



**Bille an Gharda Síochána (Feistí Taifeadta) (Leasú),
2026**
**Garda Síochána (Recording Devices) (Amendment) Bill
2026**

Meabhrán Míniúcháin
Explanatory Memorandum



**BILLE AN GHARDA SÍOCHÁNA (FEISTÍ TAIFEADTA)
(LEASÚ), 2026
GARDA SÍOCHÁNA (RECORDING DEVICES)
(AMENDMENT) BILL 2026**

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Purpose of the Bill

The Bill introduces amendments to the Garda Síochána (Recording Devices) Act 2023 (the “Principal Act”) to establish a new data-sharing mechanism between the Garda Síochána and public bodies which will reduce the administrative burden placed on Gardaí when accessing publicly operated CCTV for the purposes outlined in section 28 of the Principal Act; to empower the Garda Commissioner to designate specified public areas as Crime Prevention Zones, within which the Garda Síochána may install, operate, maintain and remove CCTV systems for the prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of criminal offences; and to introduce a statutory Code of Practice governing the use, retention, disclosure and oversight of CCTV footage obtained under the amended provisions.

Visible criminal activity degrades our public spaces. It imposes significant economic, social and personal costs on individuals, communities, and the State. Current procedures that govern how Gardaí can access publicly operated CCTV in criminal investigations are too burdensome, often resulting in footage being lost, which undermines the prosecution of justice.

The Bill also addresses barriers faced by the Garda Síochána in installing CCTV in areas where recurring criminal behaviour has been identified. It places clear obligations on local authorities and public bodies to cooperate with Garda requests for installation and operation of CCTV in designated Crime Prevention Zones.

Ensuring access to safe public spaces is a central duty of the State to its citizens, plays a central role in the development of children and healthy communities, and is a necessary condition for a high-trust society. The reforms in this Bill support that objective by enabling more efficient use of CCTV technology in a manner consistent with data protection law.

Background

The reforms proposed in this Bill will address these gaps while maintaining transparency, accountability and compliance with data protection requirements.

Provisions of Bill

Section 1 is a standard provision, which sets out the title of the Bill, and provides for commencement orders for the coming into force of the Bill once enacted.

Section 2 is a standard provision defining key words and phrases used in the Bill.

Section 3 proposes the insertion of three new sections into the Principal Act:

Section 28A provides for the establishment of a statutory data-sharing mechanism that will allow the Garda Síochána to obtain footage from public bodies, without requiring new authorisation from the Commissioner for each new access request, for the purposes set out in section 28 of the Principal Act; mandates cooperation by public bodies, subject to specified safeguards; includes time-bound obligations to provide footage to prevent the loss of evidential material and; contains data protection and security requirements governing the transfer, storage and use of footage contained for these purposes. The aim of this section is to reduce the administrative burden faced by Gardaí, guarantee timely access to publicly operated CCTV, and support the effective investigation and prosecution of offences.

Section 28B empowers the Garda Commissioner to designate specified public areas where recurring criminal activity has been identified as Crime Prevention Zones; to install, operate, maintain and remove Garda-operated CCTV systems within these zones; mandates local authorities and public bodies to facilitate the installation and operation of these CCTV systems; and includes safeguards to ensure that the use of CCTV in these zones is proportionate, necessary, and in accordance with our Data Protection laws and the Law Enforcement Directive. The aim of this section is to facilitate the targeted deployment of CCTV in areas identified as experiencing persistent criminal behaviour. This will improve public safety and support the Garda Síochána with the prevention, investigation, detection, or prosecution of crime.

Section 28C requires that the Garda Commissioner prepare and publish a Code of Practice which governs the operation, retention, disclosure, and deletion of CCTV footage obtained under sections 28A and 28B; data protection and privacy safeguards; oversight and audit mechanisms; and procedures for cooperation between the Garda Síochána, local authorities, and public bodies. The code of practice must be approved by the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, and be laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas.

James Geoghegan, TD, Naoise Ó Muirí, TD, Emer Currie, TD, Grace Boland, TD, Maeve O'Connell, TD, Bealtaine, 2026.

