

**A qualitative investigation of the factors that have an
influence on the performance of members of An Garda Síochána**

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Abstract

This research study aspires to investigate a variety of factors that may have an influence on the performance of the members of An Garda Síochána. Considerable reference was made to any literature which would assist in helping the author to formulate a constructive opinion on this matter. For this purpose, six members of different ranks and divisions of An Garda Síochána were interviewed by the researcher, to gain an insight into their opinions on the subject in question. Matters such as pay, training and development, working environment, organisational culture, work life balance and motivation were the main topics of discussion, in conjunction with other pertaining matters. All of these factors are vital within any organisation, and should be continually implemented and maintained, to lead to high performance and achieving targets set out. However, these very same factors can have a bad effect on an organisation when not applied correctly. It can be seen in this dissertation what conclusions and recommendations were made by the author, as a result of the findings from the interviews.

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List of Abbreviations

AGS	An Garda Síochána
B.A.	Bachelor of Arts
CEPOL	College Européen de Police / European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
HRM	Human Resource Management
P.A.L.F	Performance Accountability and Learning Framework
PwC	Pricewaterhouse Coopers
R	Respondent
T & D	Training and Development

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Factors either intrinsically or extrinsically have an influence on the performance of employees in whatever working environment they are in. This is certainly true in the case of An Garda Síochána. The work they do does not compare with many other jobs, where performance can be measured in terms of profit or loss. Other public sector organisations are in a similar situation. The research carried out is attempting to establish what factors may have an influence in how members of An Garda Síochána carry out their duties. Details of some factors such as pay, performance, work environment and so on are discussed in the literature.

The function of AGS is to maintain a peaceful environment in the country, as its title translated to English means '*Guardian of the Peace*'. In doing this, they are in constant contact with members of the public. When the Royal Irish Constabulary was disbanded in 1921, the 'Civic Guard' which was later to be retitled as An Garda Síochána, was founded by Michael Collins and the Irish Government in 1923 (www.garda.ie, 2018). The force's headquarters are based in Phoenix Park, Dublin.

This thesis hopes to highlight the effect of how outside factors can have a good or bad influence on how members of AGS go about their duties. Without the cooperation of the public and a system where encouragement, motivation and acknowledgement of good performance is present, the work results expected of these employees may not reach a very high standard. In this context, HRM have a major role to play in creating and promoting the highest standards of performance within the organisation. The research has included a qualitative research method with members of the force of different ranks and divisions. Conclusions and recommendations are made by the researcher, based on the replies to a

variety of questions asked of interviewees. The conclusion and recommendations can only be as effective as the information supplied by the respondents.

Other outside bodies have carried out research surveys on AGS and made recommendations where changes in the culture seemed necessary for improvement. While research in itself can expose weaknesses in any organisations culture, only the willingness of the leaders of that organisation, to implement change can make the research worthwhile.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this research is to explore the factors that influence the performance of the members of An Garda Síochána. The definition of performance is mainly to do with the manner in which an employee contributes to the productivity demands, the effectiveness of the work being done, and the ability to reach targets and maximise results (Mathis et al., 2017). There are many features which have a direct or indirect influence on employee's performance. All organisations are only as good as the efficiency of their most essential asset, their employee. In interpreting the meaning of performance, one must conclude that it is the manner in which people are trained and how they are assisted to reach targets (Torrington et al., 2008). With this attitude and approach, reaching higher standards of productivity can be achieved. The capabilities of employees vary from one to another. Whilst some have a high capacity to achieve others have to struggle. With proper training and motivation, target levels can be achieved to the satisfaction of management and employee (Truong, 2012).

Different authors have different interpretations of what performance means to them, for instance Colquitt (2011), has argued that performance of a worker can contribute either positively or negatively to achieving objectives. The performance of the employee in promoting the interests of the organisation, by increasing productivity or performing duties, can be a key factor to an organisation's success. The practices that HRM have been introducing to develop and improve work performance seem to have a successful effect in the workplace. From recruitment of employees to training, target setting, wage structures, maintaining high standards and achieving objectives, all contributing to overall high-quality performance and job satisfaction (Carlston et al., 2006; Tessema and Soeters, 2006).

With regards to performance measurement, Neely et al, (1995), described performance management as a process of quantifying the efficiency or effectiveness of an action, while a performance measure is the metric used in the quantification process. Performance measurement is an essential part of effective management in both private and public sectors. Peter Drucker, a renowned management consultant advocated the statement that 'if you can't measure it, you can't manage it'. It is discussed by Whitaker (1982), what measures should be used in order to effectively determine police performance. Firstly, there must be an obligation shown from management to sustain an efficient performance management framework before even establishing what measures would be most appropriate. Also, it can be quite challenging to gather data in a policing context and validity of the data may also be uncertain. Lastly, measuring performance of police may have an impact upon their performance levels, for example, if performance is being measured as a result of how many criminals are arrested, a police officer may alter their conduct in order to appear that they are performing well (Maslov, 2016).

Performance measurement of International Police Organisations:

England and Wales possess one of the most extensive performance measurement programs throughout the world. In 2004, the Home Office introduced the Policing Performance Assessment Framework in order to meet the high standard of public services that they already hold ownership to. The measures were aimed at monitoring the development, in meeting key objectives set in the National Policing Plan. To begin with, there were 35 measures used with the intention of observing police performance at a regional level. As the British police were largely target driven, there were accusations that police were concentrating specifically on the crimes that they were being measured on. For instance, in 2005, there were 10 crimes

declared by Home Office which were to be most concentrated on for 3 years, in which monetary rewards would be provided for achievement. These incentives led to a higher percentage of bicycle thefts being reported than the actual amount accounted for, resulting in some forces being reprimanded. In addition to this, crimes that were a genuine problem to local communities such as burglaries and criminal damage to cars, were not on the list of most significant crimes, therefore were not being given enough attention. A restructuring of the framework had to be established to deal with these issues. This led to the introduction of the Police Report Card. This report card consisted of four areas which measured performance, which are; local crimes, satisfaction and confidence, protection from serious harm and value for money.

The results from these report cards were accessible to citizens of the public in which they could view the performance corresponding to these 4 areas. The significance of national targets shifted from national to local levels and police forces created strategic plans that reinforced the priorities in local communities. Value for money was the main concern when this plan was put in place as the country was in a time of recession. Another amendment that also took place as a result of the recessionary period was the methods used in performance management. A police and crime commissioner were designated in each county who were given the authority to dismiss chief constables if they were not performing to par and also to design strategic plans at a local level. The function of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary also came under inspection for change in May 2012. The intervention role, which is a support system when forces show poor performance levels will be discontinued. However, an amended Police Report Card was launched to evaluate differences in current and previous performance levels. Along with the amended Police Report Card, the public

confidence measure would be discontinued, to be replaced by a measure developed in the Home Office, which concentrates on the satisfaction of people who had recent interaction with the police. With renewed emphasis on higher standards which would facilitate restorative justice results in circumstances where officers could apply their own discretion. (Davis, 2012).

The Impact of performance management systems on employee's performance

Performance is key to the success or failure in any organisation. This applies to organisations whether in the public or private sector. In the private sector high performance is judged by the level of profits made. The public sector is judged on its performance in its dealings with the public. Performance management is very much a driving force behind the performance levels which employees are expected to work to. The main objective of performance management is to oversee the whole set up of the organisation. Its purpose is to develop an overall set of ideas to put into practice the many factors that lead to high performance and achievement. Consequently, performance management is frequently misconstrued as it is a highly intricate process (CIPD, 2017). Unless employees are properly supervised and encouraged through motivation, they will not produce the results expected by the organisation in achieving their targets (Johnson, 2000). Managers should be well versed in the objectives of the organisation. They should know what strategies and targets the company expects its employees to work to and achieve. Management who are responsible for implementing performance training must evaluate the level of standard which the incoming employee brings to the organisation. There are many things to consider when implementing performance management in providing employees with the proper training to achieve a high level of performance (Gungor, 2011).

It is important to recognise that the job of management is to clear obstacles that would interfere with the employee's ability to achieve high standards of motivation. Management must always perform in the delegation of their duties with the ideals and strategies of the organisation foremost in mind (Kandula, 2010). It helps the employee in producing a better quality of work, creates a better understanding between management and gives the employee a better appreciation of the goals and targets the company is setting to achieve its strategic ambitions (Van der Kooy, 2010 cited in Almohtaseb et al., 2017). Some employees will not reach the expected standards. In such situations further training may be necessary for these employees. Performance management must be continually monitored to improve the work quality of employees. While goals are set out, which the employee works to achieve, performance measurement is there to see that targets set out are achieved (Amartunga and Baldry, 2002). Achieving performance targets is the objective in all organisations whether in the public or private sector, however, it should be remembered that in achieving targets incentives or rewards should not be forgotten (Verbeeten, 2008).

Rewards of any kind generally have a positive effect on employee's performance. Some organisations use methods in which they can make their strategies clear and help to improve achievement. It is argued that one such system called balance scorecard (BSC), used to control organisational performance, is of benefit to performance management systems which in turn improves employee performance (Braam and Nijssen, 2004). Performance management systems should be well designed. Their implementation is critical to the well-being of the employee and the standard of performance expected to maintain the strategic levels set out by the company. Human resource management is also very much involved in such appraisals. The collective input from supervisors, managers and HRM helps to appraise

the performance levels of employees (Foss, 2007). Appraising how performance is progressing can be carried out several times a year. These appraisals are conducted by members of the staff and supervisors. Consensus is made on what sections of the organisation is performing to the standards laid down. Where deficiencies are detected, steps are taken to correct and improve the situation. It is the responsibility of the performance management team to see that the manner in which the employees apply themselves is in keeping with the strategic objectives of the company, with getting the desired results, set out in the companies planning projection.

Interaction between management and employee is critical to getting desired results. Performance evaluation is a method of checking how a person does a job, under certain performance procedures (Clarke, 2011). One factor which performance management should not neglect is the training and development of staff. To achieve a successful training regime, the relationship between those in charge and the employee must be one of mutual trust and respect. This is necessary in order to create an atmosphere where the employee feels very much part of the organisation. This creates incentives to perform at a high level in accordance with the strategic goals of the organisation. Cultural changes in an organisation can also make a difference to the setting up of performance management systems within the organisation. Putting the right people in the right position is a good recipe to ensure the targets of the organisation will be reached (Collings and Mellahi, 2009).

Neglecting the continuous upskilling of the employee will result in poor performance. Performance measurement can be measured on how the employee handles different tasks, reaches certain goals and displays high or low levels of competency. Competency can be

defined as, having the skills and know how, to perform tasks to a required level (Draganidis and Mentzas, 2006). Where performance management make clear and unambiguous directives to employees, there is a better chance that the system will be successful (Chuang et al., 2014). Continuous training and good communicative interaction with the employees and their supervisors, giving constructive criticism and advice where needed, will help the employee to perform better and deal with difficult situations (Lindbom, 2007). Performance systems that check performance on a regular basis have a better chance of raising and maintaining acceptable levels of performance. This is particularly true when discussing performance in the public sector. Of course, setting out targets is not motivating, unless the employees are given results of their input to reach whatever levels are set. Details of what is expected of an employee should always be clearly defined and any assistance necessary to help them reach their targets, should be available. Good performance when rewarded has a tendency to continue. Dealing with poor performance can be done through retraining and re-motivating the employee.

Encouragement from management should also play an important part in motivating performance. A survey carried out suggests that monetary rewards promised had better results than motivating the employee to higher performance (Duberg and Mollen, 2010 cited in Evans Kibichii, Kiptum and Chege, 2016). Performance is also affected by low morale (Analoui, 2000; Chambers, 1996; Rauktis and Koeske, 1994). With positive implementation of company policy, strategies and objectives, the employee will perform to required levels. Continued interaction with the employee, complimenting performance and encouraging with advice and consideration is a sure guarantee to maintaining a productive and happy work force. Neglecting these areas will have negative effects and poor results.

Performance Management in AGS

In the case of AGS currently there appears to be no fixed performance management system, however, senior ranking officers hold regular meetings to assess the performance levels of all members of AGS.

Under Section 46 (2) of An Garda Síochána Act 2005, such meetings would incorporate:

- Details of the policing strategy for that year
- How performance of tasks have been carried out
- Accomplishments of performance goals as laid out under Section 20 during the year
- Compliance of the directives under Section 25 as conveyed by the Minister to the Houses of the Oireachtas
- Details of any material considered necessary to be brought to the attention of the Minister

This report must be presented to the Minister by the Garda Commissioner not exceeding 4 months after the year end.

