



Garda Recruitment Projections and Costs

This note is concerned primarily with the likely Exchequer costs of meeting the Government's official recruitment targets for An Garda Síochána (AGS) (including civilian staffing targets in light of moves towards civilianisation of previous AGS roles). Estimates of these recruitment costs are based on various population growth projections, and comparison of police officer-population ratios in Ireland with European counterparts. The Central Statistics Office (CSO) PxStat database has been key to the preparation of this note, with Eurostat, the OECD, the World Bank and the AGS website also providing essential figures. The Public Spending Code (PSC) of the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform provides the basis for calculated costs in this paper. While referring to patterns of crime in Ireland (and throughout Europe) by way of background, this note should not be seen as carrying any recommendations or value judgements in respect of the effectiveness or otherwise of maintaining/increasing recruitment numbers or ratios. Such assessments remain outside of the scope of this paper, which is intended simply to illustrate the costs associated with achieving specific recruitment goals.

An interactive dashboard showing calculations of staff numbers and costs under various scenarios is available [here](#), as an accompaniment to this note.

Key Messages

- The Government has set a target for the AGS workforce to reach 15,000 whole-time equivalent (WTE) sworn officers and 4,000 WTE civilian staff¹. In March 2023 terms, the difference in annual payroll between this target and actual numbers for that month amounts approximately to €88 million and €50 million for the requisite extra sworn officers and civilian staff members respectively.
- Alternatively, if the 2022 ratio of WTE Gardaí to 100,000 inhabitants were maintained until 2037, with numbers rising in proportion to future (M1F2) population projections, an extra spend of approximately €1,419 million and €224 million on extra sworn officers and civilian staff respectively, would be required in total between 2022 and 2037.
- Further, were the above recruitment/staffing targets achieved from the end of 2022, the extra spend in line with (M1F2) population changes from that year to 2037, would amount approximately to €1,534 million and €287 million for sworn officers and civilian staff respectively.
- Ireland has a police officer-to-100,000-inhabitant ratio that is below the average among its counterparts in the EEA, Switzerland and Britain, as of 2020. Attaining this average would entail the recruitment of approximately 484 extra sworn officers alone (assuming that Ireland's 2022 ratio is held constant), costing, in March 2023 terms, approximately €294 million until 2037. In order to attain the level of Portugal² in the same time frame, almost €4,232 million would have to be spent, in order to acquire the requisite excess circa 6,300 officers.
- All costs figures in this note are expressed in March 2023 terms, to reflect the most recent pay increases to civil and public servants.

² The Department of Justice confirmed in correspondence with the PBO that the targets are set in terms of WTE.

² The country with the fourth-highest ratio – see Figure 5 of this note.



Glossary

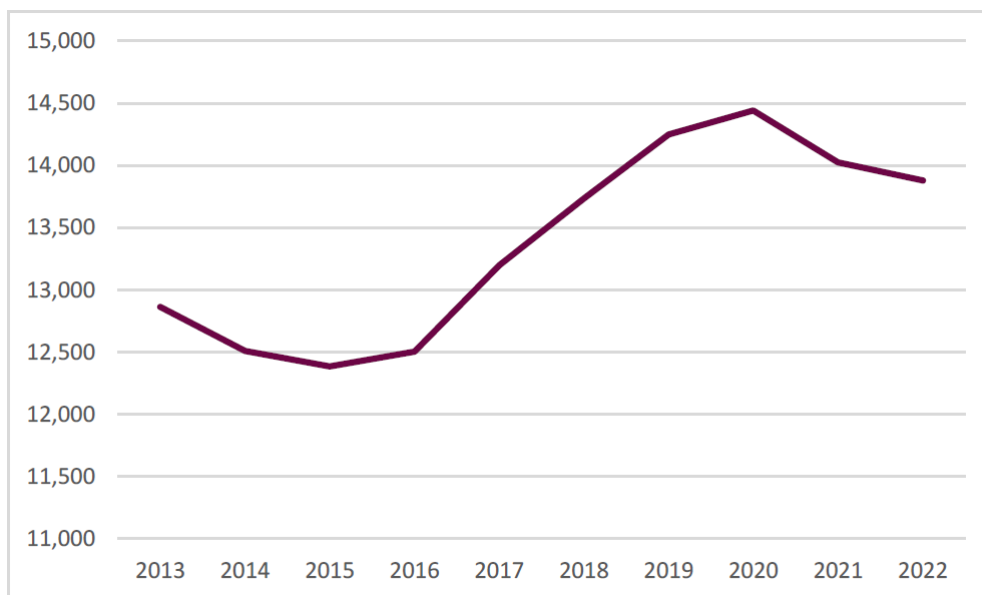
AGS	An Garda Síochána
CSO	Central Statistics Office
EEA	European Economic Area
PSC	Public Spending Code
PBO	Parliamentary Budget Office
WTE	Whole Time Equivalent

Introduction

As part of the Government's Five Year Reform and High-level Workforce Plan³, published on 1st March 2017, the overall AGS workforce is envisaged as comprising 15,000 WTE Gardaí, 4,000 WTE civilian staff members and 2,000 Reserves. This target was set initially in 2016 by the then Minister for Justice, with a view to achieving these numbers by 2021⁴.

Notwithstanding these targets, numbers of sworn Gardaí have not increased rapidly over the years, with Figure 1 below showing the WTE numbers of sworn officers from 2013 to 2022:

Figure 1: Garda WTE 2013-2022



Source: Author's calculations based on AGS Annual Reports⁵, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform figures⁶, and AGS Commissioner's Monthly Reports to the Policing Authority⁷

³ Government/Department of Justice Workforce Plan, as of 22 December 2021.

⁴ 'Tánaiste welcomes extra funding for Garda recruits, more civilian staff and sustained additional overtime in 2017', 11th October 2016.

⁵ AGS Annual Reports.

