles, as outlined above and below. Data Quality forms an integral part of that training and with the Garda Member calling GISC to create incidents, the quality of the data captured and recorded is central to the recording process.

Training of Garda members and GISC staff on crime recording such as hate motivation recording GardaSAFE and SIS Recast demonstrate the organisations commitment to Data Quality.

New Garda Probationers are trained by the Garda College, as outlined below.

The creation of Human Rights Champions who have completed the UL level 8 qualification emphasises the importance of quality data to accountability alongside personal accountability is a cornerstone of the Garda Code of Ethics.

B2. Is there a clear shared understanding of what 'good quality data' means within the organisation? How is this defined and communicated throughout the organisation?

Answer to B2:

There are over 30 references to data and information quality (with associated definitions) in the Data and Technology Vision agreed with the Garda Senior Leadership Team, the Policing Authority and the Implementation Group on Policing Reform.

While there is no formal policy/procedure on 'good quality data', it is demonstrated across the organisation through multiple operational and governance processes, including:

- Training, as outlined above in B1, reinforces the need for good quality data. Policing, by its very nature, emphasises the importance of collection of data that is fit for the purpose it is intended.

- Relevant, Accuracy, Coherency and Accessibility are all cornerstones of the development of policy and procedures across AGS. For example, the recent recording of the Victim Offender Relationship, alongside the coherency checks introduced to ensure the accurate recording of the Domestic Motive highlights a clear understanding of good quality data.

- From an organisation perspective, the Data Governance Board, chaired by the Deputy Commissioner Policing & Security has overall strategic oversight of Data Governance.

- The Data Quality Framework (identification of incidents which require further updating), alongside the Data Quality KPIs and Metrics which are published alongside internal metrics showing the helicopter oversight (at Divisional level) highlights a strong understanding of good data quality.

- The development of a PAF administrator network by GISC provides a direct connection between PULSE data experts in operational Districts/Divisions and GISC.

- PULSE updates/information is communicated throughout the organisation via bulletins and Newsbeat – the organisational communications channel and on the Garda Portal (Intranet).

B3. Outline any quality improvement programmes or new quality management initiatives that have been put in place since the last Quality review in 2021 which will impact on the quality of PULSE data?

Answer to B3:

AGS adopted a Data Quality Action Plan in 2019, the objective of which is to improve data quality at AGS. The majority of the 2019 Data Quality Actions are completed.

As well as initiatives highlighted in other answers, developments/improvements to data quality since 2021 include:

- **Development of the Data and Technology Vision**: with a foundation on data quality.

- **Ongoing meetings of the Data Governance Board**: Meetings of the Board which is chaired by the Deputy Commissioner, Policing and Security, resumed in autumn 2022; the Board has met four times since September 2022.

- **Formalisation of the closed loop data collection quality process**: Garda member – GISC creation – separate review – PAF process – Garda member.

- **Introduction and development of PULSE changes**: for example, victim/offender relationship recording, prompts for Domestic Abuse Motive Recording, New Incident Recording Types, further integration of PULSE and CAD II (GARDASafe).

- **PULSE record merge process** – The updated Masterclass Training on Merging is now fully operational in the Limerick and Mayo Division. Further training will occur with the rollout of the Op Model across the organisation. Merge rates in Divisions being tracked at the Deputy Commissioner, Policing & Security monthly PAF.

- **Incident Outcomes:** This is a large scale project to implement a system of outcomes-based measurement for crime incidents. Data related to incident outcomes will provide significant additional information to stakeholders on why some crime incidents do not progress to a sanction while illustrating the work undertaken by An Garda Síochána to investigate the incident. Investigations will no longer be able to be closed on PULSE if the incident has a status of "under investigation" to ensure that each incident is closed when the investigation has reached a conclusion and an incident outcome is assigned. Additionally, as part of the policy and procedures, oversight on recorded sanctions and non-sanctions will be undertaken within Divisions through the Performance and Assurance function. The pilot project commenced in February 2022, and is due to conclude Q4 2023. Further details are set out in C10 below.

- **Capturing the Victim: Offender relationship:** AGS began recording the Victim Offender relationship in July 2021. The capture of this data, which was known by Garda Members, has provided powerful operational data to frontline operational members and Garda management.

  In addition, the capture of this data, and in some cases an updating of historical data has enabled powerful analytical insights to support policy formation. This data has enabled both AGS and CSO to publish data externally.

As outlined above, the introduction of the capture of this data has enabled a coherency check on the Victim Offender Relationship and the recording of the Domestic MO.

The metrics associated with this coherency check are published monthly.

- **GardaSAFE / CAD 2:** GardaSAFE (Situation Awareness for Enhanced Security) is the new CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch). GardaSAFE became operational for the North Western Region on 20 March 2023 and has since been extended to the Southern and Eastern Regions. It is due to be extended to the DMR and become fully operational nationwide in October 2023. Garda Safe introduces a new interactive platform for CAD Call Takers and Dispatchers to help them engage with the public and Garda Responders.

  With the updated system, more information will be captured by the CAD Call Taker and more information will be contained in the Garda Safe skeleton incident.

  The new GardaSAFE emergency response system will support AGS commitment to victims by enhancing response standards, and ensuring that instant and vital information is provided to Gardaí on the frontline.

  It will also provide a more detailed skeleton incident on PULSE with important initial report data, with a view to improving the data quality of the corresponding incidents on PULSE meaning data is only captured once at reused multiple times.

  The CSO 2021 Quality Assessment outlined three core areas to be completed.

  1- Crime Counting Rules Adherence. Following the allocation of additional resources to GISC and the putting in place of a comprehensive new process, this target is now complete, and as outlined, is in place for all incidents created after 1 July 2022. This area of work now continues on a "business as usual basis". (Please see above under section A6.)
  2- Review of the Incident Recording Process. AGS requested an independent consulting organisation to complete this and the review concluded in September 2023. The details of the review are noted in A5 above.
  3- Publication of Data Quality Metrics. This began in May 2022 and has continued. In addition, AGS has conducted a Data Quality Assessment of the 2022 PULSE Crime Data for Data Quality, as noted in A5 above.

B4. What specific training is in place for established Garda members, trainees and Garda staff at GISC in respect of data management and its quality?

Answer to B4:

GISC provides an extensive training programme to new recruits.

