

**Press release**

28<sup>th</sup> May 2009;

11.00hrs.

**GSOC Annual Report (2008) published**

The Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission launched its Annual Report for 2008 today. The report was laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform Dermot Ahern T.D. this morning.

The Chairman, Dermot Gallagher, and his colleague Commissioners, Carmel Foley and Conor Brady, paid tribute to the founding Chair of the Commission, the late Justice Kevin Haugh who died unexpectedly in January.

Mr. Gallagher, who became Chairman on 30<sup>th</sup> April, warmly praised the enormous contribution of his predecessor.

The Commission announced significant improvement in the processing of its workload. Management of the volume of work had threatened to overwhelm the organisation in year one. This was brought under control in 2008 with a reduction of 33% being achieved in the number of cases awaiting an admissibility decision. In this regard, Carmel Foley commented: "Experience gained in year one enabled us to almost match the receipt of complaints (2681) with the closure of cases (2249). That is the result of a lot of hard work and internal re-structuring based on our experience in the first year of operation. We are very pleased with the results"

The Commission noted that the pattern of complaints was similar to previous years. The most common reasons for complaint were allegations of abuse of authority 26%, neglect of duty 25%, discourtesy 21% and assault 13%. The Commission also noted that the most common factors relating to allegations were Garda searches/investigations (26%), arrest (18%) and road traffic incidents (17%).

The number of referrals under section 102 - where the conduct of a member of the Garda Síochána may have resulted in the death of, or serious harm to, a person - was down significantly to 129 (from 245 in 2007). Conor Brady pointed out that experience was benefiting everyone involved. "In our first year some matters were referred which wouldn't be referred today. Both organisations now have a better feel for what constitutes a genuine referral. An important point also about such incidents is that cooperation on the ground has been good."

Ends.

Contact:

Kieran FitzGerald	087-2851096
Graham Doyle	086-6079456