

# Best Integrated Communication Campaign



**An Garda Síochána**  
Ireland's National Police and Security Service

## Campaign

An Garda Síochána Trainee Recruitment Campaign

## Description of Campaign

This campaign rewards public affairs initiatives that influenced policy or public discourse.

## Organisation

An Garda Síochána

### What was the brief/objective e.g the problem to be solved or opportunity to be grasped?

- As part of Programme for Government, there is a need to recruit 5,000 Gardaí over the next five years.
- We wanted to attract as many good-quality candidates as possible to apply for the Garda Trainee Recruitment Competition - who want to do the actual job.
- We wanted to show the benefits of the job – that it's rewarding, in meaning and in terms of remuneration. We were particularly keen potential candidates know Garda Trainees are paid €354 a week while training, board is covered in the Garda College, and they come away with a Level 7 degree.

### Who were the target stakeholders/publics to be reached and what did you need them to do?

Target publics:

- 18-50 year olds, nationwide.
- The Irish diaspora abroad.
- We wanted to attract more women.
- We wanted to attract more people from a diverse background.
- People who actually want to do the job.

We needed them to fill out the application form for the Garda Trainee Recruitment Competition on [publicjobs.ie](http://publicjobs.ie).

**What was the strategy and plan of action undertaken to deliver the objective? Why did you choose an integrated campaign?**

We wanted to attract applicants who want to do the actual job. This meant we had to show what exactly the job was.

The “It’s a Job Worth Doing” campaign, produced in 2023, is based on insights from Gardaí, while the creative features real-life Gardaí. This campaign shows the nature of the job – working at 4am, making arrests, being physically active, engaging with communities, helping victims of crime, and the camaraderie of colleagues. Given the “It’s a Job Worth Doing” creative was still very strong and resonated with people inside and outside the organisation, we decided that creatively, strategically - and to ensure best use of taxpayer money – it was prudent to use this suite of creative assets for one more campaign.

There is a popular narrative that Gardaí are not paid well and this was recognised by the campaign team as an obstacle to attracting applicants. To address this, a key message specific to this year was; not only is a career in An Garda Síochána a job worth doing, but is also one for which you are paid well. A strong focus was placed in the messaging on the remuneration, perks and benefits - including additional allowances, overtime, and pay and board received while in the Garda College - and the fact Trainees come away with a Level 7 degree.

Given that our target audience is across all genders and spans an age group from 18-50, who live in Ireland and abroad, it was decided that multiple outlets and platforms were required to reach all audiences. This is why we designed, with our agency Core, an integrated campaign that used a mix of television, national and local radio, print and online, digital audio, cinema, digital display, out-of-home, and leaned heavily into social media (particularly Meta, TikTok and Snapchat) and video-on-demand to reach the younger audience.

The €375,000 (excl. VAT) campaign, under the tag line of “It’s a Job Worth Doing” went live on 6 February 2025. Advertising was placed across national and local newspapers and radio stations, and television.

There was an appropriate advertising spend with Irish media including ExtraG Seachtain and Tuairisc.

Advertising via digital display and Meta targeted ex-pats. Impressions on digital display were structured to be more focused on women.

Campaign updates were relayed internally via the intranet and our internal newsletter “Newsbeat”.

An Garda Síochána uses seven social media platforms and has 43 separate accounts and approximately 2.3million followers in total. To make best use of this following, customized content was developed, while a Social Media Pack was issued to regional channel gatekeepers.

Branded assets including leaflets, posters, pull-ups and a presentation were supplied nationwide to assist Garda personnel delivering outreach.

**What outputs were delivered? For example, earned and paid media, event attendance, engagement. This is quantitative and qualitative measures of outputs.**

Widespread organic media coverage was received following the campaign announcement by the Garda Commissioner and Minister for Justice on 28 January and following the issuing of a press release a week later, announcing that the competition was now live. Pitching delivered more organic coverage - a highlight was an episode of the 2 Johnnies podcast dedicated to an interview with two Garda Trainees. The 2 Johnnies is the number one media brand in Ireland for people aged 18-35.