However, a new system of Performance Accountability and Learning Framework (P.A.L.F) is currently being implemented. As stated in An Garda Síochána's Modernisation and Renewal Programme 2016 – 2021, the system is designed to improve the attitude towards job satisfaction, performance in the organisation and the kind of service it gives the public. This system will provide the senior management to keep abreast with levels of individual performance. It will also allow them to set targets which the Gardaí will be expected to meet. Should training or upskilling be needed to achieve these results, then it will be available. The goals of P.A.L.F are as follows:

- Revitalising the motivation of the organisation members to set and achieve targets. Providing any assistance needed to perform their duties. Making time to have meetings to discuss and draw conclusions on performance.
- Create a better system of communication with staff, both on an individual and group level. This should be mandatory in all areas of policing.
- Have a well-designed way of dealing with any problems encountered by members of AGS.
- Make any directives on what is required of the staff crystal clear. Have a positive plan on the training and any support Gardaí would require. Overseeing that the needs are adequately met.
- Keeping a close watch on recruitment, training and development in career progression.

A pilot review was carried out over a 12-month period. This comprised of groups who surveyed the situation, formulating opinions through questionnaires and meetings. A report was created by an independent party. Following this it is the intention to provide a performance management structure of how matters of future development, interaction and supplying support to all members. With the introduction of this report a new era of performance management will commence within the organisation of AGS (www.garda.ie, 2016).

Factors that influence Performance

There are many factors that can influence performance with reference to AGS such as pay, training and development, work environment, organisational culture, leadership, work life balance and motivation and engagement.

Pay

Salary, wages, pay, whatever term you wish to use, is the driving force that motivates people to perform a job of work anywhere in the world (Brough, 1994). It is worthwhile to look at the influence it has on workers and the consequences the levels of pay have on individual types of people. With many organisations, how pay systems are structured allows them to remain competitive in the market place, however this does not apply to state-controlled organisations. Wage structures in general are based on the level or position held by the employee. It is considered to be a very good idea to relate pay to employee performance (Harrington, 1998), but regrettably in particular in state organisations this opportunity does not arise. There are many arguments for and against pay related performance. In principle, consensus of opinion seems to weigh in favour of applying pay structures to good performance (Randle, 1997). In contrast to this view, Lewis (1991) found that opinions differ as to the practicality of using pay to motivate performance and that it may take additional research to come to a unified solution on this subject. Workers may consider if the rewards are suitably satisfactory to reflect their performance (Belfield and Marsden, 2003). Contracts between employer and employees can sometimes extend beyond the written agreement. In an economic downturn for instance, wages have known to be reduced in order to maintain the survival of the organisation. Failure to properly communicate a satisfactory explanation for this action can have an impact upon the overall behaviour of the employee (Greenberg, 1990).

Pay and performance generally go hand in hand. Compensation for performance is often a topic of discussion, and it is discussed by many scholars that pay does not have an impact upon performance levels. It is believed that even giving things such as bonuses for work done causes other deficiencies in the workplace (Bryson et al., 2012). Performance among workers can be defined as the achievement of a job or undertaking within prescribed limits, to everyone's satisfaction. There are factors which help or encourage good performance. Where a group or groups are concerned the attitude of the manager/supervisor can greatly influence the standard of performance. This can be done by building good relationships amongst a team. Being clear in what is expected and rewarding those who reach the required standards. Showing little or no interest in how workers are doing will reduce morale and ultimately performance. Pay can influence people to give more in performance. Nevertheless, if the pay incentive is too low or only given periodically, any incentive to improve will soon lose ground. For many workers job satisfaction is related to their goal achievement.

Recognition from management on good results is sometimes more motivating than monetary rewards. It helps give workers self-satisfaction and a feeling of being instrumental in keeping the show on the road. Pay structures in the public sector are governed by the financial status of the country. This is not the case in the private sector. To motivate employees in the public sector in order to receive better performance, properly laid down pay for performance is recommended by some authors (Propper, 2006). It has been proven to have positive results in many countries when administered properly (Mookherjee, 1997). Proper pay structures generally guarantees a contented workforce. It can maintain staff who have no desire to change jobs. Performance can be measured by the results achieved against the costs incurred. Monetary incentives to control both, are proving successful in many areas. Sometimes in the

public-sector job security is pretty much guaranteed. This can lead to poor performance unless management keep a high level of control on performance levels. Clearly defined targets with pay standards framed to reward the employee performance, normally guarantees worker satisfaction, where output is maintained to required standards and pay rewards are not always a motivating factor.

Pay in An Garda Síochána

A comparison between different police forces shows that Ireland, Northern Ireland, France and Italy are much in the same bracket. Since the work of AGS cannot be compared to any other type of work, salaries should be structured on the demands and dangerous type of work they do. It is not possible to create a wage structure by benchmarking.

It is common knowledge that in recent years, Ireland has gone through difficult financial times due to the recession. As a result of this, the public sector was one of the hardest hit in relation to pay. The economic crisis that took place in Ireland saw big changes with regards to changes in pay structure. The state of the country's financial situation led to big increases in direct taxation. Public and private sector pay was cut, resulting in families in different income levels being affected with new policies being introduced. During the boom, while many made lots of money, another sector did not enjoy such rewards. During economic growth some people in society found that their position did not enjoy the benefits as much as others. Inequality can be the result of this. (Callan et al., 2010). Another feature of the boom was that it saw a return to work of many married women. Mostly these women were married to men on lower incomes, therefore, the household overall income did not change the levels of inequality. The boom did not make much change to wages inequality as compared to the

UK and USA (Barrett, Fitzgerald and Nolan, 2002; Mc Guinness, Mc Ginnity and O' Connell 2009). The recession affected both these at the top and the bottom. Lower profits and unemployment caused much inequality. The budget of 2009 brought tax changes by raising the income levy on all earnings within different ranges. Health levy and social insurance were also increased. The public sector was targeted most with reductions in pay, which had risen during the boom, out of line with the private sector. Pension levies were imposed on public sector earnings, ranging from 5%, 10% and 10 ½ % on earning over certain limits. On public sector salaries reductions of 5%, 7.5 % and 10% were imposed on pay earnings over certain limits. Loss of income were between 1% and 5 ½ % on a national basis. People in the top earning bracket were mostly affected with the salary reduction and levies imposed. To avoid allowing the financial deficit getting bigger, a restructuring of the taxation system is necessary to an economically viable one, one that gives more equality to all (Callan et al., 2010).

Since the amount spent on public pay sector has a large effect on public spending, the only way to reduce this is to cut back on the numbers employed there. The private sector is also impacted with the results of the recession, from the basis of employment and pay. In both the private and public sector, wage levels should be structured to avoid the destabilising effect of inequality (Callan et al., 2010). An indication of public sector pay can be seen on the following diagram.

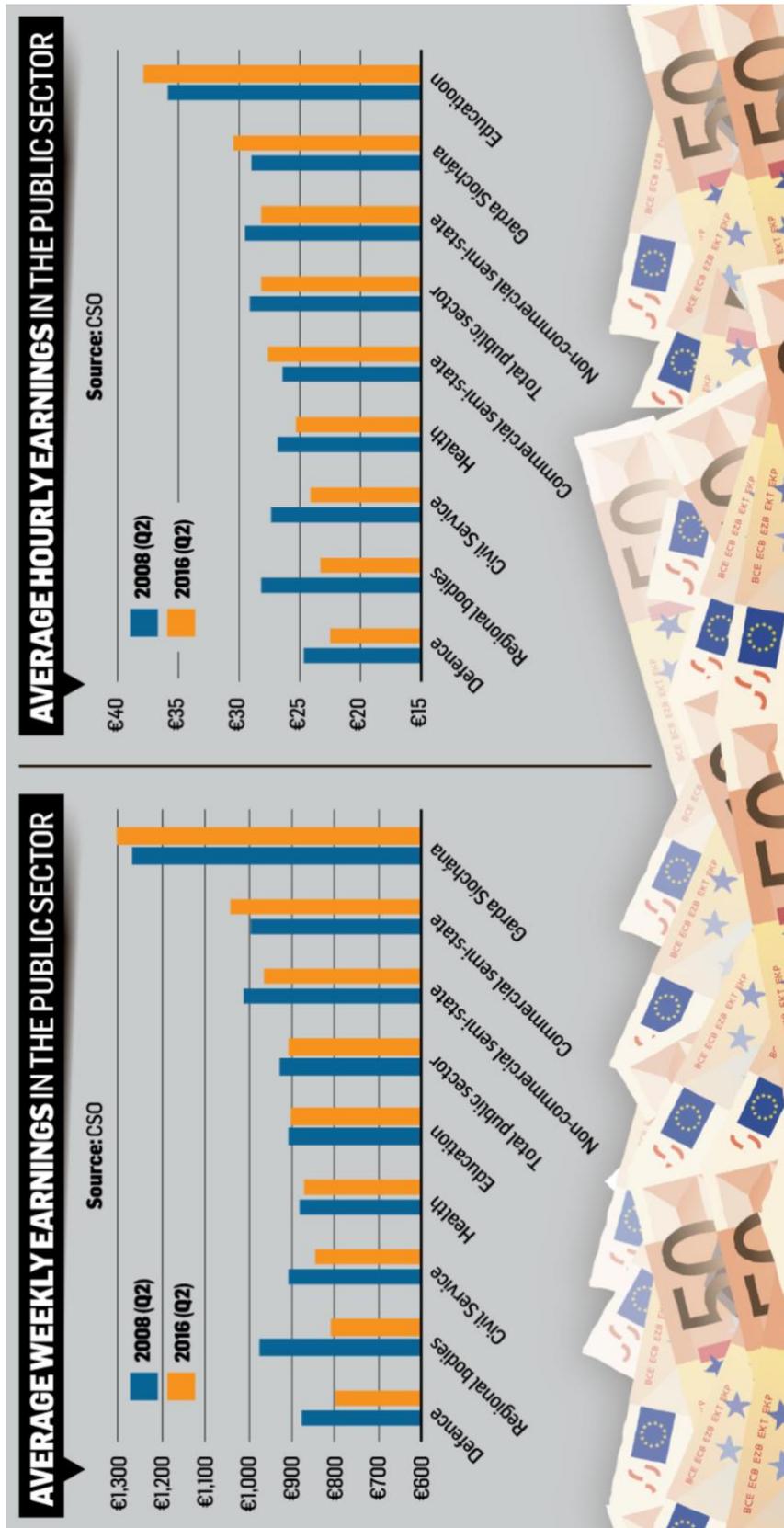


Fig 1: Earnings in Public Sector

Source: www.independent.ie

There is a conflict of opinions between Deloitte and other studies, one saying that pay is not significant in influencing employee engagement, the other stating the opposite. It has been reported in Payscale's 2015 Compensation Best Practices Report, that the main reason that lowly paid employees leave their job is because of poor pay. It is confusing then to think the difference of opinion that researchers have on the influence that wages have on the standard of employee engaged (Gibson, 2016). According to Deloitte, wages have a major influence in maintaining worker contentment. In some cases, research shows that wages are considered to be in the top 5 motivating factors for workers. It is generally accepted that where wages are low workers are quicker to leave their jobs. Nevertheless, where wages are high turnover is also evident (Gibson, 2016).

Training and Development

Training and development of the skills of employees are the foundation stone in which an organisation performs. If employees are not taught the most modern methods of job performance, they will resort to their own ways of doing things. If they are not trained to perform using the newest methods, they will continue to follow old and outdated way (James, 2012). Pollock and Jefferson (2012), explored that employees will not show positive results unless they have a determination to put their training skills into action. Employees like to feel they are gaining knowledge, which will enable them to resolve problems they may encounter in the workplace (Aik and Tway, 2006). The methods applied in training and development will only gain high results if they are clearly defined and understood by the employee. Some researchers consider that training while doing their work, produces better results. While other factors contribute towards performance, training and development are a major force in that area (Amisano, 2010, cited in Abdul Ghafoor Khan, Ahmed Khan and Aslam Khan, 2011).

No matter how intelligent an employee is, there is no guarantee that training will give a satisfactory performance, unless that employee is given the proper training to do a job. Without it, the chances are that the employee will underperform (Dessler, 2008). An employee that has received efficient and effective training and development, who applies the knowledge to the work in question, is a great asset and will contribute to the organisations success (Heathfield, 2017). However, there are opposing views which are discussed by (Torrington et al., 2008) that training employees makes them more attractive to competitors, therefore training them to further their careers elsewhere. However, this would not occur in AGS as there is only one policing force in the State and no competition involved.