New GISC recruits spend three weeks' classroom learning followed by two weeks taking calls and creating incidents with one-to-one training. They then join their teams and begin shift work. For a number of weeks after they join their teams, all incidents they create are reviewed the following day and feedback provided. Refresher training is provided approximately six months after staff start.

Training is also provided to new Reviewers, involving two days of training in the classroom followed by three weeks of intensive feedback and coaching.

In addition, training is provided to all Call Takers and Reviewers in relation to all significant updates or new functionality on PULSE. For example, during Q1 of 2023, training took place at GISC on the new GardaSAFE (CAD 2) system and on SIS Recast.

GISC has comprehensive Training Manuals for new ICRs and Reviewers.

GISC is responsible for maintaining the PULSE Incident Creation Manual, a very comprehensive document which GISC Call Takers and Reviewers refer to on a daily basis and which is also available to the wider Garda organisation.

The Garda College delivers training on PULSE management and recording. Topics include Data Protection, using PULSE, creation of key incidents alongside using PULSE to search for data alongside recording intelligence.

Significant data management policy & procedural changes, such as GARDASafe are rolled out by the Garda College and the Strategic Transformation Office. Training occurs either online or a hybrid model and emphasises the importance of data management and quality.

Such examples include, Hate Crime, Domestic Violence, SIS Recast and GARDASafe training.

Part C – Assurance of data quality for statistical purposes

This section looks in more detail at data assurance, with specific emphasis on data used to compile official Recorded Crime statistics. It considers the measures in place to ensure that crime which is reported to AGS or noted by a Garda member is initially captured and subsequently assessed and measured for quality, and how this is communicated to data users.

Please, in all cases, provide documentation if available in support of your response.

C1. How does AGS ensure that, where an offence is deemed to have occurred, a corresponding crime incident record exists on PULSE? What checks are in place for potential missed crimes and are there metrics to show the effectiveness of such checks?

Answer to C1:

AGS is increasingly using automated mechanisms to initially create crime incidents.

An important mechanism for ensuring that crime incidents are recorded on PULSE as speedily as possible is the integration of the PULSE and CAD systems. CAD incidents regarding crime are transferred on to PULSE with a requirement that they be updated to PULSE incidents as quickly as possible. This integration helps to prevent a scenario where a matter that was dealt with by AGS via the CAD system is not recorded on PULSE.

An extremely detailed investigation was carried out into the cancellation of CAD incidents and how this could impact on the transfer of crime incidents to PULSE. Additional mechanisms were introduced to assure that incidents could only be cancelled for valid reasons when the potential issue was first highlighted in Q4 2020. The issue was flagged as part of the requirements and design process for CAD 2 which will greatly improve the ability to track a call from first reporting to incident to investigation to outcome.

The new GARDASafe/CAD 2, which is currently being implemented and referenced above involves increased integration between CAD and PULSE.

There is also integration between the PULSE and FCPS systems; where an FCPN is not paid within the designated timeframe, a PULSE incident and Summonses are created automatically.

The increasing use of mobile apps to issue fines is also eliminating manual recording of those incidents and improving quality in the event that they lead to crime incidents (if unpaid).

Garda Inspectorate recommendation 4.2 provided the following – '*The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána develops a new national crime investigation/records management system that records all information and actions taken relating to the investigation of a crime. This system must be compatible with new CAD and resource management systems as recommended in Part 3'*. In line with this Recommendation, the Investigation Management System (IMS) was developed by AGS. This is now in operation across a number of Garda Divisions.

The adoption of the Investigation Management System provides that all investigations will follow a common pattern. IMS standardises, digitises and supports the management of all investigations in An Garda Síochána. Investigations are initiated in IMS once an incident requiring investigation is recorded on PULSE. It is not possible to comply with the requirement to use IMS for all

investigations without first creating the incident on PULSE. IMS provides an electronic record of all information and evidence gathered as part of an investigation. The allocation of jobs and notifications ensure a minimum Investigation standard is met whilst providing a clear view of tasks and workload for investigating members, frontline supervisors and senior management. IMS maintains a full history of the chain of events for all investigations managed through the system. The system assists with the completion of the investigation file, disclosure and all jobs post court outcome.

IMS is now being used for the management of all investigations in eight Divisions including Waterford, Wexford, Kilkenny/Carlow, Tipperary, Wicklow, Clare, Meath and Westmeath. The national roll out of IMS throughout An Garda Síochána continues on a phased basis.

As detailed above IMS also aids in addressing the Garda Inspectorate recommendation 4.14 – *'The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána directs that all information and updates regarding criminal investigations are recorded on PULSE rather than on paper memoranda'*.

The PULSE based PAF process also helps to ensure that all crime incidents are recorded on PULSE. District Office and Community Engagement functional area PAFs review all Attention and Complaints incidents to ensure that details of a crime incident are not incorrectly recorded. Where errors are identified, details are forwarded to the relevant supervisor (Sergeant) to ensure that the investigating Member has the incident reclassified correctly.

The Office of Deputy Commissioner, Policing and Security, the Office of the CIO (including GISC and GSAS) collaborate to make sure that all crime incidents reported to the Deputy correspond to correctly classified crime incidents on PULSE (e.g. reports of deployments of anti-spit guards and all critical incident reports).

The Operational Performance meetings flag under-recording/reporting concerns such as hate crime motivations for specific follow-up.

Specialist units have an increasing role in monitoring crimes related to their areas and are provided with detailed reports from GISC and GSAS in addition to their own checks on PULSE. Examples include:

- Hate Crime motivation tracking by the Garda National Diversity and Integration Office
- Domestic abuse and Sexual assault recording by the Garda National Protective Services Bureau
- Detailed monitoring of COVID FPNs by the Fixed Charge Payment Office, GSAS and GISC to ensure that unpaid fines transfer to PULSE.
- Internal Affairs monitors and reviews Use of Force related incidents.

Regarding the Garda Inspectorate recommendation 4.6 – '*The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána enforces the policy for members to contact GISC from the location of an incident to create a PULSE report, rather than contacting GISC at the end of a tour of duty*, it should be noted that this Recommendation has not been implemented and with the rollout of Mobile Phones alongside a planned GISC telephony app alongside the CAD/Garda Safe Mobile APP, being currently planned, to all Garda Members it is not expected recommendation will be implemented.

