

Local Community Safety Partnerships

Date of Issue: 12th March 2024

Background

The Department of Justice developed the new [community safety policy](#) based on a key principle identified in the 2018 report by the Commission on the Future of Policing (CoFPI), that policing is not the responsibility of the police alone and involves other agencies of Government such as health and social services. The concept of community safety is about people being safe and feeling safe in their own community. At the heart of this policy is the principle that every community has the right to be and feel safe in order to thrive and flourish.

As recommended by the CoFPI, the Government approved the development of a Policing and Community Safety Bill to replace the Garda Síochána Act 2005. The intent behind the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act is to redefine the functions of An Garda Síochána (AGS) by including community safety and placing an obligation on relevant Departments, State agencies and local authorities to cooperate with AGS in relation to carrying out this function. The Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024 was signed into law by President Higgins on 7 February 2024.

The new community safety strategy aims to ensure communities are safer and feel safer by making community safety a whole of Government responsibility and priority, to be delivered through Local Community Safety Partnerships (LCSPs). They will be supported by a national governance structure to support the aim of repositioning community safety as the provision of adequate and appropriate social services consistent with local needs. Communities will be empowered to have a strong say in what actions are prioritised by the services operating in their area, and will also have a key oversight role in ensuring those actions are followed through.

Community Safety Objectives and Structures

Local Community Safety Partnerships (LCSPs) will bring all the relevant state services and the community together at local authority level. This will build on the work undertaken through Joint Policing Committees and supplement it by ensuring that all other relevant stakeholders necessary to constitute a more holistic forum for discussion, decisions and action on community priorities are present.

Local Community Safety Partnerships align with similar approaches in related policy areas such as the Sláintecare Healthy Communities initiative and the existing Local Community Development Committees. Each partnership will have the ability to consider the local landscape as it relates to the services already being provided, and those that are needed. The

strategy's statutory framework allows partnerships to bring together, oversee and drive the delivery of this whole of Government community safety approach.

Joint Policing Committees (JPCs) have to date provided a dedicated forum to support consultation, cooperation and synergy on policing and crime issues between the Garda Síochána, local authority officials, elected representatives and the community and voluntary sectors. The Local Community Safety Partnerships will now build on this work, and importantly will add the other critical stakeholders thus enabling a more complete approach to community safety in each area:

- Community-driven: Local Community Safety Partnerships will give communities a stronger voice in identifying, prioritising and tackling the issues they face. It will allow for a more broad representation from among the community, including local representatives, the business and education sectors, public representatives and service providers.
- Multi-agency collaboration: Each Local Community Safety Partnership will have a membership that reflects the needs of the area in which it operates.
- Accountable: A Local Community Safety Plan will be developed with clear targets, which assigns responsibility to the relevant service provider. This will help the community to understand where public services are concentrated and highlight issues of concern.
- The Partnerships will develop and implement local community safety plans and will take a strategic approach to their work so that issues arising can be dealt with in a coordinated manner, addressed collectively by relevant service providers in partnership with the community.

Objectives of the local Community Safety Partnerships

The partnership approach is built on two premises:

1. Every community is different and has different problems and issues.
2. Responding to those problems and issues requires a range of inputs from across Government, local services, voluntary sector and the community itself.

The response to the issues identified above requires the following elements:

1. Community engagement in identifying what the needs of the community are;

2. Commitment and buy-in from State, local and voluntary service providers to work together to address those needs.

The local Community Safety Partnerships will seek to foster sustained community involvement in identifying needs and co-designing solutions, and sustained commitment from services in working together to address those needs. The objectives and intended outcomes of Local Community Safety Partnerships will be to:

- Prioritise issues identified by the community as safety concerns
 - The community will be engaged and represented on the Local Community Safety Partnership.
 - Improve multi-agency collaboration in the pilot area.
- Increase community confidence in service providers
 - Service providers will be accountable to the community in fulfilling the agreed actions identified in the Local Community Safety Plan.
 - The community will be better informed about and empowered to participate in community safety activities in the area.

Local Community Safety Partnerships - Structure



It is intended that membership of the Local Community Safety Partnership will include: residents; community representatives, including representatives of youth, new communities and the voluntary sector; local councillors; business and education representatives; relevant public services in the area, including HSE, Tusla, AGS, and the local authority. The LCSP will have a maximum of 30 members.

Regulations to be made by the Minister for Justice will make provision for the membership of the partnership.