Most well-run companies and organisations have the training and development of their staff controlled by the HRM department. Management in organisations are very much involved in the training of the employees (Jehanzeb and Bashir, 2013). T & D are the foundation of any organisation that wish to stay competitive and improve and maintain performance. In all aspects of business in the public and private sector the application of modern day training is imperative to maintaining enthusiastic and productive staff. The reaction of staff in an organisation where T & D are an ongoing feature, will be improved and motivated to achieve the performance levels required. Small companies sometimes use on the job training, that is learn as you go. The cost of providing up to date training methods is not part of their spending budget. In larger organisations, more sophisticated ways are used to up-skill the employees. The manner in which employees are trained and developed must be carefully monitored.

Progress reports should be kept on each individual's ability to learn and understand the purpose of training. Development of the employees' natural skills to higher levels is necessary if the training and development programme is to succeed. The level of success in such programmes determines the level of performance the employee should be capable of reaching in due course. One important part of T & D is the ability of the person giving the training to grasp the full attention of the people being trained (Seaman and Eves, 2006). Whether T & D is done on the job or through workshops the end result is to improve the skills of the employee. On the job training can give the worker first-hand knowledge of what is happening. It is cost effective and with proper supervision can be quite successful. Well trained and developed employees are a great asset to any organisation. They will contribute to good performance, increasing turnover and achieving prescribed results. Badly trained employees contribute to wasting time and money (Partlow, 1996; Tihanyi, 2000). This applies to any organisation whether in production or a service capacity. T & D must be a part of an organisation's strategy. Public sector organisations are now using T & D methods which were always used in the private sector. It is most important that any T & D programs must be tailored to suit the requirements of the company and the capabilities of the employees taking part in the training (Ferdous and Razzak, 2012). For any T & D program to be successful, there has to be an excellent relationship between trainers, HR managers, trainees and anyone in a managerial capacity or supervisory position (Mc Cracken et al., 2012). Successful T & D programs lead to higher performance and achievement in any organisation.

Garda Training:

On completion of the various stages of recruitment to enter AGS made up of Stage 1 - Garda online assessments, Stage 2 - the assessment centre, Stage 3 – Competency Based interview

and Stage 4 - physical competence test and medical assessment. Going on the basis that their background details are acceptable, they will be given the opportunity to enter the Garda Training College in Templemore, Co Tipperary. The Garda Training College is specifically designed to accommodate all aspects of modern day police training both from a physical and academic aspect. Considerable investment has been made to train and educate young men and women to become part of a modern-day police force. The opportunities are available for students to achieve degrees from level 6 to level 9 which are recognised by National Qualification Framework (NQF) of Ireland.

The preliminary training of 34 weeks takes place in Templemore. To allow for better communication between fellow trainees and lecturers, classes are kept to a minimum size. Old methods of teaching have been replaced with more up to date approaches which include the trainees' approach to ethics, human rights and dealing with the community. Following this period of training, the Garda trainee is sent to a Garda station for further development. Periodically, the trainee will return to Templemore for further training. In total, the training period lasts 104 weeks. At the end of this time it is perceived that a B.A. degree in Applied Policing (Level 7) will have been achieved. This degree is recognised by the University of Limerick. This degree is the basis from which further development will progress. This B.A. degree is designed to teach students how to deal with real life policing situations. In this context, a group/groups of trainees will be asked to resolve a particular problem. This practice is key to developing the students with the necessary skills to handle and resolve issues which will arise on a daily basis (Garda.ie, 2018).

Continuous training is nationally available to any member of the Gardaí from their entry to the force. The continuous professional development (CPD) department in the Garda Training College develop and provide training programs for Gardaí throughout the country. Gardaí who wish to pursue a B.A., B.SC, MA or PHD course have the use of the Garda College library to assist them in their studies. Gardaí are also trained on international policing methods through the agency CEPOL of the European Union. This knowledge helps them to implement their learning in their day to day duties. Such training applies to all members of the force. Various other training programs are there for Sergeants, Inspectors, Superintendents and so on. Some Gardaí will receive different training to others, such as members who are obliged to carry firearms in the course of their duty, as opposed to members who would be confined to general office duties. Their training requirements will be completely different. It has emerged from the PwC audit in 2018 that not sufficient significance is paid to the training and development within AGS (PwC, 2018).

Working Environment

Several opinions by researchers have shown that the working environment plays a big part in how comfortable the employee is at their place of work (Hardiyono, Hamid and Mardiana Y, 2017). People who work in an environment that is comfortable and pleasant will produce better results than someone who works in monotonous surroundings. Many organisations have a set of strong cultures and others have weak ones. One might say that the cultures or standards accepted by most members of the organisation can have definite results. On the other hand, there is the belief that such cultures can cause problems, should the organisation fall on hard times (Sorenson, 2002). In difficult times companies with strong cultures find it hard to change in order to improve the standards of its employees. The standard of

environment or conditions which employees occupy, can have a major effect on their performance. In public sector organisations the ability to understand and interpret culture in the interest of keeping up to date with the demands of everyday expectations, is of paramount importance. While culture systems are necessary in any organisation, it must be flexible to change if needed. If it is not, stagnation can set in which will bring an unhappy workforce with it, a workforce who are only working to earn money. Hand in hand with organisational culture is the working environment. As already mentioned, good surroundings make for happy workers, the extent of appreciation shown by managers to employees can have a serious effect on performance. When employees are allowed to interact with their colleagues and help in making decisions, greater output is sure to follow (Scott, Bishop and Chen, 2003). Pleasant working conditions does not only apply to a building, it also applies to the relationship between employees and management. Employees like to feel that they are appreciated, it is said when employees leave an organisation, they leave management not the organisation itself. Maintaining a motivated worker can be much easier if proper attention is given to the standards of the environment in which they work and the standards or cultures the organisation expects them to adhere to.

It is reasonable to say that a poor working environment has a negative effect on workers no matter what kind of an organisation it is. The place of work should be a pleasant safe area to work in, with equal opportunities of advancement available to all. Employees who work in poor or difficult working conditions are less likely to meet targets set out by the company. If the management does not or is not prepared to recognise this then surely, this organisation will not succeed (Aiken et al., 2002). The environment in which one works must above all have a recognised safety policy. Workloads should be evenly and fairly spread amongst

employees. Unless a work place is safe to work in, high wages will not compensate the employee (Sell and Cleal, 2011). Communication between employee and colleagues in a positive manner is very important to creating an amicable working environment. Support for the employee from the management or supervisor when required will have a positive effect on the employee and encourage high performance effort (Chandrasekar, 2011). Employees should work in an environment which is not stressful. HRM play a role in defining how a workplace should be relatively stress free and an enjoyable place to work in.

Garda Working Environment

As detailed in ‘Working Together to Create A Positive Working Environment’ policy, which was implemented in 2007, each member of AGS must be afforded the right to dignity and respect and to be allowed to carry out their duties in an organisation that is protected from harassment, sexual harassment and bullying. These breaches of discipline will not be accepted and will be subject to corrective action being taken. The result of any members being subjected to such misconducts have negative effects on the performance of the individual. Not only does it affect the individual, but it has a wider effect on others who may be aware of such wrongdoings. On the victim, it brings stress and leads to poor work application and eventually non-attendance at work. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that no members of the staff are subject to any form of harassment from any other member of AGS or anybody else they may have dealings with. It goes to say that such conduct will not be tolerated, and for that reason careful observation by Garda management will be conducted on a regular basis. Ideally, this will be handled by HRM for recording purposes and whatever decisive action should be taken. It is also the responsibility of the employee in AGS to create an environment free of harassment, sexual harassment and bullying.

To further explain the policy of harassment or bullying of any kind may be highlighted as follows:

- Each member of AGS is entitled to work in an atmosphere which is not subject to harassment or bullying.
- Any handling of matters in this connection should be done fairly and impartially, protecting in a discretionary way.
- Each member of AGS has to be conscious of their obligations to highlight any misconduct, which must be made known without delay to senior management regardless of what the members role is in this issue.
- There is also an obligation on management in creating a culture where all members of staff are treated equally and fairly. Under the Employment Equality Act 1998, it is clearly stated that discrimination cannot apply to any employee within the nine grounds.

Senior management have a particular responsibility to enforce these responsibilities on all members of staff in this context. Failure to implement these responsibilities through favouritism or inappropriate use of one's position will have adverse effects. The implications of this could lead to a decrease in morale and performance. Regrettably in many cases, harassment or bullying can be exploited by members in positions of authority. In any walk of life, this kind of abuse is unacceptable (Garda.ie, 2007). There is no denying that Gardaí do not have an easy job to do. The element of fear and uncertainty exists everyday they go on duty. If that is to be coupled up with internal uncertainty, it cannot lead to a highly functioning force. The lower rank of Gardaí do not seem to enjoy much confidence with the leadership and the way things are done (PwC, 2018).

Organisational Culture

Many organisations have developed cultures which work very well. These cultures are tried and tested. Nonetheless, times change and sometimes it is necessary for companies and organisations to match their cultures with the changing conditions (Cameron and Quinn, 2011). Much of the culture in public sector organisations are set in stone and are very difficult to change. Change is necessary to help improve employee performance and get better results for the targets and strategies laid down. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that managers understand the value of culture, to promote its usefulness wherever possible (Schein, 2004). Culture incorporates many aspects such as ethics, beliefs, education and principles (Hager, 2011). Cultures are handed down from one generation to the next. Culture is a set of values that shape peoples and an organisations code of behaviour. Companies who promote organisational culture must be seen to practice what they preach, for instance, an employee who has greater customer interest at hand should be more considered for advancement than one who may be more skilful but lacks interest in how customers are treated. Promoting loyal employees also encourages others to perform to higher levels. A quantitative research exercise in the early 1970's began to realise that foreign companies with strong cultural beliefs and strategies were more successful than organisations who did not put enough emphasis into culture. A well organised culture in a company helps to keep employees working with a more unified attitude towards higher performance. This in turn, makes for a better working environment. Companies should also conduct discussions to establish how the corporate culture is impacting on the employee. Keeping such discussions at a relaxed level should make the employee less anxious and more open with their feelings. There will be times in any organisation where people differ in their opinion as to how something should be done. With genuine discussion between all parties concerned and a willingness to resolve the

problem, the matter can be overcome to everyone's satisfaction. This can be helped by working to maintain the culture of the company leading to an ongoing good working environment.

Culture in An Garda Síochána

A recent study conducted by the Garda Inspectorate on the situation within the Garda Force concluded that the blame game is dominant within the organisation. Initiative is gone, since nobody is willing to make a decision in the fear of making a mistake. Fear of losing position or not getting promotion has left the force in a stagnant mode. Only a change of culture will bring the force to life again where members want results, not excuses. This has been highlighted in recent times in a meeting with the Oireachtas Committee where a senior member of AGS felt that cultural change does not require new leadership within the force. A comparison with other countries such as New Zealand and Australia showed a very big change in culture without introducing new leadership in the police force. To achieve this requires a total revamp of the present culture and the introduction of a concise plan which would deliver a new cultural approach. This senior member further felt that the attitude of blaming instead of accepting responsibility is a major factor in suppressing positive change. Promoting initiative among members of the force of AGS and eliminating fear of making decisions would encourage a different cultural attitude (Lally, 2016). The cultures that organisations embrace are a set of core values, which employees are expected to follow. Studies have concluded in many organisations that where employees feel good with the organisation in which they work, the result is a higher level of job satisfaction (Kaye and Jordan – Evans, 2009 cited in Gorenak and Kosir, 2012). Many organisations have developed cultures which work very well, nevertheless, times change and sometimes it is vital and

necessary for organisations to match their cultures with the changing conditions (Cameron and Quinn, 2011).

This has been demonstrated in recent times with a Cultural audit taking place in the organisation of AGS by Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC, 2018). Many cultures in the public-sector organisations are set in stone and are difficult to change. Since AGS have had many challenges to face, a cultural audit was required to establish what changes need to take place within their cultural strategies and if a transformation is necessary. It may be necessary to introduce cultural change in any organisation in order to improve and motivate employees to perform well and reach higher achievements. This will lead to gaining better results to their efforts and create better satisfaction within the workforce. While the general public view the Gardaí as a friendly and helpful unit, good at dealing with crime, many other people feel that AGS does not measure up very well as a world class policing service and is not well managed (PWC, 2018). Culture has been long recognised to motivate employees to greater performance leading to creating stability in the workforce and higher achievement in the marketplace (Schein, 2010; Mc Kenna, 2012). The description of culture in AGS seems to be quite conflicting to this. It describes itself as not being as open to new ideas, not listening to people, in other words, disregarding the principles of a culture which would promote higher levels of performance and ethics (PwC, 2018).

Organisational culture helps to keep employees working with a more unified attitude towards achievement and higher performance. This in turn creates a better working environment. It is always best practice for management in organisations to interact with the employee, to discuss problems and how the organisation's culture is working to help resolve such problems.