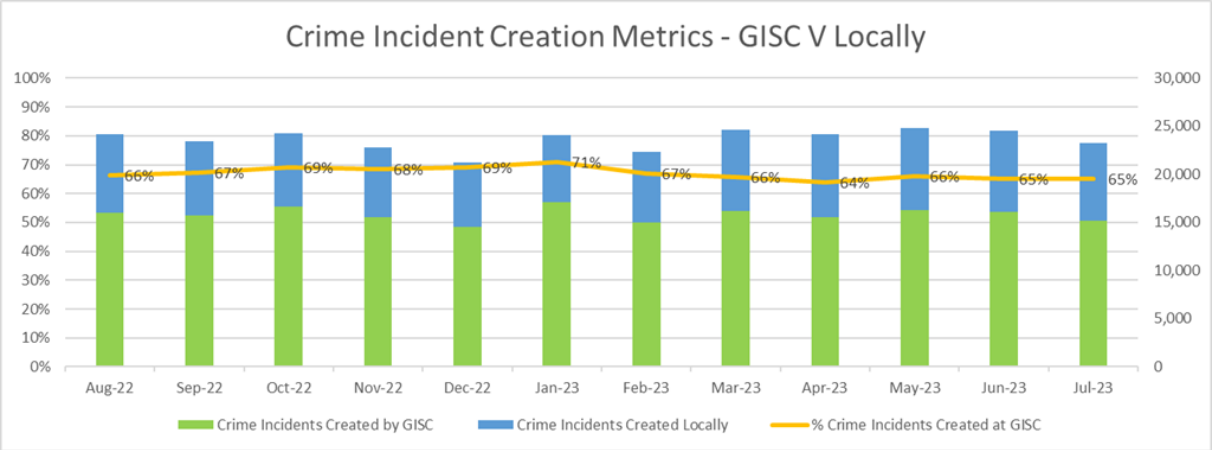
The timeliness of the Incident being recorded on PULSE is monitored at the PAF meetings. PAF incident records highlight the date of creation versus the date the incident was recorded. Any delays would require explanation, as part of the PAF process.

C2. What proportion of crime incident records are created through GISC compared to incidents created by Gardaí themselves? Are there performance targets for incident creation through GISC, and if so, what is the current status of these targets?

Answer to C2:

On average, approximately 67% of crime incidents are created via GISC with the remainder created directly by Garda members "locally". This metric is monitored by GISC on a weekly basis via a metric, which is among the metrics published by AGS on its website each month.

The metrics below outline the % and numbers of crime incidents created at GISC versus locally at Garda stations by Garda Members. Note this figure includes the update to the CAD skeleton incidents. The Crime Counting Rules are not applied to these figures.



The target is for GISC to create 95% of crime incidents, per Garda Inspectorate Recommendation 4.7 – '*The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána enforces the policy that all divisions achieve a minimum of a 95% compliance rate for using GISC to create PULSE incidents*'. AGS continues to be some way off achieving this target. This is due to resourcing levels in GISC and has been flagged as part of the risk process.

It should be noted that while metrics show that GISC create approximately 67% of crime incidents, GISC staff are involved in the review/completion/updating of many more incidents to ensure they reach the data quality standard to be marked 'Reviewed'.

C3. Please outline the review procedure for crime incident records created through GISC and for crime incident records created by Gardaí themselves? What proportion of crime incident records (i.e., GISC-created and non GISC-created) are amended following this review procedure?

Answer to C3:

All incidents created on PULSE, whether created via GISC or by Members directly "locally", are reviewed, with the vast majority of reviews being carried out by GISC. Garda Inspectorate recommendation 4.17 was as follows – '*The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána establishes a target for GISC to review PULSE incidents within 72 hours of the initial report*'. However, as of April 2023, for resourcing reasons, it can take up to 9 days for an incident to be reviewed.

Critical Incidents, as defined by AGS, are reviewed within the 72 hours and incidents requiring review for operational reasons.

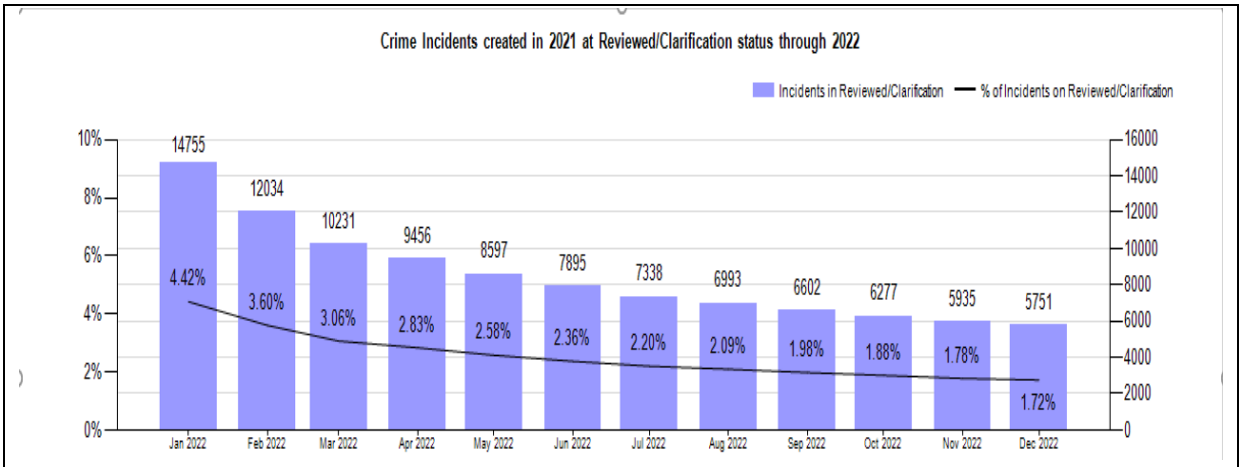
Once an incident is created on PULSE, its status is set to 'Review Required'. A reviewer will examine the incident and, if all required information is recorded correctly, will mark the incident 'Reviewed'. Should the reviewer require further information, they will set the incident to "Reviewed/Clarification". This requires the Garda member to contact GISC to resolve the issue. Where a reviewer deems the incident category/type to be incorrect they will reclassify to the appropriate category/type, as per HQ Directive 15/2018.

