



Garda
Ombudsman
INQUIRY INDEPENDENCE IMPARTIALITY

Statement of Strategy 2017-2020

GSOC's Vision and Mission Towards 2020

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1. Introduction

This Strategy document sets out the Vision, Mission and Strategic Objectives of the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission (GSOC), in accordance with the provisions of the Garda Síochána Act 2005, for the period up to and including 2020. We recognise that the appetite for change and reform within the Garda Síochána is increasing every year and we are committed to playing our part in policing reform by continuing to provide independent oversight of the Garda Síochána.

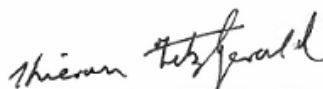
Effective oversight of the Garda Síochána will result in a robust system of police accountability in Ireland which ensures that gardaí carry out their duties properly and are held responsible if they fail to do so. The system is meant to uphold police integrity and deter misconduct. It is meant to restore and enhance public confidence in policing. It is meant to provide more effective policing. GSOC believes that its role is unique and one which has significant potential to impact these areas and to improve public confidence in the Garda Síochána and the service they provide.

We consider that the key stakeholders in the police accountability process are the complainant and the garda who is subject to complaint. We understand how difficult it can be sometimes for both sides involved in a complaint to go through the process. GSOC is committed to respecting human rights and to treating all of our clients with dignity and empathy. We hope that by focusing on the needs and rights of our clients, making our service more accessible and committing to better ways of dealing with victims of crime, we can make the police complaints process more open and straightforward for all concerned.

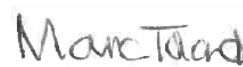
GSOC hopes that, by implementing this Strategy, we will continue to contribute to the reform agenda within the Justice sector and ultimately provide an independent oversight of policing in Ireland. To this end, over the period covered by this Statement, we will work towards delivering an influential, balanced, fair and proportionate system of oversight of policing that will be acceptable across the whole of our society.