Employees in general tend to react positively to this type of discussion which are more open to their opinions. A culture which seems to exist within AGS where Gardaí will be slow to make their opinions known, since they feel that they will not be listened to. This could be seen as a reflection on the management who should encourage open discussion and be prepared to listen. Only this way will lead to members making their views known which should have a positive impact all round (PwC, 2018).

Accountability is very important to encourage integrity within any organisation. This of course has to be driven from the top, by displaying high levels of accountability within their own ranks. This should be a major concern when making any change to cultural behaviour within AGS. Accountability does not seem to rank high on the priority list. Junior ranks are scared to commit any misdemeanour in case of being told off or disciplined in some way. Senior management of the Gardaí do not seem to have the same problem, since many senior errors made by them in the past have gone without reprimand (PwC, 2018). Expressing opinions by rank and file Gardaí is not encouraged. Suggesting something new can be viewed as creating problems and being told that the way we do it is good enough (PwC, 2018).

Work life balance

All organisations, whether they are small or large should include in their strategic plan, a system which would allow and accommodate the implementation of flexibility and work life balance for their most important asset, their employees. It has been established that organisations, through the improvement in HRM practices, have developed a much better relationship between management and staff. Consequently, better results and higher targets are met. It is not always easy for an organisation to find a happy medium between what works

for the company and the employee, at the same time. Greater use of flexitime could make bigger changes to work life balance to many employees (O' Driscoll et al., 2003). If a happy medium cannot be found it can often cause conflict to occur between family responsibilities and work life (Howard, Donofrio and Boles, 2004). It is similarly argued by Babin and Boles (1996), that when there is an accommodating work environment that conflict between work and family life is reduced. Management must be prepared to listen objectively to employees. In Japan for example, studies have concluded that employees are more positive and satisfied in their work, where life balance systems are in place (Ueda, 2012). Employees who have the opportunity to organise their careers with their private lives were found to have an increased commitment to their work. Having said that, in some organisations, management try to discourage flexibility. They maintain that it is not suitable or accommodating to the organisations' demands (Hudson Resourcing, 2005, cited in Lazar, Osoian and Ratiu, 2010). The performance of an organisation and the wellbeing of any person is dependent on work life balance (Grady et al., 2008).

Work life balance in An Garda Síochána

With the introduction of the Westmanstown Roster(s) in 2012, considerable effort has been made to introduce a better system of working environment for members of AGS. The introduction of a longer type of working day (10 hours), (8 hours on Sunday) over a period of 6 days on and 4 days off are not amenable to all members. In some cases where continuity of investigative work is necessary, taking 4 days off would not be in the best interest of such work. Early starts before 7am were suggested but were found to be unacceptable due to health and safety reasons. It is perceived that the new roster is designed to improve policing demands and the requirements in the community. Should there be any request from Garda members to

change working arrangements such requests will be assisted within the laid down procedures. In the event of a disagreement, arbitration may be necessary with the Superintendent in charge. Only with prearranged agreements can any roster be altered. Community requirements will determine how these rosters should run. Should any changes be made, they can only be done with the agreement of the Westmanstown Group in keeping with the conditions of this agreement. The new roster will have no effect on the current annual leave which stands at 34 days for Garda members. Where annual leave or part of annual leave cannot be granted for specific reasons, the portion of annual leave remaining can be carried over to the following year. The ambition of this roster was to provide conditions that would improve the work life balance of AGS (Westmanstown Roster Working Time Agreement, 2012).

Advantages of the Westmanstown Roster:

- With the introduction of shifts that overlap, provision of extra Gardaí is available at times of the week to help in policing requirements.
- Having the extra assistance especially at night time where anti-social behaviour occurs is of great benefit.
- For other areas, these extra Gardaí can help tackle other crimes such as different elements of theft, during the day.
- The extra help can also assist in the road traffic section.

This roster appears to have been acceptable to many Gardaí since it gave them a better work life balance as opposed to the former rosters that have been used (Garda Inspectorate, 2015).

Challenges of Westmanstown Roster:

- It was perceived to create an extra unit (fifth unit) and also to have additional supervisors.
- The Westmanstown Roster suggested that this unit would respond to calls.
- However, this unit would consist of members taken from other units. The result of this action would be the weakening of the existing units in 96 districts around the country, consequently not giving the kind of service that may be required by the public.
- Rosters seem to differ from unit to unit in many areas. In some, numbers were reduced which prevented cover at certain times such as during the night.
- In other places, some members were on duty when there was not much need for their presence.
- There have been criticisms that overlapping of shifts was not necessary to assist other units.
- There were certain concerns that overlaps were not using the time to assist other units, a matter which required supervision.

Motivation

Motivation of employees in an organisation must be constantly in operation, if maximum results and strategic objectives are to be achieved. Some people need little motivation, as they have the ability to self-motivate without gaining any extra payment, but to commit to the work in hand. Because everyone has a different personality, some people can be motivated positively while others behave differently (Curvin, 2004, cited in Ibrahim and Brobbey, 2015). Some people are driven by ambition to succeed and gain promotion. Social circumstances will also motivate people to attain certain levels and allow them to move in

what they consider to be higher circles (Carr, 2005 cited in Ibrahim and Brobbey, 2015). Most people in organisations are motivated because they were trained to achieve set targets. Ambition to reach a higher status and consequently higher monetary rewards, is a great motivating factor for others (Riel, 2010). Managers have a big role to play in how they work with the employee in order to get the best results for the organisation. Achieving high productivity levels is only possible with a highly motivated work force. Where workers are not motivated, absenteeism follows, with low productivity levels and poor performance (Jobber and Lee, 1994). One factor that helps to uplift motivation is giving credit to good performance. Workers like to feel appreciated and will respond to genuine praise on a job well done (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2013). Teamwork in organisations is another way in which employees can express themselves freely. This increases the employee's confidence and will create and motivate a more productive attitude. The organisation must have a solid culture in operation, where employees are treated fairly, as the organisations main asset. Where trust and mutual respect between management and employee exist, there will be a strong presence of motivation to achieve the highest performance and results.

When a Garda member is interested in the work being done and feels fulfilled with the results, then it can be said that he or she is intrinsically motivated. On the other hand, when a Garda is extrinsically motivated in the job, performance can drop to lower levels. (Amabile et al., 1994). Surveys in places such as New York and South Korea among police officers, when asked why they wanted to join the police force, replied that it was to have a secure job with good benefits and the ability to retire early. A similar survey in Ireland gave their reasons to be mainly to serve the community (Lackey, 2007 cited in Garda.ie, 2007). Reasons for becoming a member of AGS can have a big influence on job performance at a later stage.

Motivation can also be influenced by health problems or any personal insecurity. These factors can of course apply to any other place of employment one might be in.

Another matter which seems to be an issue of great concern is the matter of getting promotion within the ranks. The survey conducted seems to draw the conclusion that knowing or being close to the 'right' person can have a big influence on who gets promoted (PwC, 2018). This is also a belief among rank and file Gardaí that they are recognised only when they do something wrong, and not when they get it right. Promotional opportunities are perceived to be available only to members who have a good relationship with their supervisors. Consequently, this negatively affects morale and performance (PwC, 2018). PwC have made a number of recommendations on how the culture AGS should be changed, with determination from many people in the force, government input and a desire for cultural change to improve the overall performance of AGS, it can succeed.

Rationale for Research

The controversy connected with the behaviour within AGS, which has received much publicity in the media, with whistle-blowers in the force making accusations of the abuse of power among senior officers and the subsequent resignation of two commissioners, prompted the author to do research on AGS, in an effort to discover through qualitative research with members of the force, how different factors may have an influence on the daily working lives of members of AGS. The purpose of the research is to establish if certain factors, which are discussed previously, have an influential effect on the manner in which members of An Garda Síochána, go about their daily duties.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Research Philosophy

Research can be defined as something that individuals embark upon with the intention of discovering ‘things’ in a systematic method, thus adding to their existing knowledge (Ghuri and Grønhaug, 2005). As stated by Proctor (2005), research should be approached philosophically. This approach will allow the researcher to have a better understanding of the subject matter and will provide a clearer perception of the replies to the research questions. Individuals using research philosophy do so because of certain principles they may have in connection to the topic being researched (Bryman, 2012). Although philosophies may differ from one to the other, some researchers may prefer one to another (Podsakoff, MacKenzie and Podsakoff, 2012).

The philosophy used by any one researcher is entirely of their own choosing, some favour ontology others epistemology. Having explored the meanings of the different philosophies, the researcher decided to adopt epistemology and interpretivism. The researcher also decided an inductive approach as opposed to a deductive one. Inductive research comprises of an exploration to discover a theme from observation and ‘the development of explanations ‘theories’ for those themes through a series of hypotheses’ (Bernard, 2011 p.7). The reasoning behind this decision was to acquire an in-depth knowledge and understanding of how certain factors may or may not influence the performance of AGS.

To explain the researchers reasoning for choosing the epistemological method is as follows. This method appears to afford the researcher the opportunity to acquire detailed satisfactory

knowledge and how to evaluate the validity of such information (Bryman and Bell, 2006). Epistemology is a philosophy that provides valid results based on thorough research methods, details that are credible and to the point (Sumner and Tribe, 2004).

With regards to the inductive approach, this was decided on since it allows the researcher to collect data and formulate opinions without pre-ordained assumption (Flick, 2011). This particular method is more associated with qualitative research, since it does not influence the researcher's opinion during the collection of information (Bryman and Bell, 2011). In this context, themes are decided on when the data is collected (Beiske, 2007).

The interpretivism philosophy is that all things around us are influenced by the behaviour of people. Normally this opinion is associated with qualitative methods and centred around an inductive procedure (Rea and Parker, 2006).

Research Design

The purpose of this particular research is to gain a thorough understanding of certain factors that may have an influence on the performance of members of AGS. The research in question is a cross-sectional study, meaning the intended study will take place over a set period of time. Many cross-sectional research studies are constructed around interviews which take place over a small amount of time (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Research design can be compared to the structure which is used in the process of performing research. Whichever type of research method is used, should provide the researcher with the kind of preparation required for the research design (Creswell, 2009). The researcher must decide which research method is most suitable to their research, quantitative or qualitative. A qualitative research method was chosen by the researcher as opposed to a quantitative research method as the researcher wished to gain an inductive, holistic understanding to this

particular subject, rather than a deductive, reductionist approach. Qualitative research is typically investigative, flowing and adaptable, data-driven and perceptive to context. It is generally used to investigate everyday life occurrences (Burns and Grove, 2003). Qualitative research is a method of collecting large amounts of information on people and places (De Vaus, 2014; Leedy and Ormrod, 2014). In using qualitative research, it allowed the participants in the study to be more expressive with their opinions. This gave the researcher the opportunity to further investigate the subject matter (Quinlan, 2011).

The objective of research design is to drive the mechanism that activates and implements the questions in order to achieve results (Blanche, Durrheim and Painter, 2004). In this connection the researcher decided on a subject to follow, organise how data was collected in order to arrive at a conclusion through interviews. Furthermore, the researcher arranged suitable respondents to be interviewed. The outcome of a positive research design is the collection of information that is reliable (MacMillan and Schumacher, 2001). Sensitivity must be used to make the interviewee feel comfortable and relaxed. The researcher phrased the questions in a clear and unambiguous way, never phrased in a manner which may confuse the interviewee. Should the design not be appropriate the end results will not present an accurate picture, therefore, showing the design to be inadequate (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).

There are three types of research design; exploratory, descriptive and explanatory (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). The researcher used the exploratory research design as it allowed for a better understanding of the situation, availing of information through literature and

discussion with the respondents through semi – structured interviews. This method further allowed for any changes in information or change of hypothesis.

It was felt by the researcher that the use of semi-structured interviews was the most appropriate manner to conduct the research in question. In doing this, the researcher planned the interview to establish the main topics for discussion (Fisher, 2004). All areas to be discussed were carefully noted which allowed the interviewer to control the topic of discussion (Berg, 2007 cited in Alshenqeeti, 2017). This applied to all interviewees. The flexibility of the semi – structured interview provided the researcher to further delve into the replies of the respondents (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). The researcher had to phrase each question in a manner that would extract the same type of information on the subject from each respondent (Mc Namara, 2009). When the questions put to the interviewee had been answered, the interviewer may have wished to get additional information on the subject matter by asking further questions. This also applied to the interviewee, who may also have had additional information to add to a subject matter which had not been specifically referred to by the interviewer (Corbin and Strauss, 2014).

Research objectives

- To investigate the influence of factors such as pay, training and development, working environment, organisational culture, work life balance and motivation may have on members of AGS, particularly the rank and file Gardaí, in the performance of their work or duties.
- To further consider the research carried out by Davis (2012), in studying performance measurement which exists in another international police force, England and Wales to make comparison with performance measurement within AGS.