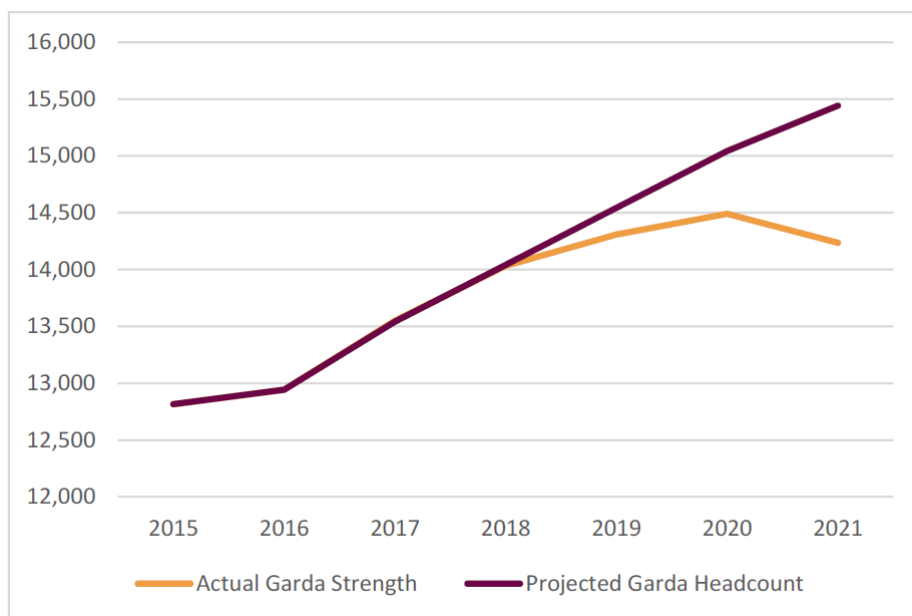
⁶ Department of Public Expenditure and Reform An Garda Síochána Workforce 2006-2023.

⁷ Commissioner's Reports to the Policing Authority.



The above figure indicates a steady increase from its trough in 2015⁸ until hitting a peak in 2020, after which a steady decline in WTE Gardaí has emerged. For context, Figure 2 below maps the fall-off in the post-embargo recovery in (headcount) Garda numbers, with a sharp contrast (from 2018) between the respective trajectories of actual recruitment and the Government's own projections in 2017⁹:

Figure 2: Projected vs. Actual Garda Headcount 2015-2021



Source: AGS Annual Reports, Department of Justice Garda Workforce plan

Figure 2 indicates a significant divergence in recent years between the Government's intentions to bolster Garda numbers and the reality of current recruitment numbers.

This is further highlighted by Table 1 below, which sets out the number of retirements versus stated annual Government recruitment targets, as well as actual attestations¹⁰.

⁸ At which point AGS had only just resumed recruitment following a freeze from 2010 to 2013 inclusive.

⁹ Department of Justice Workforce Plan, version as of 22 December 2021.

¹⁰ Attestations indicate those Garda recruits who have completed their training at the Garda College in Templemore, Co. Tipperary, ahead of placement in a Garda Division. Target numbers for 2022 and 2023 are 800 and 1,000 respectively – Retirements and Total Attestation figures for those years not to hand at the time of writing.



Table 1: AGS Retirements, Total Attestations and Announced Recruitment Targets, 2007-2021

Year	Retirements	Total Attestations	Announced Recruitment Target
2007	177	1,090	1,100
2008	243	991	1,100
2009	731	906	400
2010	379	0	0
2011	444	0	0
2012	424	0	0
2013	296	0	0
2014	249	100	200
2015	238	296	200
2016	228	393	600
2017	282	883	500
2018	312	789	600
2019	333	605	600
2020	332	522	700
2021	293	146	650
Total	4,961	6,721	6,650

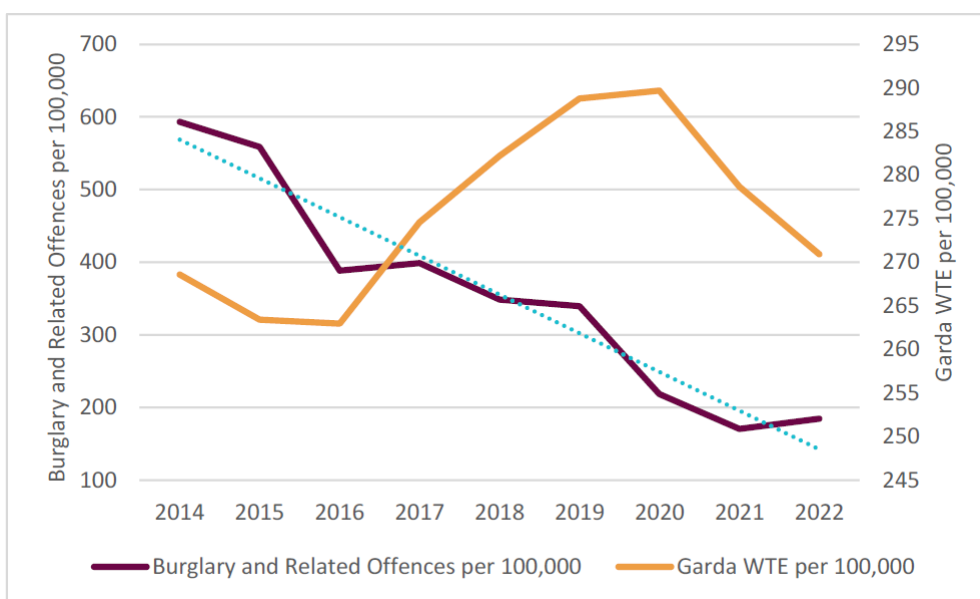
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Source: AGS Annual Reports, Written PQ Answers

Aside from showing the effects of the 2010-2013 recruitment freeze, Table 1 above indicates that recruitment targets were largely met (and greatly exceeded in some years), aside from low numbers associated with the aforementioned recruitment freeze and Covid-19. During the 2007-2021 period, attestations exceeded total annual Government targets, albeit this is offset by retirements during this time¹¹.

This level of recruitment has taken place against a backdrop of a very steady general decrease in offences in recent years (albeit somewhat distorted by the 2020 phase of Covid-19 restrictions), illustrated by Figures 3(a)-(e) below:

Figure 3(a): Gardaí WTE per 100,000 vs. Burglary and Related Offences per 100,000



¹¹ Retirement figures are independent of dismissals, resignations and other departure reasons.



