



# CRIME AND POLICING

**Our plan to rebuild  
An Garda Síochána  
and reduce crime.**

**Labour**

# CRIME AND POLICING

**Our Mission is to resource An Garda Síochána to build a force of up to 18,000 members and increase the visibility of policing in our communities to protect public safety, prevent and reduce crime, support victims and bring those engaged in criminality to justice.**

We need more Gardaí in our communities, but at present not enough new Gardaí are being trained. Labour will put in place a long-term plan to grow the force to 18,000 members to rebuild our model of community policing with strong local relationships. This will take time and resources as there is no quick fix. Recruitment is challenging across all sections of the public service, but Labour will invest in key worker housing to address one of the central obstacles - access to affordable housing.

## POLICING REFORM

Significant reforms have been made to the architecture of policing in Ireland over the last decade. Labour has expressed concerns with some of these changes, but we will:

- » Complete the work of the Commission on the Future of Policing and pass a revised Garda (Powers) Bill to codify powers of search, arrest and detention, and the protection of rights.
- » Carefully monitor the ongoing implementation of the Policing and Community Safety Authority, and how it will interact with the new Garda Board.
- » Ensure Fiosrú, the new Office of the Police Ombudsman, is properly resourced to carry out its expanded role.
- » Seek to reform Local Community Safety Partnerships to provide for stronger local democratic oversight for Councillors and the election of Chairs.

## MORE GARDAÍ

Labour will incentivise the training of more gardaí and recruit more civilian staff to free active members from administration and bureaucracy. With Templemore at capacity, we will invest to expand it and consider temporary measures to increase numbers using Garda HQ in the Phoenix Park and training modules in HEIs.

The training allowance of €354 a week is simply not enough to incentivise older recruits if they have families and financial commitments. To grow our police force and protect our communities, Labour will:

- » Put in place a plan to ensure at least 1,000 new Gardaí are trained every year to reach 16,000 by 2029 and the long-term goal of an 18,000 strong force.
- » Increase the Garda training allowance to the equivalent of a starting salary and review pay and pension issues for serving staff.

- » Recruit more civilian staff to free up gardaí from non-core duties and develop incentives to recruit back former Gardaí.
- » Invest in high visibility policing, grow the size of Community Policing Teams, and secure a more visible presence in our urban and rural communities.
- » Replace Gardaí as prosecutors at District Court level with state solicitors to free up Gardaí for frontline policing.
- » Invest in ICT to improve efficiency, HR processes and evidence management.
- » Continue to upgrade the Garda vehicle fleet and invest in garda equipment.
- » Ensure An Garda Síochána represents the diversity of our population and strongly promote policing as a career for those from minority backgrounds.

## TACKLING CRIME

Labour will take a number of targeted measures to tackle specific crimes and ensure more efficient policing. We are concerned at the rise of digital crime, and the need to adapt quickly to technological change. Labour will:

- » Double the size of the Garda National Economic Crime Bureau, review how it works with the Corporate Enforcement Authority, and hire more forensic accountants to take on money laundering, financial fraud, corruption, and other white-collar crime.
- » Strengthen the role of the Criminal Assets Bureau to ensure more effective and speedy seizure of criminal assets within two years and increase Garda resources to bring those engaged in violent and organised crime to justice.
- » Implement the Youth Justice Strategy and resource youth diversion projects.
- » Create a new forensic Unidentified Remains Unit.

Labour supports the rollout of body worn cameras but is against the widespread use of Facial Recognition Technology due to serious concerns about privacy, trust, and data protection from mass surveillance. Any use of FRT must be carefully considered with extensive public consultation to ensure clear safeguards to protect civil rights.

## COURTS SERVICE

Labour will modernise the Courts system to address delays in the criminal, civil and family courts, and adequately resource the Courts Service. We will resource the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to ensure the efficient handling and prosecution of crimes and invest in the criminal legal aid scheme by restoring the link to public service pay agreements.



We will also:

- » Invest in the delivery of modern infrastructure and the digitalisation of processes including the use of virtual hearings, a real time list of scheduled cases and begin rollout of a paperless Courts Service.
- » Support the Judicial Council to ensure that sentencing guidelines are adopted across the criminal justice system.
- » Review the recent increase in the number of Judges and what additional staffing will be required to reduce case backlogs.
- » Reopen public access to the Probate Office and complete the delivery of a fit for purpose Family Court complex.
- » Establish a Fines Collection Office.

We will also ensure there is a robust process in place for informing complainants and victims about sentencing guidelines, and how to pursue a complaint about a sentencing outcome.

Labour will reform the Special Criminal Court, and repeal and replace the Offences Against the State legislation in line with the majority Pearl report. We will ensure non-jury trials are the exception and introduce measures to address concerns about jury tampering.

Labour will reform the Coroners Service and develop a Charter for the Bereaved. We will also amend parole legislation to ensure better protection for victims and victims' families within the process.

## **PENAL REFORM**

Prisons are dangerously overcrowded at present, and this puts the safety of prison officers and inmates at risk, and damages rehabilitation. Labour will implement strong reforms including increased funding for the Probation Service to provide for greater use of Community Service Orders and the use of restorative justice. We will:

- » Reduce the use of short-term custodial sentences for non-violent minor offences and make greater use of community service and probation orders.
- » Invest in mental health care, addiction, and rehabilitation services.
- » Address the high number of people held on remand and introduce a pilot supported bail service for women.
- » Ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture (OPCAT).



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