- To acquire a better understanding of how members of AGS feel about the way in which they perceive the organisation is run in relation to the performance of their duties.
- To carry out detailed interviews with members of AGS and conclude from results of questions asked what, if any, conclusions or recommendations can be arrived at.
- To gain a better understanding of the efficiency of what kind of performance management system is used within AGS.
- To explore the relationship that exists between senior management and rank and file Gardaí within the organisation of AGS.

Qualitative research methods

The researcher has used a qualitative research method to interact with people in order to extract certain information pertaining to the subject matter which were asked in the interviews with the respondents. A study conducted by Dörnyei (2016), explains that a ‘good’ qualitative interview includes two crucial features: ‘(a) it flows naturally, and (b) it is rich in detail’. The researcher decided qualitative research provided data which does not have numerical results, unlike quantitative research, instead it gathered together a lot of information which it can demonstrate for evaluation in words. This gave a more practical and easier understanding of the research carried out (Johnson and Christensen, 2012 cited in Daniel, 2016).

Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014) propose that the mannerisms of human life are the concerns of qualitative researchers, involving individual practises that are illustrative of experiences connected with particular occurrences. The use of qualitative research on the subject chosen, was considered more adequate than others, to obtain information by having personal interviews with selected questions and open discussion taking

place between both parties in order to have a clear understanding of the questions asked and the replies received. Besides the formation of fresh theory and not just confined to testing theory, qualitative researchers are also engaged in systematic findings (Dougherty, 2015)

The researcher also needed to have a comprehensive knowledge of how to interact with people. In this context, the interviewee must feel relaxed in an easy-going atmosphere, to encourage better responses to questions which were put to them. The benefit of having a face to face interview was that it allowed a better relationship to develop between both parties, which gave the researcher and the interviewee opportunities to tease out questions and answers.

According to Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2006, p. 172), interviews gave the researcher an invaluable chance to obtain details that are ‘probably not accessible using methods such as surveys or observations’. During the interviews the researcher relied on observation to the reaction of the participants during the interview process. Qualitative research gave a more overall detailed account of their opinions, their problems and how they go about dealing with situations which arise in their daily lives (De Vaus, 2014; Leedy and Ormrod, 2014).

Research Participants

As part of this study, the researcher decided to interview six participants. Marshall (1996), mentions three methods of sampling from which participants can be selected; convenience sampling, judgement sampling and theoretical sampling. The researcher has noted that there are approximately 20 types of sampling, to mention a few, snowball, intensity, political sensitive case and volunteer sampling.

The participants chosen for this study were chosen through convenience sampling. This type of sampling, which can also be known as haphazard or accidental sampling, seemed the most appropriate type to use, given that the respondents were easy accessed and available and willing to take part in the research (Dörnyei, 2016). The researcher was aware that the final outcome of convenience sampling may not represent the thinking of everyone within the organisation of AGS (Etikan, 2016). The intention of the researcher was to interview members of AGS who are of different ranks and divisions. In doing so, the researcher feels they would gain extensive opinions from all levels of the organisation.

The below table will indicate the rank of each participant included in the study.

	Rank	Years of Service	Age	Gender
Respondent 1	Garda	25	49	Male
Respondent 2	Garda	18	42	Male
Respondent 3	Detective Garda	25	45	Male
Respondent 4	Detective Garda	13	38	Male
Respondent 5	Inspector	35	56	Male
Respondent 6	Superintendent	38	59	Male

Fig 2: Details of Respondents

Interview Questions

Below are the questions which were asked of each participant as part of this research study. The reasoning for choosing these questions by the researcher was prompted by media coverage of the poor publicity associated with the organisation of AGS. The researcher felt that these particular questions were pertinent to the type of criticisms levelled at members of AGS in the media:

1. Do you feel there is adequate training provided to the members of An Garda Síochána throughout their career?
2. Can you give your opinion on the working environment? Is the work culture up to date or outdated in your opinion?
3. Is there an acceptable work life balance in place? Have there been any suggestions made in this regard, if so what was the outcome?
4. Do you believe that the Garda Commissioner should come from within the organisation or should it be an external person?
5. Do you feel that pay has an impact upon performance levels of members?
6. In your opinion do you think supervisors effectively motivate members to achieve their objectives?
7. Do you think that there is a proper welfare system in place in An Garda Síochána?
8. Is there good morale within the force?

Collection of data

Overall, six face to face semi-structured interviews took place. These interviews took place in locations that were convenient to the interviewee, since being a member of AGS can call for unexpected events. During the interviews, all material was recorded on a smartphone device which was then transferred to a USB storage device, only accessible to the researcher. Following this, the interviews were then transcribed verbatim for further analysis. The interviewees were provided with the interview questions prior to the interview to allow them to think about these topics and prepare their answers. No questions that would cause any embarrassment to the interviewee was included in the interview. The interviewee was also informed that any question he/she did not feel comfortable with need not be answered (Mottram, 2011 cited in O' Keefe et al., 2016).

When both parties were present in the room the researcher provided the interviewee with a consent form which was required to be signed before proceeding with the interview. The researcher then gave a concise explanation of how the interview process will go, providing the interviewees with the chance to ask any questions or air any concerns they may have. The researcher informed all interviewees that the interview would be recorded. During the interview process the interviewer tried to keep note-taking to a minimum, not wishing to give the impression to the interviewee that some points were more important than others. Brief notes were only taken when they were felt to be absolutely necessary. Where replies to answers were brief, the interviewer attempted to get the interviewee to elaborate further where possible. At times, it was necessary to bring the interviewee back on track, when they strayed from the subject matter. It was also emphasised that in giving replies to questions, no references should be made to any individuals.

Before arranging the interview, it was necessary for the interviewer to prepare to take notes and or to have a recording device ready to record the material of the interview. This is very important for the analysis stage. The interview can be concluded when all the questions asked are fully answered and discussed. Also, when the interviewee and interviewer feel that there is nothing more to add to the discussion (Trotter, 2012). Any information collected will only be used for the amount of time needed which will be no longer than 6 months. The material which is recorded and stored on a USB device will then be destroyed and there will be no option of recovery.

Analysing the data collected

An aim of the researcher was to examine the data collected. Analysing qualitative data is going through each piece of information and comparing the results established, in order to determine if any similar patterns emerge. Reading over the transcripts of the interviews numerous times to completely familiarise oneself with the data collected is very important. Connecting different themes of data is necessary for the author in forming an opinion or patterns (Gibbs, 2007).

It is discussed by Creswell (2009) that the analysing of the data should be related to the researchers own personal experience with interviews. All in all, since there is no one way to evaluate the data collected during an interview, analysing of such data should be carefully handled since its impact on the quality of the interview and validity and reliability of the whole exercise in the research process is vital (Van den Berg and Struwig, 2017).

Thematic analysis was used in order to evaluate the data collected. Clarke and Braun (2013) identified that the objective of a thematic analysis is to classify themes, in other words, connections in the data that are significant or thought-provoking. These themes will then be used to refer to the research question or make a statement about a particular subject. There is a lot more involved than purely summarising the data; a well written thematic analysis understands and shows the logic of it. As stated by Clarke and Braun (2006), there are six steps in which the researcher should follow when analysing the data in question, these are:

- 1) Understand the data
- 2) Identify codes
- 3) Examine data for themes
- 4) Reassess themes discovered
- 5) Outline and explain themes
- 6) Begin write up of analysis

With the six phases in mind the researcher proceeded to firstly become acquainted with the data collected. Subsequently, the data needed to be transcribed fully for the purpose of analysis. In order to break down the data into different themes, it was necessary to use a coding system to get a clearer picture of the subject matter being researched (Schreier, 2012). In the researcher's case, identifying the themes was done with the use of a highlighter. The different themes highlighted were categorised under separate headings with the researcher looking for themes which were connected. The researcher checked each theme to ensure that the themes were properly collated under various headings. The researcher identified eight

themes and connected the data appropriately to these particular themes. Following this, these themes were analysed and are detailed in Chapter 4: Findings.

Ethical Considerations

Interviews were only conducted when the interviewee was given clear details in writing of the questions which were to be asked of them. The location of the interview was to the satisfaction of both parties. Information regarding the name or whereabouts of the interviewee or their connection with the organisation they are associated with, will not be disclosed and will remain completely confidential. Interviews of recorded format can only be used with the expressed wish of the interviewee therefore, this was done in writing to avoid any confusion at a later stage. Questions relating to religion or politics were avoided, also questions that may cause embarrassment to the interviewee were not asked.

Limitations to Qualitative Research

Although qualitative research was the most suited research method to this particular research question, there can also be a number of drawbacks to using it. Conducting interviews is a time-consuming procedure, from organising a time and location that suits both parties, travel time to the agreed location and analysing the collected data can take weeks, even months. Qualitative research is a demanding method. It has been recognised by the researcher that the sample size used is relatively small, therefore, it may not form an accurate depiction of all of AGS. Qualitative research needs a knowledgeable researcher to acquire the targeted data from a collection of respondents. Furthermore, various conclusions are derived based on the same information subject to the characteristics of the researcher (Maxwell, 2013).

Chapter 4: Findings

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with six members of An Garda Síochána in order to hear their opinions on eight questions, relative to the performance of their duties. These questions are derived from the literature which covers a variety of subjects which may or may not have an influence on performance within AGS. The subjects which were discussed and analysed are as follows:

- Adequate training provided during career
- Working environment
- Work life balance
- Promotion within or outside the force
- Pay and performance
- Efficiency of supervisors
- Welfare system
- Morale within the force

Adequate training provided during career

There is a majority opinion that there is little opportunity to get continuous training in AGS. “Most of the training I believe is from personal experience, which you pick up from working on the front line and ongoing training seems to be hit or miss” (Respondent 1). It appears that members are left to look after themselves and look for courses that would be of benefit to them. It also appears from responses, that courses are not always available or have been reserved for others who find more favour with senior management. Without properly organised training courses, members will feel inadequately equipped to deal with problems

when they meet them, this is a recipe for underperformance (Dessler, 2008). Respondent 3 feels that training has been neglected since the recession and has not made any significant recovery, but particularly to the rank and file Gardaí, suggesting that members are left to their own devices and without proper and continuous training will function badly. This is supported by Respondent 6 who was a former training Sergeant who feels that training is not available to members during their career. With regards to participants 2 and 5, they are of the opinion that courses are available to members who may require them.



Fig 3: Results of Question 1

Working Environment

The feeling in general is that the culture within AGS's working environment is very outdated. Some of the respondents have made comparisons with other organisations and feel that there is a lack of will to modernise the job. 'There is lack of resources from pens and paper up to vehicles, including the standard of vehicles' R1. 'While some effort is being made to update certain things like computers, there does not seem to be any great attention to the type of vehicles which are being used and are a danger under health and safety, duty of care is lacking' – R1. R4 endorses what other Gardaí have said, that they are not provided with the proper tools for the job. Here again reference is made to the standard of vehicles provided ' ' We have cars some of which can only be described as banjaxed and are 11 and 12 years old and it's not good enough. It's very poor' R4. R6 also agrees that the working culture is inadequate and much needs to be done. R5 concurs that the working environment is ' 'still sub-standard' ' with ill-equipped stations around the country and feels that efforts should be made by government to create a better working environment within AGS.

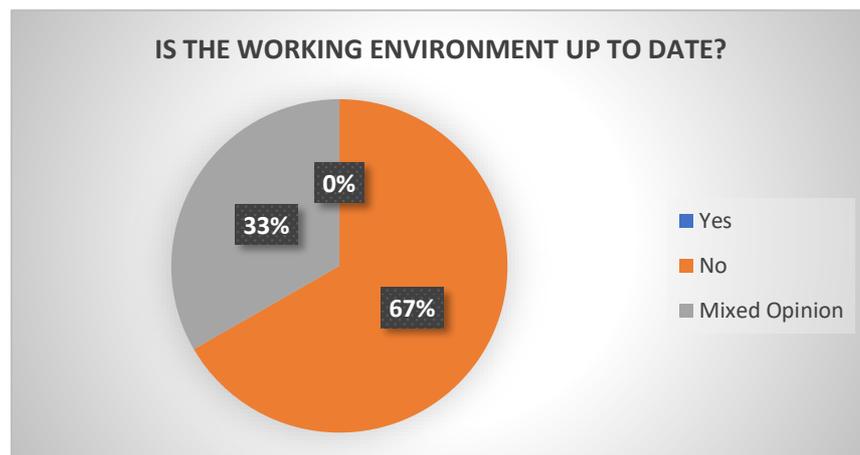


Fig 4: Results of Question 2

Work Life balance

The general opinion from the respondents is that the irregular working hours do not make for a pleasant work life balance. They do however accept that they were aware of this on joining the force. There is a feeling of annoyance that the European working time directive is not being properly implemented. One reason for this is that it would incur more overtime since the possibility of a 39-hour working week for Gardaí seems remote. Opportunities to get jobs which are 9 – 5 are not attractive to many respondents, since they would experience a big drop in allowances. It was mentioned that irregularity in their working hours can have problems with their responsibility with their families and also their job. While it is generally accepted that Gardaí work long irregular hours, matters do not get better when the leader of the country ‘‘doesn’t think we are working late enough’’ R3. Respondents feel that if better work life balance systems were put in place, members would be happier and more motivated in their job. In this connection new shifts were introduced with the Westmanstown Roster(s) which according to R6 are not achieving what they set out to do. Respondents 2 and 5 feel that it is good but have reservations that some of the shifts are not suitable to everybody, in some cases from a management perspective.