Figure 3(b): Gardaí WTE per 100,000 vs. Theft and Related Offences per 100,000

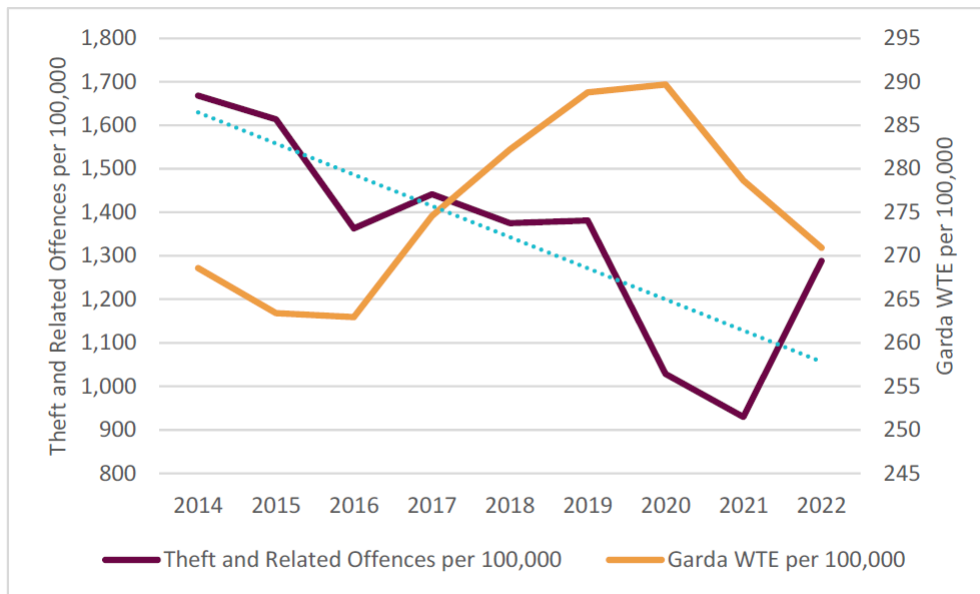


Figure 3(c): Gardaí WTE per 100,000 vs. Damage to Property and to the Environment per 100,000

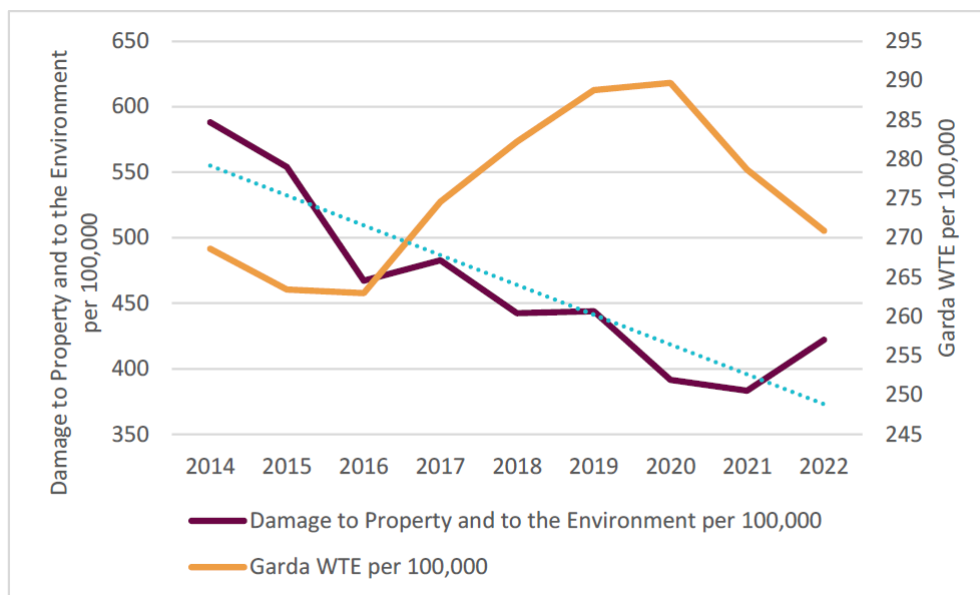




Figure 3(d): Gardaí WTE per 100,000 vs. Public Order and other Social Code Offences per 100,000

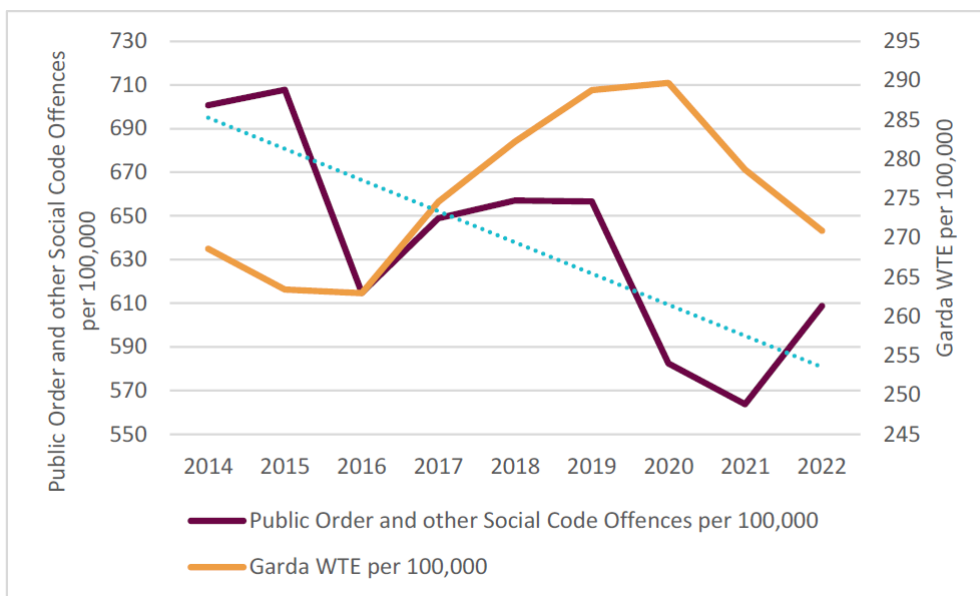
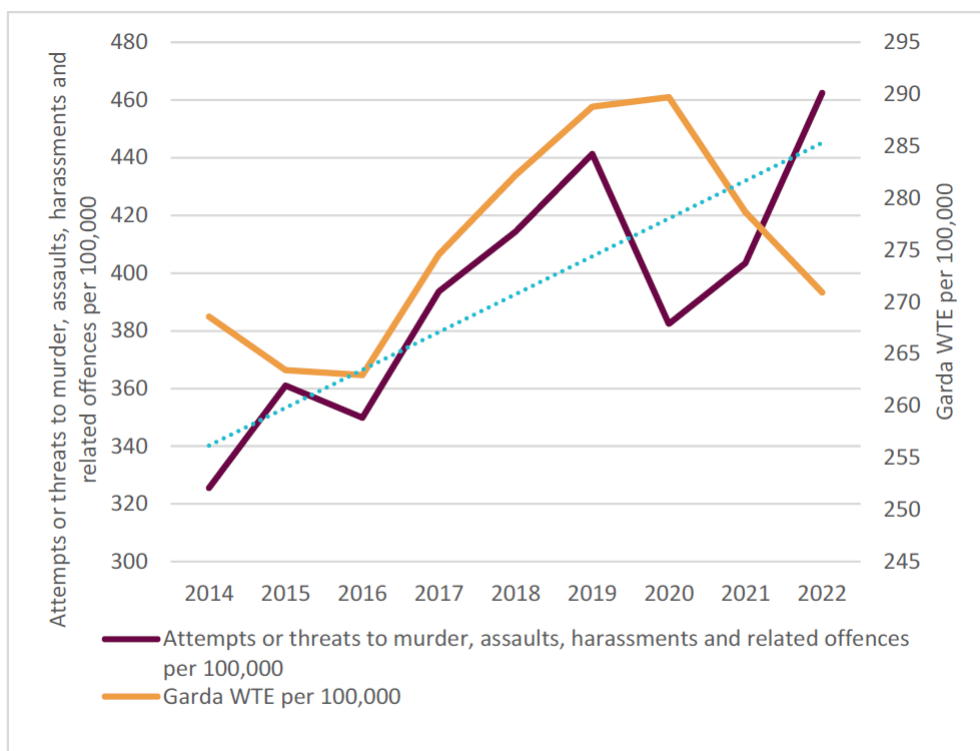