- 20 of the 30 members will be specified in regulation (including 7 local councillors)
The remaining 10 places will be appointed by the Chair in consultation with the rest of the partnership, who will consider local demographics and other factors that will help in deciding who else is needed in each specific locality.

Partnership Staffing and support

Each Partnership will be supported by a dedicated Community Safety Coordinator, Grade VII – Administrative Officer and an administrator, Grade IV Assistant Staff Officer. Both of these permanent positions will be funded by the Department of Justice and recruited by and sit within each local authority. The Secretariat for each LCSP will be provided by the local community safety coordinator.

The Local Community Safety Partnerships will have strong support from the national level:

- There will be a national **Community Safety Strategy**. This will provide an overarching policy framework and programme of actions, underpinning a whole-of-government approach.
- There will be a designated **Cabinet Committee**, to provide high-level political oversight and accountability to Government
- Below this, at senior official level, there will be a **National Community Safety Steering Group**. This will provide senior leadership and direction for the implementation of national strategy and for fostering interagency cooperation.
- A **National Office for Community Safety** will be established. The Director of the National Office will have executive responsibility for delivering the objectives of the national strategy. The National Office will provide training, guidance and other support to the Local Community Safety Partnerships. The competition for the role of the Director is due to commence shortly.

Chairperson

The role of the Chairperson will be to lead the work of the Local Community Safety Partnership and the Community Safety Coordinator, find consensus among the partnerships members so that a tailored local community safety plan can be developed and drive forward the implementation of the community safety plan across the community so that it delivers tangible benefits for the relevant community. The Chairperson is responsible for the leadership of the LCSP and ensuring its effectiveness on all aspects of its role. They should

display high standards of integrity, impartiality and probity and set expectations regarding culture, values, and behaviours for the LCSP and for the tone of discussions at LCSP level.

The learnings from the independent evaluation of the LCSP pilots informs us that the role of the Chairperson, particularly in terms of leadership competence and experience, is central to the Partnership. It is a significant high-level volunteering role, within their own community/county, which will require dedication and time.

In addition, the evaluation emphasises that it is imperative that the Chairperson is experienced and confident to facilitate a large partnership, strategically and relationally, bringing in involving stakeholders at all levels in a consistent and effective manner. It is a significant role and it is considered that the Chairperson will be a key enabler of driving the momentum and indeed success of each Partnership. The ability of a chair to act as an independent broker is an essential requirement.

The Chairperson will:

- provide leadership and strategic direction,
- lead the LCSP in making informed decisions and solutions tailored to the needs of the specific community which they are working in,
- implement the Local Community Safety Plan in conjunction with both community and public services;
- act as an advocate for the LCSP and representing the LCSP to the public, media and other stakeholders as appropriate.

Candidates for the role of Chairperson in each local authority area must demonstrate in their application evidence of:

- proven ability in building consensus and effective communication;
- proven ability in influencing a wide range of stakeholders;
- an ability to lead strategically in a high-profile environment;
- demonstrable understanding or the ability to grasp issues relating to community safety;
- the capacity to work in a sensitive area sometimes under the pressure of close public scrutiny;
- Experience of large partnership processes and facilitation skills
- Ability to act impartially

Selection Process

An Expression of Interest process will be undertaken by each Local Authority to identify a suitable Chairperson.

This process will ensure that each partnership is led by experienced individuals who will be confident in facilitating the LCSP and bringing in the involvement of all stakeholders at all levels so as to deliver real change in local communities.

A three person Assessment Panel will be convened in each Local Authority, to comprise:

1. A CEO of a Local Authority, who will act as Chair of the Assessment Panel. Local Authorities may wish to pair with each other and be the panel member for the other authority, if this were desired.
2. To be confirmed.
3. The Director of the National Office of Community Safety or a senior manager of the Department of Justice Criminal Justice Policy division (min. Principal Officer Level)

The Panel will arrive at a shortlist of the most suitably qualified candidates, hold interview where deemed necessary (virtual interviews are deemed acceptable), and put forward a preferred candidate for appointment by the Minister for Justice.

The term of appointment for the Chairperson is three years.

Funding

Beyond the core staff of the partnership, the focus is to that funding for the aims of local community safety plans should be sourced from the relevant departments/agencies. This is to ensure that funding identified to support the actions identified in the plan is provided by the relevant entity and that, where it is needed on an ongoing basis, it is mainstreamed within that organisation.