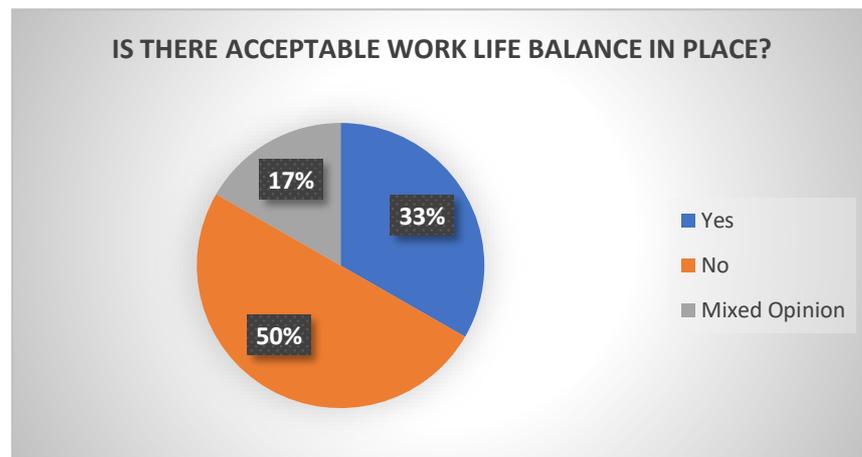


Fig 5: Results of Question 3

Promotion from within or outside the force (The Commissioner)

In general, most respondents do not have any objections to promotion of the Commissioner in AGS being filled from the outside, important to them is that whoever fills the position comes with a good policing background. Someone who has the welfare of the Gardaí and to provide them with the necessary equipment to perform at the top levels ‘What we need is someone to fight for our cause for what we need and to give us the right tools to do our job’ R4. There is however a strong belief that promotion should come from within from R1 and R5. Particularly when the matter of replacing with a new commissioner arises, one respondent feels that someone who has come up the ranks, gaining experience in a variety of areas, would be ideally suited. R1 states ‘Yes, I do believe the commissioner should come from the organisation and within the ranks of AGS’. R6 feels that because of the many problems within AGS in recent times, an external appointee with the proper experience will probably be the best choice.

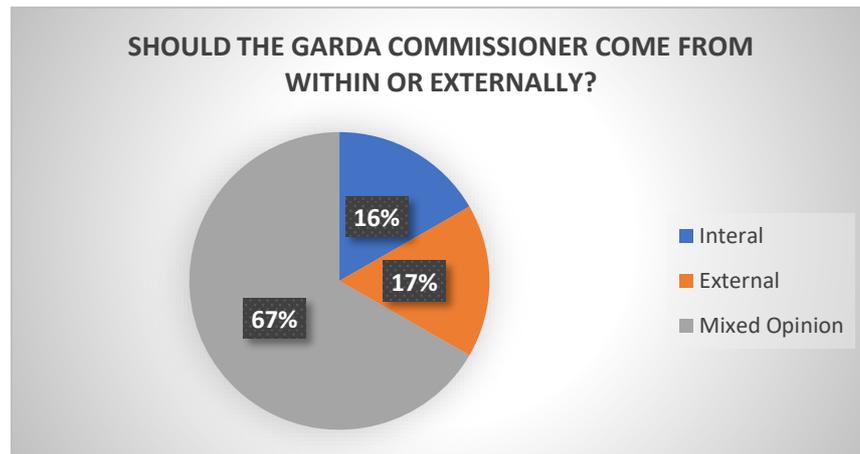


Fig 6: Results of Question 4

Pay and Performance

The respondents do not think that pay in itself effects the way a Garda responds to duty. Nevertheless, the pay reduction taken by the Gardaí in the recession had a big effect on their living standards. R1 feels that where the Gardaí come to negotiate pay increases, they are treated harshly and that this has a demoralising effect on the members, but it does not interfere with performance. Some consider pay to be low in certain areas. It goes without saying that according to R4 that where pay structures took a downward trend, especially in the recession, ‘Gardaí felt they were hard done by and didn’t I suppose, didn’t put in a whole effort because they were being hit right, left and centre with our pay’. It is also felt that the ‘basic pay for police men and women in this country is a serious problem’ R3.

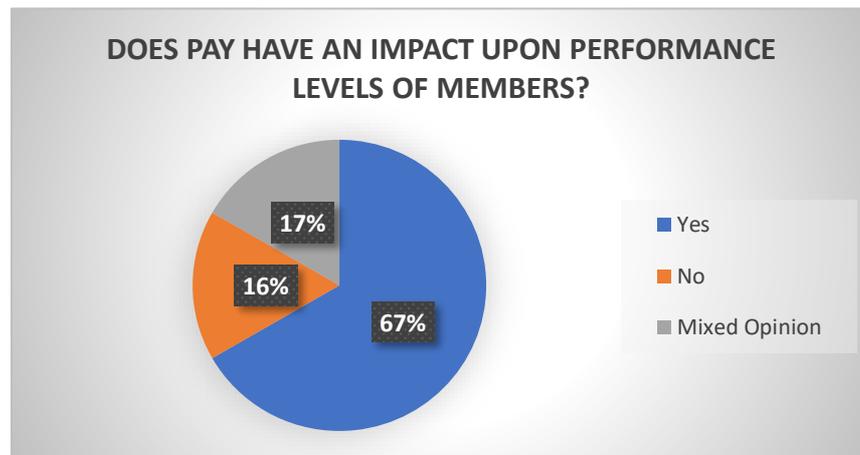


Fig 7: Results of Question 5

Efficiency of Supervisors

Supervisors are perceived to lack the necessary efficiency to motivate members of AGS, according to R1 - ‘I don’t believe supervisors motivate anybody in AGS’. This is also supported by R3 and partly supported by R4. One respondent suggested that supervisors use their position to promote their own image rather than support the members under them in the performance of their duties and they seem to lack an understanding of the organisations culture in promoting motivation to achieve maximum levels of performance. One respondent (R4) has mixed feelings, saying that some supervisors are good, others lack any motivating skills, in general, motivation is left to the member who looks for direction from fellow members, not from the supervisor. R5 feels that as a supervisor, motivation is high on the list, however, the feeling is that not all members can be motivated. R6 is of the opinion that work load sometimes prevents supervisors from dealing with other issues and stresses the need for supervisors to be clear in their directives.

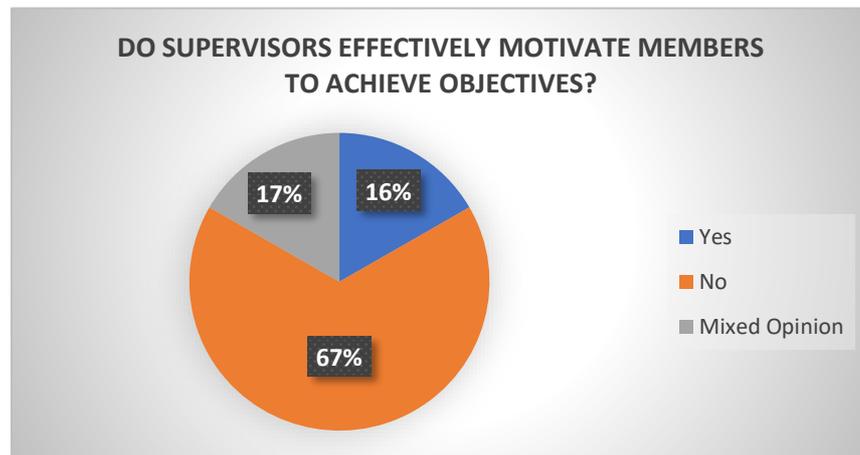


Fig 8: Results of Question 6

Welfare system within AGS

There is a divided opinion with regards to the existence of a proper welfare system in AGS. Members of AGS who are confronted with situations such as serious accidents or facing armed criminals, do not have any proper counselling with regards to their mental well-being afterwards as stated by some respondents. The consensus of opinion among respondents is that no one from a management perspective is concerned how long a Garda works without a break or how they feel after witnessing a horrific accident. ‘I don’t believe mental health is looked at, at all, for any member’ R1. Colleagues of Respondent 3 were witness to a child dying in a car, due to the parent forgetting that the child was there. The Gardaí in question failed to revive the child. This had a very bad impact on them and they looked for welfare assistance. ‘The welfare officer arrived to them one month after the incident’ R3. Respondent 4 agrees with other members that there is requirement for a proper working welfare system in AGS. While respondents 2 and 6 agree that the welfare system is adequate, there is a feeling that much more is needed to improve the situation, such as the level of sick pay in operation and response time from counselling services. R5 feels that the welfare system is not availed of properly by some members for whatever reasons best known to themselves.

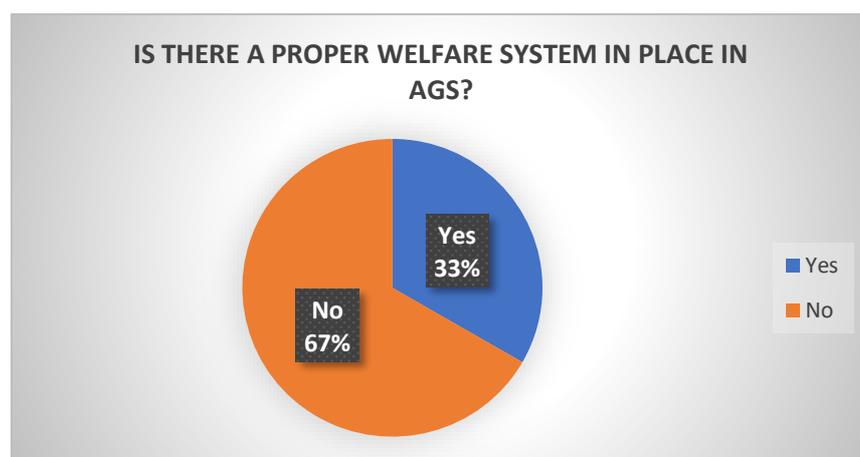


Fig 9: Results of Question 7

Morale within the force

The morale situation is considered very low according to respondents which they feel can be laid at the feet of the management. They feel that their indifference to the needs of their officer's leaves much to be desired and unless the rank and file receive support from their manager or supervisor, when required, performance will diminish. From a recent report the lower rank of Gardaí have little confidence with the leadership within the force (PwC, 2018). R1 feels that the lack of motivation has reduced morale to a level that Gardaí just come to work with little enthusiasm for the job, while pay is not the main factor here, it is felt that in many cases it is not in keeping with the work done and the negativity from the media does little for the morale. The observations of R3 and 4 are of the same opinion that morale is at a very low point in AGS for several reasons such as pay and scandals within the organisation. In the unit in which R2 works, morale seems high, there is however an understanding here that, in other areas morale is low because of the criticisms that AGS are subject to such as recent commissioner resignations and some bad practice within the organisation. R 5 and 6 are in agreement that morale is good but also accept lack of training and promotions have contributed to bringing down morale among the force.

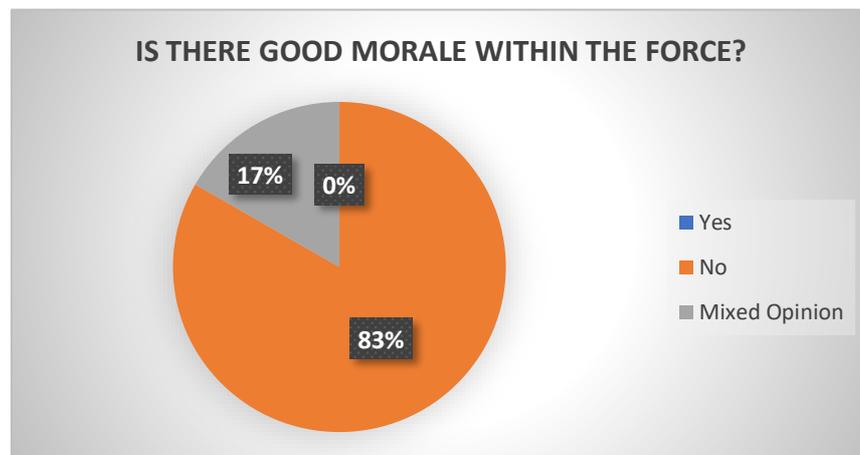


Fig 10: Results of Question 8

Chapter 5: Discussion

Having interviewed six members of AGS and listened to their views on eight areas which may have a direct influence on the performance of Gardaí in their course of their daily duties, these responses will now be looked at more critically, in conjunction with the literature on many of these subjects.