Figure 3(e): Gardaí WTE per 100,000 vs. Attempts or threats to murder, assaults, harassments and related offences per 100,000



Source: Author's calculations based on CSO figures¹² and World Bank¹³ and CSO population estimates

Per the above figures, it appears that while Garda numbers have declined from their 2020 peak, there is a general downward trend in offences¹⁴, albeit increased from 2021 to 2022 in each case. The decrease appears generally to have occurred as Garda numbers increased, and reversed as Garda numbers have decreased - however, correlation does not imply causation. Further, it should be noted that official crime figures such as those employed in the above figures are dependent on how often offences are reported and may not be a completely accurate reflection of the actual rate of crime in the country.

¹² This period was employed on account of an apparent change in the CSO's reporting methods circa 2013/2014 – all annual figures based on Q4 of each year.

¹³ World Bank Population, total – Ireland.

¹⁴ Aside from attempts or threats to murder, assaults, harassments and related offences.

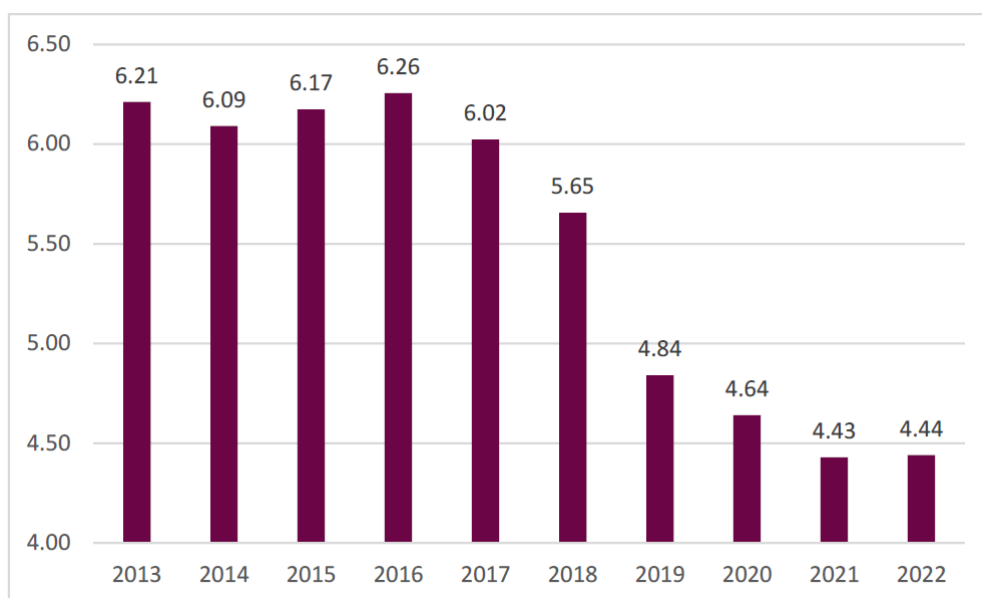


Civilianisation

The number of Gardaí has also been affected by efforts to civilianise the force, in order to ensure that Gardaí are more focussed on core duties. Indeed, the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland suggests that civilianisation ought to be prioritised over the simple recruitment of extra sworn officers¹⁵. AGS is broadly supportive of the civilianisation process, per its Modernisation and Renewal Programme 2016-2021, but cautions that “on its own, [civilianisation] won’t enhance professional policing. We must have civilians with the right skills in the right places to support the professionalisation of the organisation [.....] we are committed to maximising the use of professional civilian skills.”¹⁶. It has also been pointed out that civilian staff tend to be cheaper than sworn Gardaí, due to the range of monetary allowances and faster-accruing pensions available to the latter¹⁷.

Efforts to civilianise can be seen in Figure 4 below¹⁸, showing the ratio of sworn officers to civilian staff in recent years.

Figure 4: Garda-Civilian Staff Ratio 2013-2022



Source: Author’s calculations based on AGS Annual Reports and Department of Public Expenditure and Reform figures¹⁹

Figure 4 above indicates that the Garda-civilian ratio has fallen from 6.21:1 in 2013, to 4.44:1 in 2022. A target of 3.75:1 (implied by the target of 15,000 WTE sworn officers and 4,000 WTE civilian staff) therefore looks achievable.

An interactive dashboard allowing for observation of the increasing cost of progressing from the present to the target ratio is available [here](#).

Garda Salary and Pension Spend

Table 2²⁰ overleaf sets out aggregate pay and pension figures from 2005 to 2021 inclusive.

¹⁵ ‘The Future of Policing in Ireland’, September 2018.

¹⁶ AGS Modernisation and Renewal Programme 2016-2021.

¹⁷ DPER July 2018, ‘Policing Civilianisation in Ireland: Lessons from International Practice’.