Where a crime incident has not been reviewed and a Garda Member wishes to create a Charge or Summons, GISC has a dedicated phone line for Reviewers where the Garda Member can contact to request the urgent review of the incident.

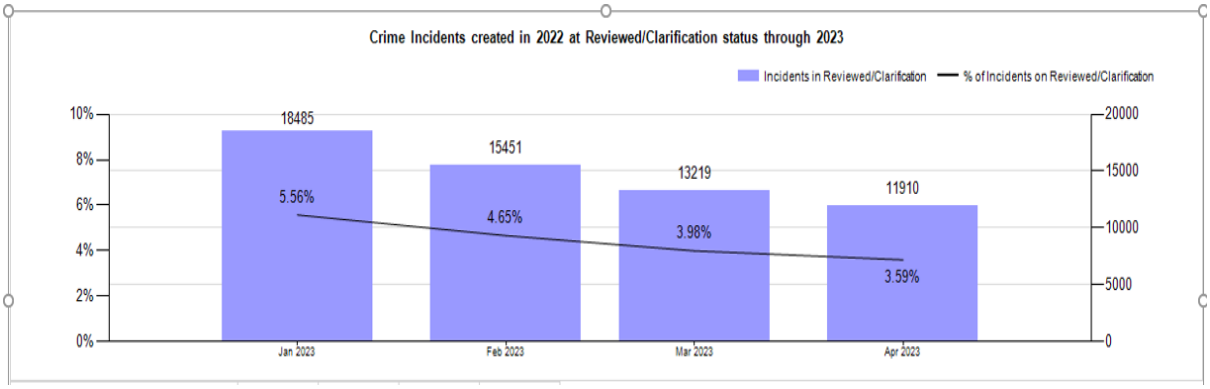
A single crime incident may be updated and reviewed on a number of occasions as an investigation proceeds.

A risk identified resulting from a delay in reviewing incidents is in relation to domestic abuse cases. Domestic abuse incidents require a call back from a Garda Member within seven days; however, if there is a delay in reclassifying an incident to a domestic abuse category or adding the domestic abuse motive (MO) to an incident, this timeline may be missed. To address and mitigate this risk, GISC issues a report twice a week to Divisional offices detailing all incidents which have been reclassified to a domestic abuse category.

Internal Data Quality Metrics, highlight that 1.72% of Crime Incidents created in 2021 remained on Review Clarification as of December 2022.



Similarly, for crime incidents created in 2022, as of April 2023, 3.59% of crime incidents created in 2022 remained on Review Clarification



Both of these metrics demonstrate the operation of a strong Data Quality Framework.

C4. How does the Performance and Accountability Framework (PAF) work in respect of incident record creation and validation of key incident details for crime incident records created through GISC and for crime incident records created by Gardaí themselves? How effective is PAF as a quality assurance system?

Answer to C4:

The Performance Accountability Framework (PAF) process addresses the Garda Inspectorate recommendation 5.1 – '*The Inspectorate recommends that divisions hold a daily accountability meeting that is structured and reviews incidents and crimes on a divisional basis to ensure appropriate action and tasking*'.

While the PAF process does not govern the record creation and validation of key incident details created through GISC versus records created by Gardaí themselves, it does have a huge role to play in Quality Assurance especially with regard to Data Quality.

There are regular, often daily, PAF meetings at District/Divisional/Regional level at which PULSE incidents are monitored and considered. Part of the daily routine of the PAF process is to read and review every incident, both crime and non-crime, and identify any crime incidents created by Members that are recorded on PULSE that are not up to the required standard. While the purpose of the PAF is primarily the management and review of the incidents from an investigative perspective, the accuracy of the recording is critical to investigation and follow up. As such, incidents are reviewed and considered in detail.

Since early 2022, GISC has arranged a number of data quality training webinars for PAFs, which are held remotely. The first of these webinars, held on 22 March 2022, focused on the classification of Domestic Dispute incidents and was presented jointly by GISC and the Garda National Protective Services Bureau (GNPSB) to aid all PAF Administrators identify potential incidents easily. Feedback from this webinar was very positive from both PAF administrators and the GNPSB in relation to correct categorization of incidents of that nature.

Further webinars for PAFs have focused on the Youth Referrals process (14 July and 13 September 2022), the process for recording PULSE incidents as detected in exceptional circumstances (28 February 2023) and CJIP (9 May 2023). Feedback from PAFs has continued to be very positive. It is envisaged that further webinars for PAFs organised by GISC will take place during the remainder of 2023.

The introduction of the new PAF E-Tool is being rolled out from GISC to PAF Administrators in Mayo/Roscommon/Longford on a pilot basis. It is envisaged that once this system has been trialled in Mayo/Roscommon/Longford it will be rolled out nationally. The aim of this new system is to aid PAF administrators in streamlining meetings, minutes etc., but most importantly rather than emailing Sergeants and Investigating members in relation to contacting GISC to update an incident, there is an "Actions" tab which the PAF Administrator can use throughout the daily/weekly/monthly PAF meeting to Action the Sergeant of the Investigating member for various different tasks. This tool will aid all PAF administrators going forward, as rather than emailing a Member after the meeting to update an incident or address a Reviewed/Clarification, they are "Actioned" during the meeting and the "Action" remains on the screen of both the PAF Administrator and the Sergeant until it has been addressed.

This means that all incidents that have been "Actioned" for update at a PAF meeting are the first thing on screen for the PAF Administrator, Superintendent and the Sergeant in question first thing the following morning for the next PAF meeting.

The training being rolled out from GISC includes a template for the weekly PAF meetings between Sergeant, Inspector and PAF Administrator where they address incidents relative to that particular unit. This template will also address and highlight all incidents with an outstanding 'Reviewed/Clarification' attached. This template will hugely benefit in documenting the data quality process within the PAF meetings.

It is also the procedure for most PAF administrators nationwide to leave an incident open which has a direction of closure on it, until the 'Reviewed/Clarification' has been addressed. This ensures all incidents that have been closed are recorded at the highest possible standard on PULSE. The Metrics above in C3 demonstrate this.

The GISC Data Quality mailbox receives queries from PAF Administrators with regards various incident queries and marking incidents detected. The frequently asked questions have been incorporated by GISC in the PAF training, with a view to enabling consistency from Functional Area to Functional Area and likewise District to District.