Q1. Do you feel there is adequate training provided to the members of AGS throughout their career?

According to the participants, from the information collected it seems the training of Gardaí, after their initial training in Templemore, appears to be of secondary importance. The importance of continuous training cannot be over emphasised, this has been mentioned in the literature by James (2012) who stated that without proper training, employees will continue to use old and outdated ways. Cultures in any organisation are important to maintain top performance. Without proper training and development, a most important method is being neglected. Again, this is seen in the literature (Amisano, 2010, cited in Abdul Ghafoor Khan, Ahmed Khan and Aslam Khan, 2011) who said that while other factors contribute towards performance, training and development are a major force in that area. The respondents all feel that they are being deprived of any opportunity to upskill themselves. The responsibility to ensure that members received proper training lies with the management. This is seen in the literature by Jehanzeb and Bashir (2013) who said that management in organisations are very much involved in the training of employees. Management who do not promote and support proper training for its members are guilty of wasting company time and money which is acknowledged in the literature by Partlow (1996) and Tihanyi (2000) that badly trained employees contribute to wasting time and money. Respondents who would like to have

courses found it frustrating to be refused, since the courses have already allocated to others. They feel it reduces morale, particularly when they believe that those given the courses were chosen through favouritism. The apparent frustration of the respondents with regards to the inadequate training provided in AGS, is very evident in their answers. Not alone do they feel they are not given the opportunity to learn new skills, but the feeling is that it interferes with any promotional opportunities which may come their way. Members lacking the training needed to do their work will underperform. This point is made in the literature by Dessler (2008), who states that without it, the chances are that the employee will underperform.

Without proper training, the member cannot be expected to perform at a level which will produce results. This is seen in the literature by Pollock and Jefferson (2012) who stated that employees will not show positive results, unless they have a determination to put their training skills into action. Insufficient or poor training methods prevent Gardaí from making positive decisions in resolving problems in the course of their duties, according to the respondents. Participants of the research find it difficult to understand how something as important as training in an organisation such as AGS seems to be neglected. The Garda who receives proper training and applies such training to the job will be a great asset to the organisation (Heathfield, 2017).

Q2. Can you give your opinion on the working environment? Is the work culture up to date or outdated in your opinion?

Replies from participants gave a definite yes to this question, that the working environment is outdated. It is felt that the culture within the organisation does not appear to have any desire to change and improve the situation. Comparisons were made by respondents with other outside organisations, where while others were modernised there is a perception that the

culture within AGS is prepared to stand still. According to participants, paperwork seems to be the best method of keeping records and making communication. Although, one participant did comment that of late they have started using emails to communicate between different ranks. It is well documented that the state of a working environment is a big factor in how an employee feels about their place of work (Hardiyono, Hamid and Mardiana Y, 2017). Accepting the culture as it is, seems to be the way to go in the respondents' opinion as this is counterproductive to creating an atmosphere of a performance driven work force. This can be seen in the literature by Scott, Bishop and Chen (2003) who state that when employees are allowed to interact with their colleagues and help in making decisions, greater output is sure to follow. The respondents believe that working conditions will also have a big impact on the manner in which members perform since not providing them with the proper tools, whether with communicating clearly when giving instructions or providing advice when required, to having equipment like cars, motorcycles to the highest standards, then it is unlikely that members will be motivated to achieve the standards expected of them. The participants are of the opinion that if this situation is not recognised by the organisation, targets will not be met. Literature supports this by Aiken, Clarke and Sloane (2002) who state that if management are not prepared to recognise this, then the organisation will not succeed. It should not go unmentioned that the health and safety of the members of AGS should not be neglected through using inferior transport vehicles. This point was highlighted by Respondent 1.

Q3. Is there an acceptable work life balance in place? Have there been any suggestions made in this regard, if so what was the outcome?

The respondents have conflicting opinions on work life balance in AGS. It is felt by one of the participants that the HR department should endeavour to create a working situation that suits both the organisation and employee. Literature promotes this, Dreher (2003) states that HRM should aim to accommodate the objectives of the organisation with full consideration for the employees. It was further suggested by the respondents that more flexible working hours should be introduced to accommodate both the employer and employee. According to the respondents there seems to be very little appetite among the higher-ranking officers in AGS to make any changes to those that have been there since the beginning of the force, the attitude is to carry on as always. This is highlighted in the literature by Hudson Resourcing (2005) cited in Lazar, Osoian and Ratiu (2010), who stated they maintain that it is not suitable or accommodating to the organisations demands. A system introduced, namely the European working time directive has not been properly implemented in AGS according to respondents. One reason as expressed by respondent 3 is that the implementation of this directive would involve a lot of overtime, since the possibility of a 39-hour week seems unlikely. The Westmanstown Roster(s) in 2012, sought to introduce a better working environment which would suit members of AGS. Longer working hours (10 hours daily), in a six day on period, with four days off were introduced. It seems that this new system is not acceptable to many participants since they feel it will lack consistency. Time on the job and time off, they feel, will not be set in stone. It is also considered by respondents that long working hours together with certain kinds of shift work can have a contributing factor to mental and physical health problems. This is shown in literature by Grady et al. (2008), who said that it is considered that long working hours, together with certain kinds of shift work, can have a contributing

factor to mental and physical health problems. Performance within an organisation together with how well an employee feels, depends on work life balance (Grady et al., 2008). Some reviews show that work life balance does not get sufficient attention in many organisations. According to respondents, perhaps a greater use of flexibility to working hours would go a long way to ensure a better work life balance (O' Driscoll et al., 2003).

Q4. Do you believe that the Garda Commissioner should come from within the organisation or should it be an external person?

The research produced mixed feelings from the respondents. One respondent feels strongly that the new commissioner should be someone who has come up through the ranks experiencing every aspect of criminality over a spread of different areas in the country. Others are equally keen to see that whoever is taken on as commissioner should have the necessary experience required to do the job, although respondent 1 is of the opinion that the experience the new commissioner will bring will not be good enough. It is not of great concern to the respondents where the person comes from, provided that the person will have the welfare of the Gardaí at heart and will provide them with whatever they need to perform to the best of their ability. 'What we need is someone to fight for our cause for what we need and to give us the right tools to do our job' R4. It is felt there will be mixed feelings among members of the force as to where they would like to see the new commissioner come from. From the study carried out the majority of respondents do not care too much where the new Commissioner comes from but what experience is brought to the job, coupled with that, must be the ability to apply that experience to guide and control an organisation as large as AGS. Since most Gardaí would like to see a change in culture to improve standards within the force, should the

new commissioner move in that direction, the members of AGS will welcome this person regardless of their origin, as felt by the respondents.

Q5. Do you feel that pay has an impact upon performance levels of members?

There seems to be a unanimous agreement from all respondents that pay plays a big part in the life of AGS. However, one respondent feels that it does not interfere with performance. Respondents referred to the reduction in pay which AGS had to accept during and after the recession. They, the respondent states are under severe pressure to manage the very high costs of renting accommodation, particularly in places like Dublin or Cork. To avoid this, they have decided to commute long distances to get to work, all this can be stressful and have an effect on how they go about their duties according to participants. Because of this, respondents feel that there can be little job satisfaction or the motivation to perform beyond the call of duty. Respondent 4 implied that when the recession occurred, the reduction in pay in AGS resulted in low morale across the country. It is felt by some participants that other people in the public sector took pay cuts as well, but perhaps the work of a Garda is more demanding and, in many cases, more dangerous, therefore, it is not easy to draw comparisons. As suggested by Harrington (1998), pay should be gauged on the type of work performance of an employee. Pay related to performance has been shown by some authors to have a positive effect in motivating employees. This is supported by Mookherjee (1998) and OECD (2005) in the literature, who state that it has been proven to have positive results in many countries, when administered properly. Respondents suggested that even with the job security within AGS, unless pay structures are in keeping with the demands of the job, performance levels will suffer. It is not uncommon for employees to compare their wages to what they do, and this is supported by literature by Belfield and Marsdon (2003) who state that workers may

consider if the rewards are suitably satisfactory to reflect their performance. Since the police force are a very necessary organisation in any country, maintaining high performance may be dependent on wage structures at all levels of the ranks, as pointed out by some participants in the study. It was further felt that the enthusiasm to perform was diminished in many. The study also shows that respondents feel that the basic wage is insufficient, resulting in some older members returning to shift work to help enhance their pensions. A general feeling of discontent seems to be brought out in the study regarding pay structures within AGS.

Q6. Do you think that supervisors effectively motivate members to achieve their objectives?

A study of the replies from the respondents suggested that some supervisors are not held in very high esteem in AGS. It is felt by some participants that supervisors had no interest in motivating the members to performance but rather only when it made the supervisor look good in the eyes of their superiors. One respondent feels that supervisors demotivate people regarding motivation 'In fact I believe the exact opposite' R1. Their only interest in motivating people, according to Respondent 1, is when they want to improve records in an effort to impress their supervisors as it seems, the performance results of the Gardaí are only of secondary importance. When workers perform well and are praised for doing a good job, they will continue to perform to the highest level. Literature corroborates this as stated by Kreitner and Kinicki (2013) who say workers like to feel appreciated and will respond to genuine praise on a job well done. Respondents state that people who join AGS, do so to serve the people. This is exhibited in the literature by Lackey (2007) who states that a survey completed in Ireland showed Gardaí join the force mainly to serve the community, this ambition will soon diminish if they feel that they are not properly motivated by those under whom they serve. The opinions of Respondents 3 and 4 equally agree that some supervisors

show little interest in the job they have to do. In a survey carried out it was felt that promotional opportunities within AGS has much to do with relationships between the Garda and the supervisor (PwC, 2018). Respondent 6 feels that there is a mix of good and bad supervisors in AGS. The good ones, R6 feels are very much heavily overworked and this leads to their inability to do their job of motivating the members in their charge. Respondents state that if this behaviour is allowed to continue then the standard of performance within the force will not improve, morale will continue to drop, leading to discontentment and resentment in which the long-term effect will be a drop in the numbers of people joining up which will not help an already depleting force.

Q7. Do you think that there is a proper welfare system in place in AGS?

Some respondents in the conducted study feel that the welfare system in AGS is very poor and it does not appear to fully operate towards the well-being of its members. Others feel that it is acceptable with reservations for improvement. Many Gardaí who are dealing with situations which are extremely unpleasant such as accidents, murders or anti-social behaviour, are often in need of counselling after the event as mentioned by some participants. They feel this benefit is not available in any constructive manner and that counselling arrives far too late to be of any use to the Garda involved. Respondent 3 gave an example of where colleagues needed counselling after witnessing a traumatic accident. The counselling officer called one month after the request was made. It is felt by participants that there is a lack of urgency when dealing with some internal problem, regardless of how the person involved may be feeling. Even with seeing that breaks are taken during shifts, according to R1 'Nobody seems to care if you get a rest period during work, as in a break where you could come in at 7am and not take a break until 5pm'. There does not seem to be any proper welfare system in

existence, according to R1. Other participants feel that supervisors should be trained to recognise if Gardaí are under stress and are in need of counselling, particularly where members are working away from the centre, there should be a good system of communication to offer support when required. The feeling from respondents is that the well-being of members is being ignored which can lead to frustration and poor performance.

On the other hand, R6 feels that there is a good welfare system in operation in AGS. This interviewee however feels that sickness pay benefit is not helpful, since sick or injured Gardaí are forced to return to work before time, because of financial reasons, and such situations like this 'puts huge strain on individuals and their families'. This respondent feels that because of the job of AGS, which is different in that they are subject to abuse from the public, has a big effect on their personal welfare. While there seems to be mixed feelings as to the efficiency of the welfare system in AGS, counselling does seem to be there but, in some cases, it seems the manner in which it is administered is not consistent, according to respondents.

Q8. Is there good morale within the force?