¹⁸ Citizen Staff numbers in Figure 3 based on WTE estimates.

¹⁹ See footnote 4 for link.

²⁰ Figures are Outturn/Realised figures, rather than Estimate figures. Pension figures per heading A.8 in *Appropriation Accounts 2012-2021 (inclusive)*: ‘Superannuation, etc.’; heading G in *Appropriation Accounts 2005-2011 (inclusive)*.



Table 2: AGS Pay and Pension Spend, 2005-2022, in €million

Year	Salaries, Wages & Allowances	Pension
2005	€794.3	€215.4
2006	€878.6	€222.4
2007	€1,002.7	€230.0
2008	€1,078.6	€249.0
2009	€1,079.5	€317.7
2010	€1,025.9	€289.0
2011	€1,036.9	€307.1
2012	€955.2	€317.8
2013	€946.6	€306.9
2014	€931.4	€308.2
2015	€963.3	€311.0
2016	€979.5	€319.3
2017	€1,075.8	€326.7
2018	€1,091.8	€336.8
2019	€1,137.6	€343.4
2020	€1,225.6	€354.7
2021	€1,252.3	€377.6

Source: Comptroller & Auditor General Appropriation Accounts

Table 2 above shows a steady increase in the cost of pension payments to the Exchequer, but also reflects the effects of wage cuts and a recruitment freeze on foot of the major recession of 2008-2011.

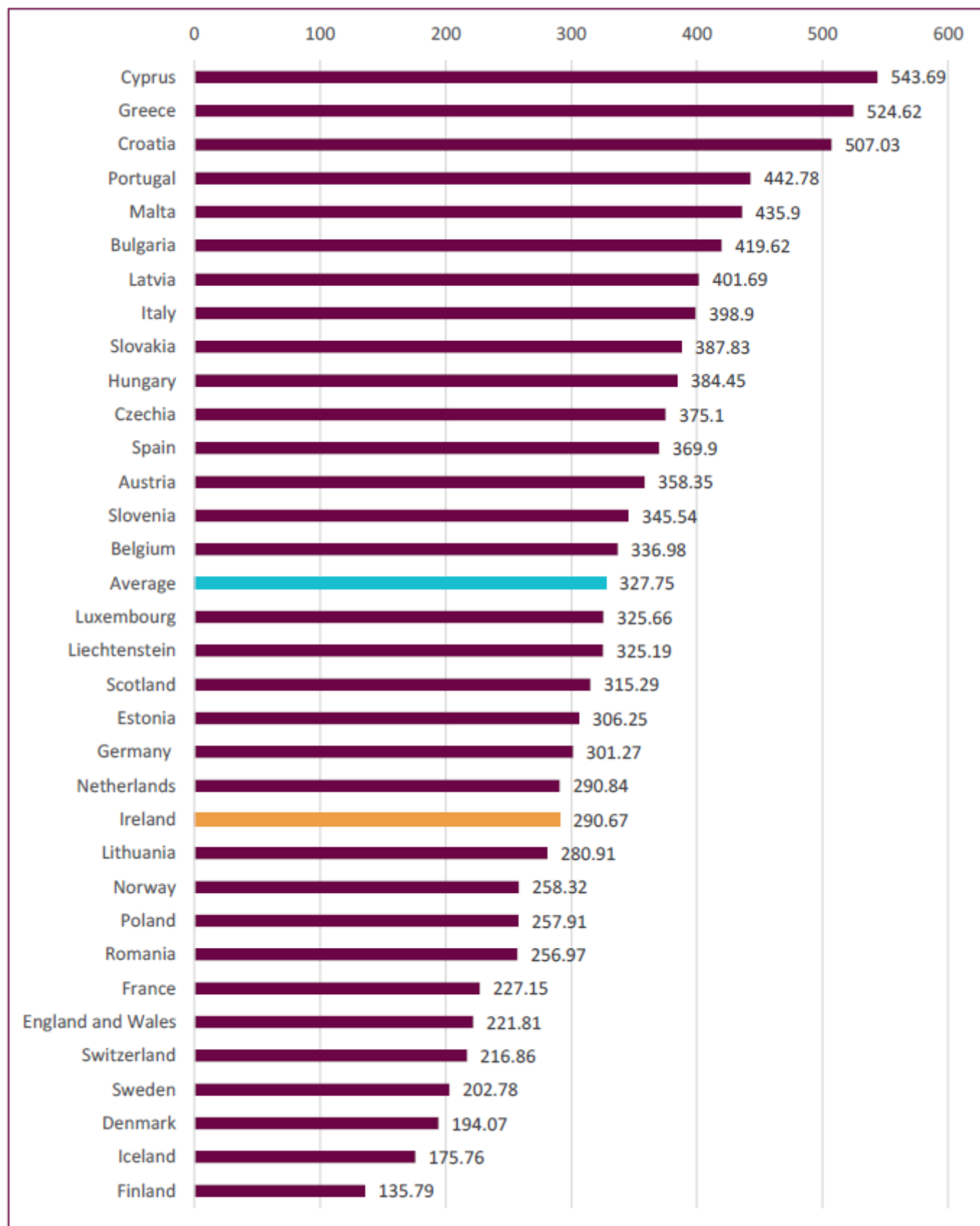
European Comparison

In this section, Garda strength is compared with their European counterparts' police numbers, with a view to assessing whether or not AGS is sufficiently resourced for the purposes of maintaining pace in terms of numbers of sworn officers. Figure 5 overleaf sets out the 2020 figures²¹ for police officers per 100,000 inhabitants for each of the Member States of the EEA, Switzerland and Britain.

²¹ The most recent figures from Eurostat. It should be noted that 2021 figures are also available, but the figures for Britain, France, Italy and Norway are not yet to hand for that year. Further, it should be noted that the figures for Ireland are derived from the author's own calculations of sworn Gardaí per 100,000 of population – this is on account of gaps in Ireland's reporting, as well as apparent changes in calculation from 2018 onwards.



Figure 5: EEA, Switzerland and Britain 2020 - Police per 100,000 Inhabitants



Source: Eurostat and author's calculations based on AGS Annual Reports and World Bank population estimates.



Figure 5 indicates that Ireland would have to increase its 2020 police-to-100,000 inhabitants ratio by approximately 37 per 100,000 in order to attain the average among its European counterparts, and 152 per 100,000 in order to match the country with the fourth-largest ratio, Portugal²². The fiscal implications of these scenarios are discussed further in this paper.