Media met Trainees at a media day in the Garda College and observed instructors training classes on using batons and handcuffs. This ensured strong engaging imagery featured in the extensive ensuing media coverage, not least in the lead photo on the front page of the next day's Irish Times. Press office staff also delivered specific targeted activity in each of the western, southern and eastern regions.

Garda personnel nationwide delivered recruitment outreach through engagement with schools, colleges, sports clubs and minority groups; face-to-face and virtual information seminars; and recruitment stands.

Content produced by our staff and Core shared on social media included:

- Suite of videos featuring interviews with Garda Trainees
- Customized infographics and graphics for themed carousels
- Podcast

**Digital results:**

- Organic social media activity delivered 156,000 total clicks on Facebook and over 4,000 link clicks. Almost 23,000 clicks were delivered on LinkedIn.
- A total of 143,231 clicks to the publicjobs.ie application page was delivered by paid advertising from across digital audio, social media, video-on-demand (VOD) and digital display.
- Overall, paid social media significantly outperformed expectations delivering 71% more impressions than planned (29m v 17m).
- TikTok's Irish Reach campaign delivered 217% more impressions than planned.
- Broadcast VOD delivered almost 950,000 impressions with a view-through rate of 96%.
- Programmatic display advertising's viewability rate was 94% - an almost-perfect rate.

**What was the impact of your campaign?**

The campaign delivered a significant amount of positive publicity for An Garda Síochána, due to the slick nature of the assets used, and the engaging content featuring so many members. The wider family, friends and colleagues of those featured were proud by association, and this helped to build a wider pride amongst Garda personnel in their organisation and their work.

According to Ruepoint's "Media Insights Report" on the Garda Recruitment Competition 2025:

- The campaign "gained substantial media attention during the analysis period, registering 785 organic media mentions between 28 Jan – 3 March 2025."
- "Less than 1% of coverage for the campaign was negative."
- Key messages resonated strongly, appearing in 67% of analysed coverage" – this related to messaging about remuneration and perks.

### **Further impact:**

- 6,784 people applied to the competition – this exceeded expectations given a previous recruitment campaign ran just 11 months prior.
- 23% of applicants who stated their background detailed an ethnic background other than white Irish, and 32% of applicants were female.
- 41% of applicants were aged 30 and over – this was a feat as the age limit had been raised from 35 to 50 the year before so it was expected the interest from this age group was previously captured.
- Although we don't know what proportion of applicants are living abroad, we do know the campaign reached them because 2,881 clicks were delivered in a paid Meta campaign targeting Irish expats in Australia and New Zealand, while 5,512 clicks were delivered in a paid Meta campaign targeting Canada and the UK.

20 candidates from the 2025 campaign are already enrolled in the next Trainee intake entering the Garda College. They will be working members of An Garda Síochána, within nine months.

The campaign helped build a positive reputation for An Garda Síochána in the public domain, but its more crucial lasting impact is that it has put boots on the ground, from many different parts of Irish society, to keep people safe.

### **What was unique/innovative about this integrated campaign?**

- QR code stickers for Garda cars were supplied to divisions nationwide. When scanned, the code brought users to the competition page on Garda.ie.
- An audience aged 18-34 was targeted Snapchat via a Lead Generation campaign. The latter was planned to retarget engagers from Snapchat Reach campaigns, encouraging them to fill out forms. A total of 722 people completed the forms.
- Our TikTok account jumped on the “Day in the Life” trend and posted organic videos depicting a typical working day for young members. Just four of these videos garnered a cumulative 2 million views and 77,000 likes.
- Divisional Diversity Inspectors and Garda Diversity Officers supported the recruitment campaigns by engaging with local stakeholder groups.
- Throughout 2024 and early 2025 the Garda National Diversity Unit promoted a career in An Garda Síochána at a range of events which attract a diverse audience, for example a Garda Recruitment Information Day at Mosney.