There is little doubt that half of the respondents view the level of morale within AGS as very low. Most respondents are of the opinion that the causes of the low levels of morale in AGS are down to reduction in pay, poor leadership and lack of training facilities and courses. This apparent indifferent attitude of senior officers to those in lower ranks, does nothing for morale, according to the research material. Researchers have concluded that low morale leads to poor performance, this is supported by the literature by Analoui, 2000; Chambers, 1996; Rautkis and Koeske, 1994 who state that performance is also affected by low morale. One participant feels that members perform their duties with little enthusiasm and their morale levels have slowly deteriorated from lack of motivation. Respondents feel that lower ranking

Gardaí within the force have little or no confidence with those whose job it is to lead. Leaders who place the needs of the staff as the most important thing are described as a servant leader (Spears, 2004). It is also recommended by an author that a careful monitoring of how morale is within staff, should be an ongoing feature (Lloyd, 2003). Literature supports that morale is a very important factor in determining performance levels and that high morale will increase performance whereas, low morale will do the opposite (Foss, 2007).

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

The author has attempted to investigate and evaluate the influence some factors may have on the working performance of AGS. An in-depth study was made of certain factors and how they may affect employees in general. The factors in question are set out in the literature review as follows:

- Impact of performance management systems on employees' performance
- Work life balance systems
- Pay
- Training and development
- Work environment
- Motivation

As can be seen from the literature, the benefits of the above factors, when applied correctly can greatly benefit the effectiveness of the performance within any organisation. With this in mind, the author decided to carry out a qualitative research method of interviewing with six members of AGS. This was achieved through semi-structured interviews with the participants on a selection of eight questions relative to the activities within the organisation of AGS. These questions were provided to the participants before the interview, to allow them time to prepare what they would say.

Having completed the intended research, there are some conclusions that the author may arrive at. Since the interviews were carried out with a small number of Gardaí of different ranks (six in all), it has to be remembered that any conclusions may not reflect the feelings of other members of AGS. However, half, or in some cases more than half, are in agreement

with each other. While the rest have reservations, they feel that they do agree with the other members in certain areas.

The feeling that there is a disconnection between management and lower ranks seems pretty clear. This filters down to a similar situation between supervisors and lower ranks. This is felt to reduce motivation in the force. Training or lack of it, seems to be a major area of criticism in AGS. After initial training in Templemore further training seems to grind to a halt according to the findings. There is a considerable dissatisfaction with the work environment, working with outdated equipment does nothing to help performance, according to the participants in the study. Promotional opportunities seem to be short in supply, respondents maintain, this of course is linked in with training and development or the lack of. While this study was only carried out with six participants, the responses are worthy of attention. The findings show that morale also seems low within AGS.

While the researcher feels that possibly a more in-depth study may be needed to fully identify the internal strategies within An Garda Síochána, from respondents replies it is felt that there seems to be a lack of communication among the ranks. As a result of the findings, it is felt that this issue contributes to low morale, poor motivation, inadequate training and ultimately poor performance.

Recommendations, Costings and Timeline for Implementation (CIPD Requirement)

- ***Transform organisational culture***

As a result of the findings the researcher felt that certain areas related to the culture of AGS needs attention. From the replies received from the respondents, there is a strong opinion that the culture within AGS is very outdated and in need of reform. In order to achieve this, a new frame of mind must be developed within the organisation. It is recognised that the leaders in an organisation carry the responsibility to ensure that the set values of the organisation are strictly adhered to (National Policing Improvement Agency, 2008). The author recommends that a new mindset would promote a situation where police officers feel free to take initiative in solving daily problems without fear of criticism, which will subsequently make them feel that they are making a serious contribution both to the organisation and community. This attitude was adopted and endorsed by the police force in Glendale, Arizona in 2012. Every effort in the newly formed culture must be aimed at building up a solid communication system between the leaders and subordinates. Additional to that, rank and file members serving the community should be encouraged and supported in building up a solid relationship with the people they serve, breaking down distrust barriers. The cost factor would be non-existent since all that is being suggested is a change of attitude and mindset. Implementing such a process can commence without any delay and should be monitored on a regular basis, since it can take time for some to adjust to change.

- ***Training and Development***

The respondents' replies to questions on training were that little or no training seems to exist beyond Templemore training college. Within the organisation there are various aspects of training necessary, depending on what position the member occupies. In view of the negative

replies of the respondents in this context, the author would recommend the implementation of modernised training courses, suited to the specific requirements of individuals. Some years ago, the Police Service in England and Wales considered setting up a University type campus, with state-of-the-art training facilities. The capital needed to set up such an institution was estimated at £20 million in the first year, which they felt would greatly reduce the cost of training and raise the standards of training to the highest levels (Alexandrou and Davies, 2000). Within this University would be a ‘virtual campus’ in which members could avail of a state-of-the-art technology, 24 hours a day, every day of the year. This virtual training would allow members to improve their skills, achieve professional levels in their own time, with courses that were designed to achieve success and not to fail. Perhaps, the latter would be more suited to the organisation of AGS as this would be less costly than what the Police Service in England and Wales initially had in mind. The implementation of such a system could take months if not a year, as training courses would have to be designed and put on a data base for members to access.

- ***Improve team engagement***

From looking at the replies from the respondents, the author recognised an apparent lack of team engagement within AGS. The respondents were highly critical of management’s lack of communication to the lower ranks. Those who were under supervisory control felt that they were given no motivation from their supervisors to achieve any levels of performance. They felt that the only time that their supervisors showed any interest in motivating them, was when it was to promote the supervisor’s image in the eyes of their superiors. The author’s recommendation is that to improve the situation in relation team engagement, a complete change in mindset must take place. As set out by the National Policing Improvement Agency

(2008), clear and concise rules should be put in place, leaving nothing to misinterpretation, of what is expected of the member and the consequences of not adhering to these rules. The implementation of a new set of rules and regulations may be resented by some in the organisation, but with a strong-willed management and the ability to gain the trust from the members will help to improve team engagement. This can be seen from the Metropolitan Police: Kingston Borough who had similar issues but managed to overcome them by implementing the 4 enablers of employee engagement which are; strategic narrative (vision), engaging managers, organisational integrity and employee voice. AGS could greatly benefit from considering these approaches. Here, the implementation of such a plan can begin immediately with the willingness of management. The cost of implementing this new approach should be negligible since it only requires a change of attitude.

Limitations of the research

To complete a research study on the subject matter '*To investigate the factors that influence the performance of the members of An Garda Síochána*', within an opportune time frame suitable to the interviewees and researcher, a qualitative research study seemed the appropriate way to go. It was considered that with a small number of participants selected, the collating of the results of the interviews would present more detail, which would help in formulating a conclusion and making recommendations. One advantage to using the qualitative research method was that it gave the researcher the opportunity to change course if the questions asked are not coming up with worthwhile answers. However, qualitative research can be a time consuming process when having to collate all of the answers given. The researcher must not try to influence the outcome of any question, for personal reasons. It is suggested that when research is carried out with a limited number of participants, it questions if the results are representative of the greater mass (Harry and Lipsy, 2014; Thompson, 2011). As stated previously, since the researcher was confined to a limited number of participants, and with the knowledge gathered from their replies, the researcher feels that if further research were to be carried out, on a quantitative basis, it would be possible to reach a greater number of participants. In doing so, comparisons between the qualitative and quantitative research can be made, which would provide more conclusive evidence to allow more positive recommendations to be made, which could influence policy changes within the organisation.

Implications of Findings (CIPD Requirement)

Working Environment

Any delay in implementing a new change in the culture of AGS, will result in poor performance and unnecessary costs, due to the lack of a modern equipped work force. To operate an organisation like AGS, will always incur costs in providing equipment and vehicles, to modern day standards. However, the maintenance of outdated equipment and vehicles can be both costly and unnecessary. The situation which exists, suggests that there is a poor interaction between the top and lower ranking officers. This can be remedied with the determination of those in charge, to motivate better interaction among all ranks. HRM has a big part to play here in setting up a program to promote interaction. Following up with regular feedback from all ranks will help to guarantee its success.

Training and Development

Creating courses to assist members in the performance of their duties, should not incur too much financial strain. With the incentive of promotional opportunities available to those taking the courses, the level of enthusiasm should be high. The result in performance should outweigh any financial consideration. Such courses could be set up without too much delay. Reviewing courses and updating when necessary is a task within the scope of HRM.

Work life balance

The introduction of flexitime which is now widely used in the private sector, may be one way to go, to provide a better work life balance among members. If properly implemented it could go a long way to change the working day of the member. There seems to be a lack of discussion between higher and lower ranks, to help resolve the problem. Introducing more

staff to reduce working hours of members could also produce results, but this would incur certain costs. Maybe a reduction in overtime could offset some of this cost.

Promotion from within or outside the force

Promotion whether from within or from outside the organisation, will always carry a certain amount of criticism, for many reasons. In the present situation of AGS, the cost of promoting from within would be somewhat less, as opposed to doing a wider search for the filling of the position. From within, the qualifications of the applicant would be well known, whereas much research would be necessary in considering outside applicants. Employing advisory guidance from recognised bodies would also be costly. The only conclusion here is that whoever is considered to fill the position, should come with qualifications necessary to do the job in question.

Pay

Having a proper pay structure within AGS can create a good form of stability among members. It promotes performance and a motivation to succeed. On the other hand, a poor pay structure leads to unrest and underperformance. Because of the type of work which the members perform, pay should equate with performance. This should eliminate unnecessary wage bargaining, which sometimes threatens the safety of the state, through the possibility of strike (The Blue Flu). Benchmarking, as other organisations do, particularly in the private sector, is not an option here.

Supervisors

This is an area which has a direct implication on rank and file Gardaí. Should supervisors not be carrying out their duties, as some respondents suggest, then there is a strong need for change. Management must ensure that there is a positive interaction between supervisors and those under them. There should be clear directives on how supervisors and those under them interact. Constant reviewing of the situation by HRM, allowing all concerned to make their views known, should be set in place. This would be part of the HRM function and would not incur any costs. Should the results suggest change, then such change should be put in place without delay. Management should also be kept informed as to the progress made, with the help of constant feedback from all those involved.

Welfare System

It seems there may be a need for discussion, to check if the welfare system is adequate to the needs of AGS members. In an organisation like AGS counselling is very important. The results of not running an efficient counselling service, will have negative effects on the members. Consequently, they will not respond positively to situations, which might affect their health and safety. Counselling may be a daily requirement in a large organisation like AGS. To neglect it could result in poor performance or non-attendance at work. A well performing counselling service will save time and money. Looking into sick pay is also recommended, as sick or injured members sometimes return to work before time as their sick pay does not adequately support them according to respondents replies.

Morale in the force

The levels of morale have been falling for some time, particularly since the recession and the internal scandals in AGS, according to respondents. Should the organisation decide to change its culture, and introduce a culture with higher levels of ethics, the working environment, work life balance and so on, then maybe morale will pick up. In this new culture there should be a better understanding and relationship between higher and lower ranking officers. They all work for the one cause. This should lead to higher levels of performance and motivation. There should be no delay in introducing such a culture.

CIPD Personal Learning Statement

Undertaking the research study that I took on, opened up an unexpected introduction to a way of investigating a subject which up to now, was unfamiliar territory to me. My knowledge about how to study the working cultures and strategies of AGS was quite limited. With the tutoring of my mentors and unlimited literature at my disposal, I set out to understand and write about some factors which may have an influence on the performance of members of AGS. Planning this task was the key to making my research as easy as possible. Arranging the interviews with the members of AGS and have face to face discussion with them was an experience I had not done before. Fortunately, the cooperation I had with the participants was very helpful. Arranging a time schedule for this study was not an easy task. With all the different subjects within the research, it was necessary for me to apply a time period to complete each one. In some cases, I was successful but, on more occasions, the study took longer than anticipated. From my frequent use of literature, I became more efficient and built up some speed in checking information needed for my research. Being involved in interviewing other people who expressed their feelings on questions put to them, was

somewhat of a confidence builder. All in all, the knowledge I picked up from the research carried out is invaluable. It takes any fear away I might have had, to research any other subject at any time in the future. Like any time, if I needed help or advice, my family were there to help me go that extra mile.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Consent Form for Interviews

Title of Research Project: *A qualitative investigation of the factors that have an influence on the performance of members of An Garda Síochána*

If you are content to proceed with the above research by taking part in an interview with the researcher Nicole O' Carroll, please complete and sign below. Please place an **X** in the boxes to confirm that you agree with the statements.

Please X to confirm you agree:

- I recognise that my participation in this research project is completely voluntary and I can withdraw my participation at any time.

- I understand that my identity will be kept completely confidential at all times and my identity will not be recognisable in any research material.

- The researcher has my permission to record the entire interview in which the material collected will only be used for the purpose of analysis. The recorded material will only be kept up to a period of 6 months and will only be accessible to the researcher. The data collected will be destroyed when it is no longer needed with no option of recovery.

- I give consent to take part in this research project.



NAME OF RESEARCHER DATE SIGNATURE

NAME OF PARTICPANT DATE SIGNATURE

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