An interactive dashboard displaying the ratio of police officers to 100,000 inhabitants among EEA Member States and Switzerland over the years 2008-2021 (inclusive) can be found [here](#).

Caveats

There are a number of key caveats regarding the cost calculations and analysis in this note, and these are set out below.

Garda Reserve

None of the projections in this paper account for any future recruitment plans regarding the Garda Reserve, currently part of the overall Garda recruitment target. As a volunteer force, and though incurring some cost in terms of training, uniform etc., they do not figure in any salary- or pension-related costs.

Relationship between Garda Numbers and Crime Rates

This note analyses the costs associated with increasing Garda numbers and does not attempt to analyse the relationship between police force numbers and crime rates. The PBO is not advocating any particular policy approach regarding the effectiveness or otherwise of attaining the stated Garda recruitment target (and other targets mentioned in this note) on crime levels in Ireland. It is noted that opinion on this subject is divided. Ministers for Justice²³ have been firm in their wish for the achievement of the headline 15,000 target, and the Commissioner has advocated for the increase of this target in line with future population growth²⁴. However, others such as the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland have questioned the rationale underpinning these targets, pointing instead to the need for maximising existing resources and noting the financial commitment involved in meeting the target²⁵. Academic studies have also yielded mixed results in respect of the relationship between police numbers and crime levels, with some endorsing the notion (especially with regard to property crime)²⁶, while others point to the need for greater effectiveness rather than greater strength²⁷.

Differing Functions of Police Officers Internationally

Analysis relating to counterpart police forces in this note does not account for the differing internal grade structures within forces and/or functions of police officers from country to country. For example, the Gendarmerie in France performs an entirely different role to municipal police officers in that country²⁸, in much the same way that the Royal Marechaussee in the Netherlands²⁹ performs different duties to those of the regional and district units³⁰. AGS, on the other hand, is the national unified police force operating at various local levels (station, district, etc.) throughout Ireland. It was not possible, for the purposes of this paper, to obtain police officer-civilian staff ratios for a significant number of the European countries analysed herein.

Other Public Servants

This note concentrates exclusively on costs related to the AGS workforce, and does not take into account any possible effects of a significant increase in strength on related functions of the public sector, such as the Courts Service, the Irish Prison Service, the Probation Service and so forth.

²² The first three nations in this figure, Cyprus, Greece and Croatia, have specific and historic security/policing issues that may render their respective situations incomparable to that of Ireland, and therefore it is considered that Portugal would be a more reasonable comparator.

²³ For example, see *Dáil Éireann Debate of 6 December 2022*.

²⁴ Irish Times *article* of 23 January 2023.

²⁵ See Chapter 18 of the Commission's *Report*.

²⁶ Bradford (2011), *Police numbers and crime rates – a rapid evidence review*.

²⁷ Kleck & Barnes (2010), *Do More Police Lead to More Crime Deterrence?*.

²⁸ Site officiel de la Gendarmerie nationale.

²⁹ Tasks of the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee.

³⁰ Organisatiestructuur Nederlandse politie.



Figures

All cost amounts presented in this note are expressed in March 2023 terms. Overtime and other allowances are disregarded in the pay calculation in this paper³¹. In terms of projecting Garda officer and civilian staff costs, it should be noted that criminal activity can vary in type and/or intensity over time, causing varying demands on resources³², necessitating different skill sets. With that in mind, the identification of existing Garda functions for likely future civilianisation is outside the scope of this paper. Further, staff cost calculations are based on the composition of the civilian staff cohort of AGS as of February 2023.

Cost Projections

In this section, calculations of projected costs for AGS to meet its recruitment and staffing targets, are set out in various scenarios. The cost implications of increasing the strength of the force vis-à-vis European counterparts, are analysed later in this note.

Base Calculation

In this paper, the basis for estimating staff-related costs for AGS is the PSC approach to calculating staff costs in the public sector³³. The approach comprises four separate components: median salary³⁴; Employer PRSI; a percentage premium based on the imputed cost of the pension accruing³⁵, and 25% of median salary to account for 'overheads' (to cover, for example, the cost of office space, travel, materials, etc.). This calculation is applied in estimating the costs not only of AGS members, but also the civilian staff working in the organisation.

One consideration given to estimating AGS costs is the cost of training each officer. These costs have been estimated at €27,961³⁶ per officer. The costs expressed in the analysis in this note however are exclusive of training.

Officer Target Cost

Table 3 below sets out the cost of the current³⁷ WTE total of AGS sworn officers, 13,955.0 as of 30 April 2023, together with the cost of a proportionate increase (per rank) to the stated target of 15,000 officers, and the difference between present costs and the hypothetical cost of reaching that figure³⁸. As stated earlier, all calculations have been made using the PSC approach to staff costs, referred to earlier in this note.

Table 3: Comparison of Total Staff Cost for AGS Sworn Officers, Present vs. Target³⁹

Rank	Total Staff Cost 30 Apr 2023	Required Total Staff Cost	Total Cost Difference (March 2023 Terms)
Commissioner	€415,930	€415,930	€0
D/Commissioner	€534,714	€534,714	€0
A/Commissioner	€1,888,123	€2,029,732	€141,609
Chief Superintendent	€7,997,320	€8,596,231	€598,910
Superintendent	€23,977,741	€25,773,217	€1,795,476
Inspector	€47,214,962	€50,751,811	€3,536,849
Sergeant	€193,164,628	€207,632,574	€14,467,945
Garda	€897,461,610	€964,681,070	€67,219,460
Total	€1,172,655,029	€1,260,415,279	€87,760,250

Source: Author's calculations based on AGS Annual Reports, AGS Monthly Report to the Policing Authority⁴⁰, and PSC.

The above figures indicate a necessity for an extra €88 million (approximately) in order to increase the size of the force to 15,000. This works out at an average of approximately €83,981 per extra sworn officer. This is the figure used to calculate other costs associated with adding to Garda strength throughout the rest of this note.

³¹ For an indication (albeit possibly not up to date) of the various monetary allowances available to Gardaí attested after 2013, please see this [Garda Representative Association document](#) for Gardaí Who Joined After October 2013.

³² DPER Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service, July 2017: 'Challenges for Investment in Police Expenditure: A Public Expenditure Perspective'.

³³ [Public Spending Code: Central Technical References and Economic Appraisal Parameters](#).