It is important to note that the PAF process is just one stage in a system of overlapping checks and controls on data quality at all stages in the lifecycle as highlighted elsewhere in this document.

C5. What checks are in place by AGS to ensure criminal offences have not been classified using non-crime incident types (e.g., Attention and Complaints)?

Answer to C5:

To address the Garda Inspectorate recommendation 4.18, previously referred to in A4, HQ Directive 25/2018 assigned responsibility for the classification of all crime PULSE incidents to GISC. All incidents recorded on PULSE are reviewed in GISC to ensure the appropriate classification has been selected.

HQ Directive 25/2018 also addresses the Garda Inspectorate recommendation 4.13 – '*The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána develops and circulates policy clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of GISC and front-line supervisors in respect of classification of crimes and supervision of the initial investigation of a crime or other incident'*.

HQ Directive 25 of 2018 encompasses a procedures document entitled 'The procedure for the Classification of Incidents and Recording of Detections within PULSE'. This document outlines the roles and responsibilities of Garda Members, GISC, Sergeants, PAF administrators and Superintendents.

Also in 2018, additional mandatory fields were introduced to some incident categories/types on PULSE. Mandatory fields vary depending on the incident category/type. These fields must be complete before an incident can be marked 'Reviewed'. There is a visual aid on the incident screen to identify when all mandatory fields are complete, i.e. the review check will have a green tick. If there is mandatory information missing the review check will be a highlighted. The red x can be clicked on and will display the mandatory information field that is missing. If a reviewer set an incident to 'Reviewed/Clarification' the review check will be set to a red x. Incidents that are automatically reviewed, e.g. searches, will be set to 'Reviewed/Clarification' if mandatory information is missing.

As well as being reviewed in GISC, Attention and Complaints incidents are reviewed at a local level, as part of the PAF process on a daily basis. These reviews include the incident narrative and classification.

A daily Critical Incident Report is circulated to all senior Garda personnel each morning. Incidents included in the daily Critical Incident report are reviewed by GISC, usually on the day the report is issued.

As noted above a review of Classification of Crime Incidents was carried out by the Garda Professional Standards Unit (GPSU) in 2019 and found internal controls implemented since the Garda Inspectorate Report of 2014 are robust, and fit for purpose.

In addition, as outlined above, GISC has introduced a number of coherency controls which will support the potential misclassification of incidents as non-crime. These coherency controls will be updated as required or when there are learnings from other data quality initiatives.

The 'Governance Report' for use at the Monthly PAF Meeting designed by ICT and available on the Garda Portal can be run at a national, regional, divisional or district level. This report contains a measure which looks at the number of incidents which have been reclassified from a crime incident to a non-crime incident and vice versa. Details of all such incidents are available to be further examined.

C6. Regarding the gap in time between a crime having taken place, being reported and the corresponding record being created on PULSE, please provide detail of the expected standard for the timely creation of records? How is the timely recording of crimes on PULSE assessed and measured?

Answer to C6:

While Gardaí may record incidents on PULSE themselves, the majority of crime incidents (c. 67%) are recorded through the Garda Information Services Centre (GISC). The Reporting Member (i.e. a Garda who attends the scene, or if the scene has not been visited, a Garda who takes full particulars from the complainant) rings GISC and supplies the information required to record and classify an incident on PULSE.

Calls to the emergency services which require Garda intervention are recorded on the An Garda Síochána Computer Aided Dispatch System or CAD. A record which contains details of the initial call is created on the CAD system.

CAD is currently in the process of being replaced by a new system called Garda Safe (also referred to as "CAD 2"). Garda Safe became operational in the North Western Region on 20 March 2023 and in the Southern Region on 3 May 2023. It is due to become operational in the Eastern Region in late May 2023 and in the DMR later in 2023.

Under Garda Safe, more detail is contained on the skeleton incident which comes across to PULSE. There is also more integration between Garda Safe and PULSE than is the case between CAD and PULSE.

CAD reports are classified on the CAD system under particular categories (which are different from PULSE Incident Category/Types), depending on what is reported. Once the CAD incident has been updated to 'closed' by the Reporting Member (i.e. having concluded an initial investigation at the scene), the CAD system sends a 'skeleton' incident to PULSE when the report falls within predefined CAD incident category types. (All crime-related CAD incident category types result in a skeleton incident being sent to PULSE).

The skeleton incident contains the following details: The CAD narrative - a description of what was reported when the call was made to 999/local station; Details of the Reporting Member; The local station (with responsibility for the investigation of the alleged crime); the location of the incident, an Eircode (if applicable), and where available, persons associated with the incident. The incident-creation process in PULSE provides for a CAD 'skeleton', to be updated with details of what the Garda reports from having attended the scene.

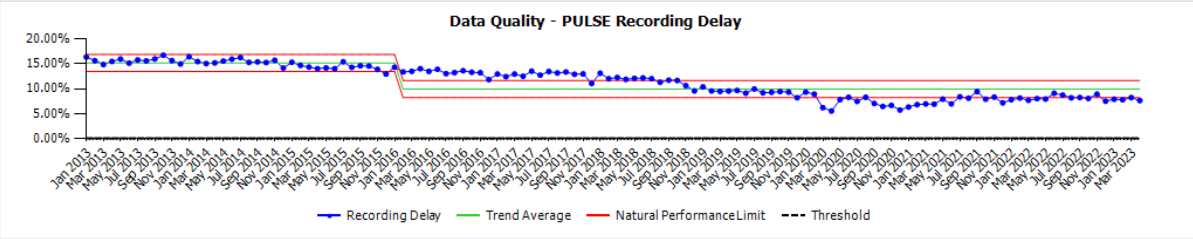
If there is no CAD incident available, (e.g. the incident was not reported through the emergency service), the PULSE incident will still be created from the details obtained by the Reporting Member.

HQ Directive 67/2016 addresses call handling and incident recording between CAD and PULSE. This stipulates that all calls for service must be recorded on CAD at the time of the initial report. As soon as the call has been dealt with, the Control Room must be updated and closed on CAD accordingly, thus enabling the record to transfer to PULSE. The Directive specifies that CAD incidents should be closed by the end of the tour of duty. A target was included in the Policing Plan 2018 to reduce the time taken between an incident being reported and when it was recorded (created) on PULSE. The purpose of this target was to ensure timely recording and improve data quality by reducing any recording time gap and to address the Garda Inspectorate recommendation 4.8, which provides as follows: – '*The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána enforces compliance with the policy that all PULSE crime incidents are recorded as soon as possible and in any case within a tour of duty*'.