Ms. Justice Mary Ellen Ring
Chairperson



Mr. Kieran Fitzgerald
Commissioner



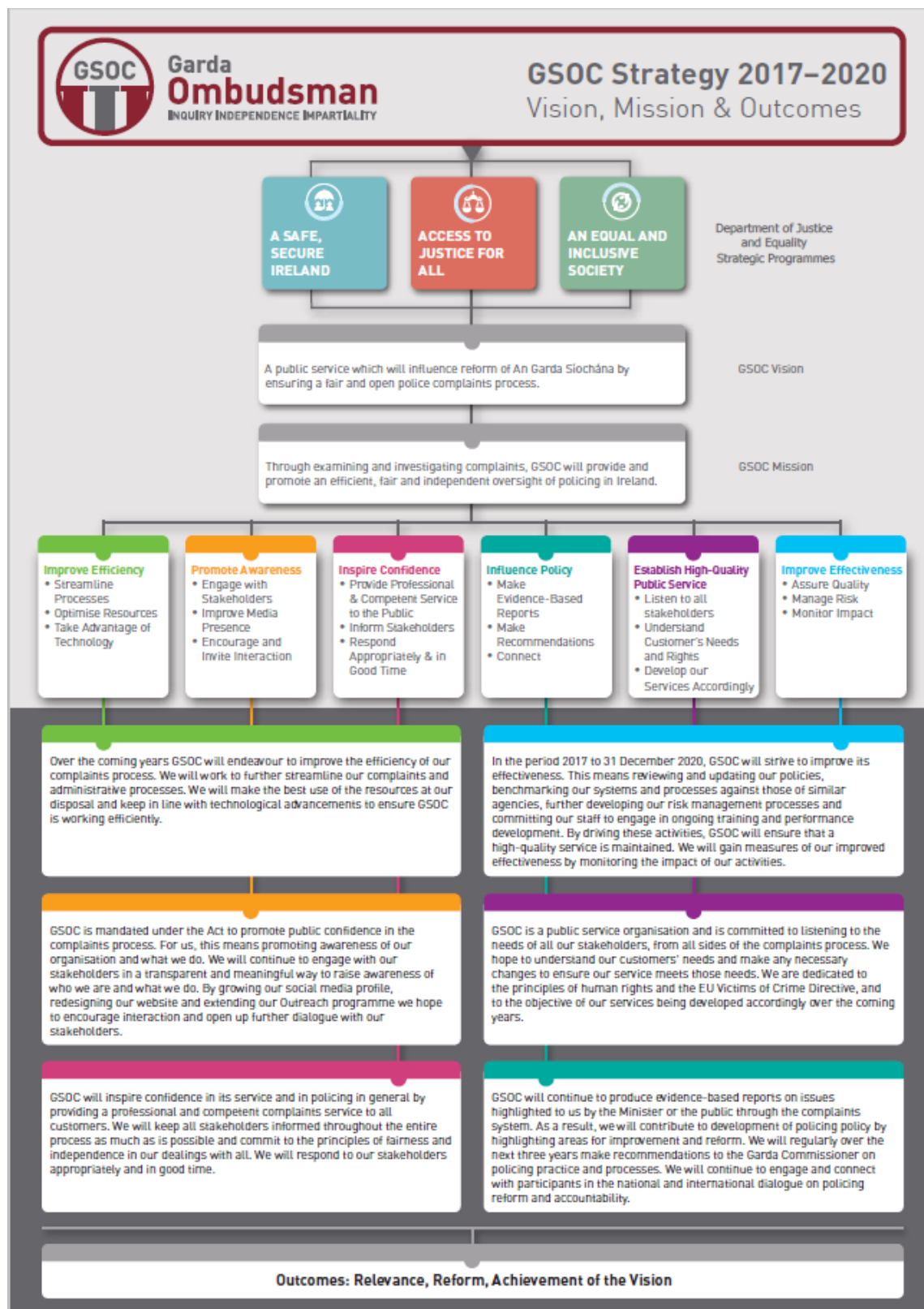
Mr. Mark Toland
Commissioner

26th September 2017

2. GSOC Strategy

2.1 Overview

A corporate Strategy requires that the Vision, Mission and desired Outcomes of the organisation's activities be identified. The schematic sets these out for GSOC.



2.2 GSOC Vision, Mission and Outcomes

2.2.1 Vision Statement

A public service which will influence reform of An Garda Síochána by ensuring a fair and open police complaints process.

2.2.2 Mission Statement

Through examining and investigating complaints, GSOC will provide and promote an efficient, fair and independent oversight of policing in Ireland.

2.2.3 Strategic Objectives

The GSOC Strategic Objectives are grounded in the three core values which have been instilled in the organisation since its inception:

- Inquiry
- Independence
- Impartiality

These values form the basis of all GSOC decisions and actions and will continue to drive our approach to being an organisation that puts human rights at its core. These values will permeate our decisions and actions as we strive to achieve our strategic goals.

GSOC's Strategic Objectives for the period 2017 -2020 inclusive are to:

1. Improve Efficiency
2. Promote Awareness
3. Inspire Confidence
4. Influence Policy
5. Establish High Quality Service
6. Improve Effectiveness

3. How will GSOC Achieve its Objectives?

3.1 Method

GSOC will achieve our Strategic Objectives through targeted planning within each Directorate and Business Unit.

3.2 Improve Efficiency

1. Streamline Processes
2. Optimise Resources
3. Take Advantage of Technology

Over the coming years, GSOC will endeavour to improve the efficiency of our complaints process. We will work to streamline further our complaints and administrative processes. We will make the best use of the resources at our disposal and keep in line with technological advances to ensure GSOC is working efficiently.

3.3 Promote Awareness

1. Engage with Stakeholders
2. Improve Media Presence
3. Encourage and Invite Interaction.

GSOC is mandated under the Garda Síochána Act 2005 to promote public confidence in the complaints process. For us, this means promoting awareness of our organisation and what we do. We will continue to engage with our stakeholders in a transparent and meaningful way to raise awareness of who we are and what we do. By growing our social media profile, redesigning our website and extending our Outreach programme, we hope to encourage interaction with us and open up further dialogue with our stakeholders.

3.4 Inspire Confidence

1. Provide a Professional and Competent Service to the Public
2. Inform Stakeholders
3. Respond Appropriately and in Good Time.

GSOC will inspire confidence in its service and in policing in general by providing a professional and competent complaints service to all customers. We will keep all stakeholders informed throughout the entire process as much as is possible and commit to the principles of fairness and independence in our dealings with all. We will respond to our stakeholders appropriately and in good time.

3.5 Influence Policy

1. Evidence Based Reports
2. Make Recommendations
3. Connect.

GSOC will continue to produce evidence-based reports on the issues highlighted to us by the Minister for Justice and Equality, or by the public through the complaints system. We will contribute to the development of policing policy by illuminating areas for improvement and reform. We will make recommendations concerning policing practice and processes to the Garda Commissioner on a regular basis over the coming years. We will continue to engage and connect with the participants in the national and international dialogue on policing reform and accountability.