³⁴ Median on the incremental scale for the relevant grade.

³⁵ This is dependent on grade or position: e.g., in the case of AGS members recruited after 2013, this premium is calculated at 14%.

³⁶ This is a CPI-adjusted figure to reflect an approximate estimate of €24,000 received by DPER for the purposes of their [review](#) of AGS civilianisation efforts in July 2018. Inflation adjustment carried out using the [CSO CPI Inflation Calculator](#).

³⁷ At the time of writing.

³⁸ These figures are calculated on the basis of there being no increase in the current number of Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners.

³⁹ Calculations may be affected by the rounding up/down of figures.

⁴⁰ For May 2023.



Staffing Target Cost

Table 4⁴¹ overleaf sets out an equivalent set of figures measuring the likely costs incurred by the Exchequer in the event of current civilian staffing levels in AGS reaching the target number of 4,000⁴². The grades/posts of the civilian workforce are set out below as of 28 February 2023⁴³, when the WTE number was 3,143.6, and increased proportionately in order to meet the 4,000 target. For example, as of February 2023, there are 68.5 WTE Assistant Principals working in AGS. In order to meet the 4,000 target on a proportional basis, this number would have to increase to 87.21 WTE. Similarly, 1.38 WTE Photographers must increase to 1.76 in order to meet the target⁴⁴. It should be noted that this does not account for future recruitment for specific posts and/or current sworn officer functions to be civilianised.

⁴¹ Calculations may be affected by the rounding up/down of figures.

⁴² For the purposes of these calculations, it is assumed that there would be no change or increase in the number of the most senior grades, namely Chief Administrative Officer, Executive Director and Director. It should also be noted that the calculations are based on WTE numbers of civilian staff, i.e., with a WTE target of 4,000.

⁴³ This is the last month – at the time of writing - for which disaggregated figures for the various administrative/professional/technical/industrial grades are available.

⁴⁴ Only the total WTE figure for these positions was available, meaning that the headcount for each post had to be reduced proportionate to the overall WTE. This is why there are 2.07 Photographers in February 2023, for the purposes of these calculations. In other words, the calculations are based entirely on the breakdown of civilian staff for that month.



Table 4: Comparison of Total AGS Civilian Staff Cost, Present vs. Target⁴⁵

Civilian Grade	Total Staff Cost	Target Total Staff Cost	Difference (March 2023 Terms)
CAO	€367,328	€367,328	€0
Executive Director	€1,433,586	€1,433,586	€0
Director	€712,888	€712,888	€0
PO	€4,418,509	€5,625,709	€1,207,200
AP	€8,331,758	€10,607,483	€2,275,725
HEO	€18,193,928	€23,163,405	€4,969,477
AO	€1,794,736	€2,284,550	€489,813
EO	€47,579,624	€60,574,503	€12,994,879
CO	€91,194,907	€116,102,339	€24,907,432
Professional Accountant Grade	€347,105	€441,428	€94,322
Professional Accountant Grade	€372,516	€474,013	€101,497
Forensic Accountant Grade II	€74,503	€95,018	€20,515
Engineer Grade II	€151,075	€192,675	€41,600
Traffic Warden	€35,709	€45,542	€9,833
Principal Psychologist	€116,860	€149,039	€32,179
General Operative	€376,816	€479,944	€103,129
Carpenter	€39,495	€50,370	€10,875
Charge Hand	€43,614	€55,624	€12,010
Groom	€53,800	€68,615	€14,815
Store Person	€122,583	€155,893	€33,311
Legal Professional	€503,554	€640,998	€137,444
Head of Legal Affairs	€163,964	€209,114	€45,150
Examiner of Maps	€40,501	€51,653	€11,152
Catering Staff	€742,440	€945,279	€202,839
Cleaner	€5,829,310	€7,421,565	€1,592,255
Service Attendant	€1,505,475	€1,916,694	€411,220
Service Officer	€203,847	€259,556	€55,710
Senior Solicitor	€80,460	€102,615	€22,156
Solicitor	€61,612	€78,577	€16,966
Chief Medical Officer	€110,929	€141,475	€30,546
Assistant Chief Medical Officer	€95,104	€121,292	€26,188
Cartographer	€34,204	€43,622	€9,418
Researcher	€135,012	€172,189	€37,177
Photographer	€81,663	€104,149	€22,487
Telecoms Technician	€347,188	€442,078	€94,890
Driver	€478,804	€609,335	€130,530
Store Officer	€48,578	€61,955	€13,377
Superintendent of Cleaners	€53,685	€68,468	€14,783
Nurse	€42,085	€53,673	€11,589
Teacher	€768,768	€978,769	€210,001
Plumber	€39,250	€50,058	€10,808
Total	€187,127,770	€237,553,065	€50,425,296

Source: Author's calculations based on AGS Annual Reports, DPER Civil and Public Service Pay Scales⁴⁶, FÓRSA Public Service Pay Scales⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Calculations may be affected by the rounding up/down of figures.

⁴⁶ Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Circular 02/2023: Application of 1st March 2023 pay adjustments.

⁴⁷ FÓRSA Civil Service Salary Scales: Revision of salaries with effect from 1st March 2023.



Per the above figures, it will cost an extra €50 million (approximately) in order to bring the civilian staff cohort of AGS from its February 2023 WTE total of 3,143.6 to 4,000. This implies an average approximate cost of **€58,881** for every extra civilian staff member employed for the purpose of meeting the stated recruitment target. It should be noted, at this point, that this is purely an average figure, and takes no account of any specific duties currently performed by AGS officers that will be civilianised in future. Further, this is the figure used to calculate other costs associated with adding to AGS civilian staff throughout the rest of this note.

Sensitivity Analyses

In this section, Garda and civilian staff numbers and costs are analysed on the bases of different population projections.

Population Projection Models

The following tables show the effect on the Exchequer of growing the AGS workforce from 2022 to 2037 inclusive, in line with population projections, and growth of the workforce with the target officer and civilian staff member number as the bases. Population growth in this paper is projected using the M1F2 criterion developed by the CSO, predicting population numbers for the period 2017-2051, based on net migration of +30,000 per annum until 2051 (M1) and the total fertility rate decreasing from the 2016 level of 1.8 to 1.6 by 2031 (F2), and to remain constant for the rest of the projection period⁴⁸.