Specifically, the measure looked at the proportion of incidents which took more than 24 hours to be recorded on PULSE from the time the incident was first reported.

It is considered that the timeframe of having incidents created on PULSE before the end of a tour of duty is unrealistic with a timeframe of within 24-48 hours being more realistic.

Performance against this target is measured via a report designed by GSAS which is available directly through Reporting Services on the Garda Portal. This report can be run at a national, regional, divisional, district or station level. In 2017, approximately 13% of incidents nationally were taking more than 24 hours to record on PULSE. This has been gradually reducing since that time. In March, 2021 the proportion of incidents taking more than 24 hours to record was 7%. Whilst this target is no longer current, the report remains available and is periodically reviewed.



C7. How does AGS check that the crime counting principles (i.e., Rules 5.4 to 5.6 in Guide of how crime is recorded by AGS) have been correctly applied? Please provide detail of the expected standard for correct application and how is this assessed and measured?

Answer to C7:

As mentioned in A2 above, to address the Garda Inspectorate Recommendation 5.4, AGS published 'A guide to how crime is counted and recorded' in August 2020. This Guide outlines for users of crime statistics (both internal and external) how crime is recorded, counted and marked as detected.

The Crime Counting Rules, i.e. "casing" of incidents, are applied at both incident creation and review stage. Casing is covered in GISC's training for both Call Takers and Reviewers.

From 2018, GISC implemented a limited data quality check on sexual offences and fraud incidents to assist in ensuring the correct application of the Crime Counting Rules in relation to these categories.

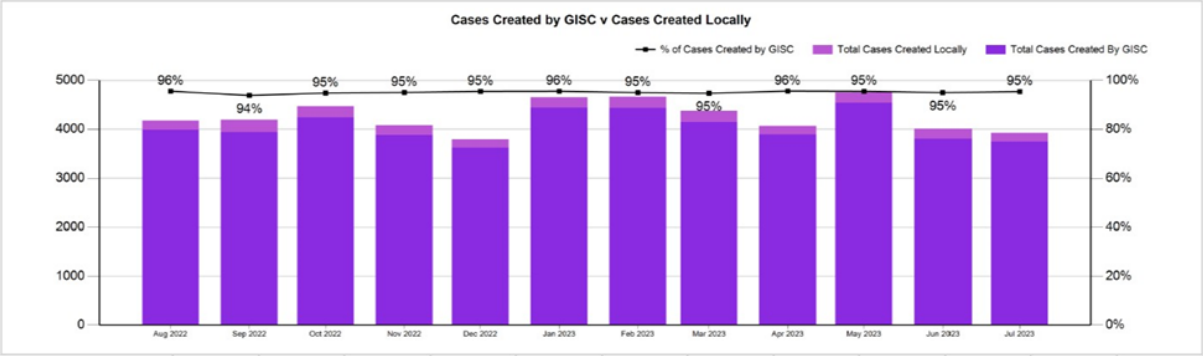
In the autumn of 2022, an enhanced process was put in place extending data quality checks on the application of the Crime Counting Rules to all crime categories. Under this enhanced process, all cases created on PULSE from 1 July 2022 to 31 December 2022 have been reviewed in GISC to ensure the correct application of the Crime Counting Rules.

GISC has reviewed a total of 24,857 cases for the period 1 July – 31 December 2022. Of these, 4,487 (18.1%) had to be amended to comply with the Crime Counting Rules. GISC's Potential Casing Report for the same six-month period generated 3,677 incidents which needed to be checked for potential casing. Of these, 1,885 (51.3%) incidents had to have a new case created or had to be added to an existing case.

As stated above, casing is a particularly complex and resource intensive area. The allocation of additional resources to GISC in late 2022 allowed the Centre to address the issue of casing in a comprehensive way for the first time. Casing errors which have been identified since the new process began in late 2022 were not being identified before then. The error rate should reduce over time as the process "beds down" and additional training for GISC staff is provided. The critical element is that the work now being completed ensures high quality data is being transferred to the CSO, via the quarterly PULSE files, that has accurate crime counting rules applied.

Casing is one of the areas captured in data quality metrics published by AGS. This work will continue on a "business as usual" basis in the future, with progress captured in the metrics. Casing checks for Q1 and Q2 of 2023 have been completed.

The metrics below shows the number of cases created at GISC versus locally by Garda Members during the period August 2022 – July 2023 (these figures are operational and subject to change).



C8. How does AGS ensure that the incident type classification is correct? Please provide detail of the expected standard for correct incident type classification. How is this assessed and measured?

Answer to C8:

In 2017/2018, responsibility for classifying PULSE incidents passed from Garda Members to GISC; this new arrangement was set out in HQ Directive 25/2018.

PULSE incidents are initially classified at creation stage, with the Garda member - as opposed to the GISC Call Taker – remaining responsible for deciding on this initial classification. Incidents are then reviewed as soon as possible (certain non-crime incidents are reviewed automatically; however, all crime incidents are subject to review).

The vast majority of reviews are carried out by GISC, although a number are carried out by members "locally". In line with recommendation 4.17 by the Garda Inspectorate in 2014, the objective is that each incident be reviewed within 3 days; however, because of a lack of resources at GISC, currently it can take up to 9/10 days for some incidents to be reviewed.

Reviews by GISC are carried out by Reviewers (Executive Officers) who examine all aspects of an incident. Where he/she considers the incident to contain all necessary information, he/she will mark it as "Reviewed"; charges/summonses may then be created on the incident. If the Reviewer considers the incident to be classified incorrectly, he/she reclassifies it to another category. The incident narrative is the key aspect of an incident in determining its classification.

If, as is often the case, additional information is required on an incident, the Reviewer will return it to the member on "Reviewed/Clarification". The onus is then on the member to revert as soon as possible; this process is overseen at Divisional level through PAF.