3.6 Establish High-Quality Service

1. Listen to all stakeholders
2. Understand Customers' Needs and Rights
3. Develop our Services Accordingly

GSOC is a public service organisation and is committed to listening to the needs of all our stakeholders. We hope to understand our customers' needs and make any necessary changes to ensure our service meets those needs. We are dedicated to upholding the principles of human rights and the EU Victims of Crime Directive and are committed to developing our services accordingly over the coming years.

3.7 Improve Effectiveness

1. Assure Quality
2. Manage Risk
3. Monitor Impact

In the period 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2020, GSOC will strive to improve its effectiveness. This means reviewing and updating our policies, benchmarking our systems and processes against other similar agencies, further developing our risk management and committing our staff to engage in ongoing training and performance development. By driving these activities, GSOC will maintain a high-quality service. We intend to measure our improved effectiveness by continuous monitoring of the impact of our activities.

4. How We Will Measure Our Success

4.1 Approach

This Statement sets out GSOC's Strategic Objectives and the work we will undertake to meet these over the coming years. Under each Objective, we have included information on what we expect to deliver, and the difference this will make to our work and to the experience of people who come into contact with us, work with us and work for us.

In 2017 we launched a Business Improvement Programme, to enable us to achieve our vision of an organisation that operates an open and fair police complaints system. As part of this programme, we will track the benefits delivered by each of its component projects to ensure that we are able to demonstrate the merits of our work. We will also continue proactively to seek feedback from our stakeholders to ascertain whether or not the changes we are undertaking are making a difference to them. We will report on our progress each year in our Annual Report.

4.2 Resources

In 2017, GSOC's total budget is €9.577m. Although the funding will allow us to make significant changes as part of our work, some limitations in that funding will require us to make choices in regard to the new work we can deliver.

We have developed plans to prioritise funding of activities that will best ensure increased capacity to carry out independent investigations of serious and sensitive matters, as expected by the Department of Justice and Equality (DJE).

4.3 Strategy and Impact

The GSOC Communications and Research Unit will continue to play a key role in helping us secure and maintain public confidence in the Complaints system. It does this both through reporting on lessons learnt from our work and using those reports to improve our systems and influence changes in policing, and through communicating information about our functions and activities to the public and other stakeholders.

We seek to influence:

- Policing practice, by ensuring that key findings from our work are understood and responded to by the police service
- Policing policy, through our work with the DJE and with other external stakeholders.

4.4 Change

GSOC is responding quickly to the requirement to take on a greater number of investigations of serious and sensitive cases, thereby ensuring that they are independently dealt with. By doing this, we are continuing our work to improve public confidence in the police complaints system. We will:

1. Make sure that quality and customer service continue to be embedded in everything we do
2. Work in new ways to deliver improved capacity and efficiency, as well as greater confidence in the police complaints system
3. Expand our staff numbers and increase our geographical footprint to meet the increasing demand
4. Scale up sufficiently to deal with all serious and sensitive cases.

Significant organisational change is required for GSOC to achieve this level of change. The first stage is to recruit and train new investigators, find new premises, and make some top-level changes to our leadership and organisational structure.

4.5 Looking to the Future

We are now moving into a phase of transforming GSOC's processes and functions so they can support a larger, more robust organisation. Towards the end of 2016, we completed important review work directed at shaping the organisation that GSOC requires to independently investigate all serious and sensitive cases.

The focus for our Business Improvement Programme in 2018 and 2019 will be careful and managed implementation of this 'Target Operating Model'.

Our Business Improvement Programme is organised in an integrated way, making sure that key operational and functional staff work with a Programme Manager to control and deliver planned changes and improvements. The Ombudsman Commission, along with staff from both GSOC Directorates and across all Business Units, is directly involved in the Business Improvement Programme. The programme incorporates a number of projects directed at ensuring that GSOC delivers its Objectives. These projects include:

1. Promotion of improved skills, communication, consultation and recognition within the GSOC organisation and among its staff
2. Further improved delivery of GSOC services to the public we serve, augmented by modernised means of communication and receipt of feedback
3. Within the limits of legislation as it currently applies to GSOC, simplification and optimisation of GSOC's operating processes, directed at providing the most responsive possible service to our clients
4. Formulation and submission of proposals for legislative change in the area of the Garda Síochána Act, the instrument that governs GSOC's operation and service delivery
5. Optimisation of the GSOC organisation structure, with a view to realising improved functional integration and operating efficiency
6. Proactive alignment with all foreseen legislative and regulatory provisions, including the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Retention Act.

The initiatives and projects mandated by the Business Improvement Programme will drive progress, advise and direct on risk mitigation and provide a bridge between programme activity and realisation of GSOC's Strategic Objectives.