

**Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland**  
**St Stephen Green House**  
**Earlsford Terrace**  
**Dublin 2**

**Dated: 1st of September 2018**

**Re: Promotional Process within An Garda Síochána**

With reference to the above and as a concerned member of An Garda Síochána I feel obligated to highlight the following issues.

The PWC Cultural Audit Survey identified the promotional process as being the greatest issue of (cultural) concern for the organisation. While the survey acknowledges that senior management (who participated in the survey) claim never to have personally canvassed for candidates themselves nor were they the recipients of entreaties by others; this is false. Clearly the canvassed members were going to maintain this stance, because if they did not, they would have admitted breaching discipline.

While the reader may not accept the views and opinions of the writer, the reality is that canvassing is very much a reality within the organisation. Despite the fact that addressing culture within the organisation has now been placed as a Tier I objective as part of the Modernisation & Renewal Programme. Unfortunately nothing has changed. No real reform in this area of concern has taken place.

It would appear that there are inconsistencies between Interview Boards in terms of the interview process (approach to questioning candidates) and the marks awarded for the various competencies. An independent review of the quality of the application forms and possibly the notes taken during the interview would show such inconsistencies. The feedback provided by the Interview Boards are inadequate, generic and at times irrelevant.

While the writer does not wish to labour the point, however, it is accepted by staff members within the organisation that there is often a queuing system in place, whereby staff members with greater services are first in line for promotion. Or more worrying staff members with certain connections will get promoted a head of more deserving candidates. A review of who has made it through the various interview stages would show such connections. The fact of the matter is that (in some cases) honest members will openly acknowledge the fact that they got promoted as a result of a telephone conversation to the interview board (the Garda member of the board). Senior management have at times referred to how they intend to get certain staff members prompted, for different reasons. There are cases where senior management have advised certain staff members to go for promotion telling said

members "this is your year". In other cases arrangements have been discussed regarding where staff members will be allocated upon promotion, despite that fact that no interviews had even taken place. Either the system is fair and transparent or it is not.

As part of the MRP the organisation recognises the need to develop its staff members but also to identify current and potential leaders. Promoting members based on years of service is at odds with this commitment as is promoting a certain quota from each Division/District or Section. The writer wants to see enthusiastic members with good leadership potential being promoted. As this will better serve the organisation. Promoting staff members who are only looking to increase their pay for pension purposes or staff who are merely going through the motions will achieve nothing when it comes to increasing the organisations governance and accountability.

A total and complete review of the promotional system is required. Discussions and reviews surrounding the application form are cosmetic and effectively a pointless exercise. In the current Sergeant to Inspector competition, while of course some excellent candidates are progressing, the writer is at a complete loss as to how some exceptional candidates and potential leaders have not progressed. But yet other candidates who lack the necessary skill set were selected to go forward to the second round of interviews.

There is now a need for the Policing Authority to take responsibility for the promotion of all ranks as Garda Management is not able to address this issue at present. If this is not feasible, that at least all interviews should be video recorded with a robust independent review process, as the current appeals system is not fit for purpose. As one retired senior member stated, appealing will get you nowhere.

Without the correct people to lead the organisation it will not be possible to challenge the behaviour and culture and bring real reform. Members will continue to be de-motivated and disillusioned resulting in possibly more scandals going forward. This is not what the writer wants to see for such a great organisation.

The writer asked several candidates who were unsuccessful at the first interview stage, why not appeal the decision? The reasons given were, their appeal will not be successful, senior management will see it as a personal attack, and it will harm their future opportunities. Has the organisation not learned anything from our Code of Ethics?

An independent review of the current promotional competition needs take place for the sake of the organisation as a whole.