If a Superintendent disagrees with the classification by GISC of an incident, he/she may, under HQ Directive 25/2018, send a formal request for the incident to be reclassified to GISC's Data Quality Section. The matter will then be considered by a member of GISC staff at Higher Executive Officer level. HQ Directive 25/2018 also provides for a final appeal by the Superintendent to AGS's Crime Legal Section.

In 2022, 144 reclassification appeals were received by GISC and, based on rationale provided, 94 were successful. No reclassification appeals were submitted to Crime Legal (final arbitrator) in 2022.

In Q1 of 2023, 15 reclassification appeals were received by GISC and based on rationale provide 13 were successful. No reclassification appeals were submitted to Crime Legal in Q1 2023.

C9. What are the circumstances which allow for reclassification (i.e., incident type) or invalidation of crime incident records? What is the process for authorising such changes? Does AGS monitor the number of incidents changed in these ways?

Answer to C9:

Crime incidents on PULSE may be reclassified or invalidated either via GISC or by members directly "locally". To achieve The Garda Inspectorate Recommendation 4.10 – '*The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána immediately establishes policy that prohibits the changing of narratives and any other records on the PULSE system'*, and 4.12 – '*The Inspectorate recommends that the Garda Síochána audits PULSE to determine the level and scope of change of PULSE information records after their initial creation',* the following is being progressed:

Since 2014, PULSE has been updated with a history tab on an incident provides details of changes made to an incident, date/time, changed by, change detail, etc. While the Additional Information tab provides further details, particularly in relation to reclassifying an incident or marking it detected, e.g. reason for change, requested by, reclassification reason, etc.

In addition to the history tab, all updates to a narrative are tracked, saving the date/time and edited by for each update. This cannot be deleted.

GISC runs an invalidations report monthly which details the number of incidents invalidated during the month by either GISC reviewers or Garda Members. This report is then actioned to review the merit of incidents marked invalid by Garda Members. Incidents found to have been marked invalid incorrectly are revalidated by the Data Quality section and returned to the Member for update.

C10. Does AGS monitor the number of and reasons for crime incidents where a detection is claimed but no sanction is recorded against a suspected offender (i.e., a so-called crime counting rules exception)?

Answer to C10:

HQ Directive 25/2018 provides that a crime counting rules exception detection must be approved by a District Officer and relevant documentation submitted to GISC for this to be recorded. This documentation must include the rationale as to why the exception should be recorded. The Directive also prescribes the information which must be included depending on the exception being claimed (section 4.4 a-g of the Crime Counting Rules). GISC review prior to recording the detection to ensure that there is sufficient information provided. In the case of any doubt, the matter is referred to Crime Legal section in Garda HQ.

The relevant section of the Crime Counting Rules (CCR) under which the detection has been claimed is recorded on PULSE. This means it can be extracted from PULSE and statistics examined. Such queries are run on an ad-hoc basis by GSAS. Other spot checks may be conducted by local management.

Detailed below is the number of detection requests made under section 4.4 a-g CCRs inclusive in the calendar year 2022:

- 2607 total number of requests received by GISC
- 2203 total number of requests accepted by GISC
- 231 total number of requests rejected by GISC
- 173 total number of requests queried or issues with Crime Legal, e.g. child under 12 (s4.4e)

There is a constant rejection rate of approximately 9%. Requests are rejected if the rationale provided does not meet the criteria as set out in HQ Directive 139/03.

Work is currently ongoing between ICT and GISC to move to an incident outcome based approach to detections, similar to that used in the PSNI as well as forces in England and Wales. A working group was established in February 2022 and a pilot region of Galway Division accepted. The working group consists of members from GISC, GSAS, ICT, GYDB, GNECB, GNPSB, GVLO as well as the operational and PAF representatives from the Galway Division. The incident outcomes project is a significant opportunity to communicate the work An Garda Síochána undertakes and the reasons why incidents have not moved towards a sanction. The project reflects a move away from detections vs undetected to outcomes. Recording the data will provide rich powerful data for victims, stakeholders and internally to drive performance. Since commencing the working group has worked well to create a

list of incident outcomes, design the PULSE release and record over 3,000 incidents with a pilot incident outcome within the Galway Division. Overview briefings have been provided to the CSO and the Policing Authority on this project.

A training programme is being developed by the Pilot Division in conjunction with GISC and the Garda College prior to the implementation of the incident outcome project. This training programme will be delivered by the Garda College to Operational Members (Superintendents, Inspectors and PAF Administrators) on the changes to PULSE functionality and will outline the benefits of the change both operationally and to our stakeholders.

It is envisaged that incident outcomes will be rolled out to all Divisions in Q4 2023.

C11. Are PULSE records relating to court outcomes from courts other than the District Court checked for completeness and accuracy? Please outline how this is checked.

Answer to C11:

District Court outcomes are transmitted electronically from the Courts Service to PULSE. Such a system is not yet in place for Higher Court Outcomes. Currently, the onus is on the Garda Members to ensure Higher Court Outcomes are created manually on PULSE.

This involves the Garda Member attending Court or obtaining the Court Order from the Courts Service and then creating the Higher Court outcome on PULSE or in many instances, contacting GISC's CJIP section to assist in the recording of the outcome. In some cases this is not a straight forward process as AGS record Charges on PULSE and the Courts Services record Counts on ICMS. These two variable do not always reconcile and workarounds are used to manually record all the Court data on PULSE.

There is no systematic national system in AGS for reviewing the quality and completeness of Higher Court Outcomes on PULSE. However, when a Higher Court outcome is created by GISC the Court Outcome PULSE ID is emailed to the prosecuting/investigating Garda Member and they are requested to review the outcome to ensure it is accurate.

In addition, a report on incomplete Circuit court outcomes (RPT-C0001) is generated in the District/Division office and details Circuit court outcomes that do not have a final Court outcome on PULSE. This report is disseminated to the relevant prosecuting Garda Members, directing them to update PULSE accordingly.

AGS were involved in discussions and workshops with the Courts Service and CJOH since 2020 to develop a data sharing process for the automated transfer and therefore more accurate recording of Higher Court outcomes on PULSE. This project involved the transfer of data from the Court Service (ICMS) to AGS (PULSE). Unfortunately, this project formally ceased in January 2023. The Court Services have made a strategic decision to replace their ICMS system and as part of that project address the issues to support a data message that can be shared with AGS in the future.

It must be noted that court outcomes are Courts Service data. As part of the Criminal Justice Operational Hub, the focus of AGS has been on ensuring that this data is recorded correctly at source and transmitted accurately to AGS. The existing manual measures above are temporary pending the implementation by the Courts Service. Although AGS uses Court Outcomes for operational purposes, the data for statistical purposes should be sourced from the Courts Service.

C12. What information relating to the PULSE data collection process and the quality of data outputs is communicated to data users?

Answer to C12:

Data Quality Metrics are reviewed at the Deputy Commissioner Policing & Security PAF. Divisional Data Quality Metrics are being planned for rollout later in 2023 in line with the Policing Plan 2023 goals.

The review of all incidents by GISC alerts members in a timely manner to any gaps and/or deficiencies there may be in the information they have provided on the PULSE record. These incidents remain flagged for the member on PULSE until the issues have been resolved.

Where issues of more general application are identified in terms of data quality these are communicated to senior Garda management, for example, at monthly PAF meetings so that they may be communicated to all members for their information.

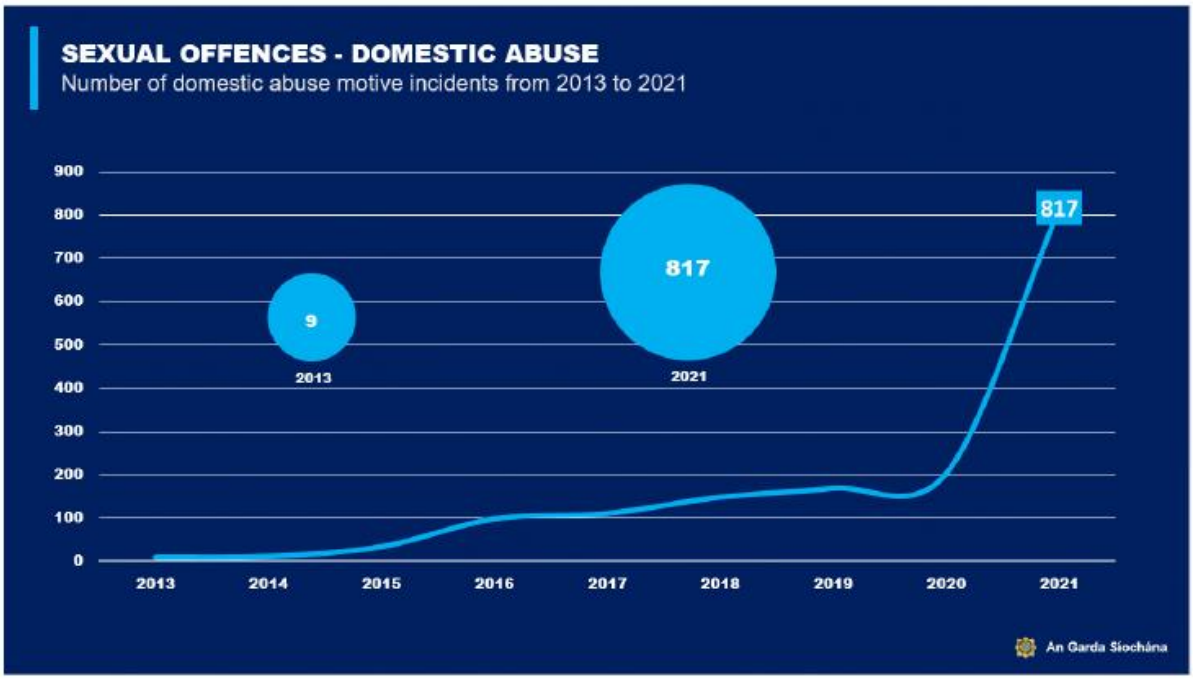
These actions all form part of a closed loop process as the Garda members who record the information are also those who rely upon this information to inform their daily duties.

GSAS include a note to reference the methodology and any relevant issues in terms of the data used in all their work for both internal and external audiences. In PQs, for example, this will include reference to any items relating to data classification and/or recording issues. Additionally, users are alerted to the fact that PULSE is an operational system so figures may be liable to change. This is particularly the case when reports include reference to very recent incidents as the full review process may not have been completed.

GSAS only provide replies/reports based on data in which there are no significant underlying data quality concerns or known issues. If information about which there may be some data recording concerns needs to be provided as a fundamental element of the request, this is highlighted to users.

A recent example of this can be seen in the release produced by GSAS on knife related crime – information from the MO field was an essential element here but there are some issues with under-recording on PULSE. This was specifically noted in the published report which is available on the link below: https://www.garda.ie/en/about-us/publications/general-reports/analysis-of-knife-related-crime-data-february-2021.pdf.

The milestone Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence report, published in September 2022, was a collaboration between various sections across the organisation including the GNPSB, GISC and GSAS. The report acknowledged data quality issues surrounding the recording of the domestic abuse motive in particular, the efforts/initiatives put in place to improve same and measures of the impact of the data quality improvements on our recorded DA motives on incidents of Sexual Offences. Screenshot of chart from the report and quoted text below:



"While the displayed increase is striking, it does show the immediate effect of improved recording practices, and how incidents of this nature can be better identified in the future. Contributing to this apparent increase is the effect of 'Victim Offender Relationship' on improving the determination of a domestic abuse incident. Of the 817 Sexual Offences incidents with a domestic abuse motive reported in 2021, 429 (53%) had the recorded relationship between the victim and the offender as either 'Inter-familial[1]', 'Current intimate partner/spouse' or 'Former intimate partner/spouse'. All incidents with these relationship types are subject to additional review to see whether the domestic abuse motive should be recorded. As this facility was not available before July 2021, the effect is clearly demonstrated and is likely contributing to identifying incidents that have a domestic abuse component, which may not otherwise have been recorded as such. With the domestic abuse Sexual Offences data as it is, the data would not be suitable to allow commentary on longer-term trends. However, given the data quality framework and data coherency checks in place, the figures provide a new baseline for measuring trends" (p.22).

[1] The list of victim offender relationships introduced on PULSE followed consultation with the CSO and were based on examples from other jurisdictions. The benefits of this information are significant for the organisation and all users of crime statistics. The list is currently being reviewed to capture further and more nuanced relationship types. The term 'inter-familial' is used in this report as an alternative to the existing 'blood relative'.