Calculations using M1F2 and the other five CSO Population Projection criteria⁴⁹ can be found [here](#). It should be noted that the CSO is currently updating its population projection criteria, in order to account for new data and changes to migration and fertility patterns attributable to recent shifts in asylum numbers, among other factors.

AGS officer and staff numbers are those recorded at the end of 2022 (as the last full year for which there are records), with costs expressed at March 2023 levels. The cost of each additional sworn officer/civilian staff members is calculated using the figures for the base calculations set out earlier in this note.

Table 5 sets out M1F2 projections of the costs entailed in increasing 2022 AGS staffing levels in proportion with population increases.

It should be noted, per Table 5, that while Garda WTE numbers exceed the present target of 15,000 by 2030, civilian WTE numbers fall significantly short of the 4,000 target within the time-frame. Based on the calculations above, the total extra cost (in March 2023 terms) to the Exchequer of maintaining Garda strength in line with population projections until 2037 is approximately **€1,419 million**, while the cost of extra civilian staff is approximately **€224 million**.

Further, Table 6 depicts equivalent calculations, this time with Garda strength and civilian staff WTE numbers set at the target levels from 2022.

The figures in Table 6 indicate that were AGS to attain its present recruitment and staffing targets, and from there increase the respective cohorts in line with population projects until 2037, an extra **€1,534 million** (approx.) would be required for Garda strength, and **€287 million** for civilian staffing.

⁴⁸ CSO Population and Labour Force Projections 2017-2151.

⁴⁹ As well as M1F2, the CSO uses M1F1, M2F1, M2F2, M1F3 and M2F3, which apply different fertility and net migration rates.



Table 5: AGS Sworn Officer and Civilian Staff Member WTE in Line with M1F2 Population Growth, 2022-2037, with end 2022 numbers as Base, Costs in €million⁵⁰

Year	Population	Garda WTE (end Dec 2022)	Annual Garda Cost (end Dec 2022)	Excess Garda Cost	Civilian Staff WTE (end Dec 2022)	Annual Civilian Staff Cost (end Dec 2022)	Excess Civilian Staff Cost
2022	5,101,144	13,880.00	€1,165.70	€0	3,125.60	€184.00	€0.00
2023	5,156,660	14,031.10	€1,178.30	€12.70	3,159.60	€186.00	€2.00
2024	5,211,032	14,179.00	€1,190.80	€25.10	3,192.90	€188.00	€4.00
2025	5,264,348	14,324.10	€1,203.00	€37.30	3,225.60	€189.90	€5.90
2026	5,316,742	14,466.60	€1,214.90	€49.30	3,257.70	€191.80	€7.80
2027	5,368,212	14,606.70	€1,226.70	€61.00	3,289.20	€193.70	€9.60
2028	5,418,977	14,744.80	€1,238.30	€72.60	3,320.30	€195.50	€11.50
2029	5,469,265	14,881.60	€1,249.80	€84.10	3,351.20	€197.30	€13.30
2030	5,519,004	15,017.00	€1,261.10	€95.50	3,381.60	€199.10	€15.10
2031	5,568,301	15,151.10	€1,272.40	€106.70	3,411.80	€200.90	€16.90
2032	5,617,093	15,283.90	€1,283.60	€117.90	3,441.70	€202.60	€18.60
2033	5,665,931	15,416.80	€1,294.70	€129.10	3,471.70	€204.40	€20.40
2034	5,714,832	15,549.80	€1,305.90	€140.20	3,501.60	€206.20	€22.10
2035	5,763,710	15,682.80	€1,317.10	€151.40	3,531.60	€207.90	€23.90
2036	5,812,482	15,815.50	€1,328.20	€162.50	3,561.50	€209.70	€25.70
2037	5,861,095	15,947.80	€1,339.30	€173.70	3,591.20	€211.50	€27.40
Total Excess Garda Cost:				€1,419.20	Total Excess Civilian Staff Cost:		€224.10

Source: CSO Population Projection Result Database⁵¹, Author's calculations based on AGS Annual Reports, DPER Civil and Public Service Pay Scales, FORSA Public Service Pay Scales

Table 6: AGS Sworn Officer and Civilian Staff Member WTE in Line with M1F2 Population Growth, 2022-2037, with Target numbers as Base – Costs in €million⁵²

Year	Population	Garda WTE (Target)	Annual Garda Cost (Target)	Excess Garda Cost	Civilian Staff WTE (Target)	Annual Civilian Staff Cost (Target)	Excess Civilian Staff Cost
2022	5,101,144	15,000	€1,259.70	€0	4,000.00	€235.50	€0
2023	5,156,660	15,163	€1,273.40	€13.70	4,043.50	€238.10	€2.60
2024	5,211,032	15,323	€1,286.90	€27.10	4,086.20	€240.60	€5.10
2025	5,264,348	15,480	€1,300.00	€40.30	4,128.00	€243.10	€7.50
2026	5,316,742	15,634	€1,313.00	€53.20	4,169.10	€245.50	€10.00
2027	5,368,212	15,785	€1,325.70	€66.00	4,209.40	€247.90	€12.30
2028	5,418,977	15,935	€1,338.20	€78.50	4,249.20	€250.20	€14.70
2029	5,469,265	16,082	€1,350.60	€90.90	4,288.70	€252.50	€17.00
2030	5,519,004	16,229	€1,362.90	€103.20	4,327.70	€254.80	€19.30
2031	5,568,301	16,374	€1,375.10	€115.40	4,366.30	€257.10	€21.60
2032	5,617,093	16,517	€1,387.10	€127.40	4,404.60	€259.30	€23.80
2033	5,665,931	16,661	€1,399.20	€139.50	4,442.90	€261.60	€26.10
2034	5,714,832	16,805	€1,411.30	€151.60	4,481.20	€263.90	€28.30
2035	5,763,710	16,948	€1,423.30	€163.60	4,519.50	€266.10	€30.60
2036	5,812,482	17,092	€1,435.40	€175.70	4,557.80	€268.40	€32.80
2037	5,861,095	17,235	€1,447.40	€187.70	4,595.90	€270.60	€35.10
Total Excess Garda Cost:				€1,533.70	Total Excess Civilian Staff Cost:		€286.70

Source: CSO Population Projection Result Database, Author's calculations based on AGS Annual Reports, DPER Civil and Public Service Pay Scales, FORSA Public Service Pay Scales

Cost of Attaining European Standards⁵³

As can be seen from Figure 5 earlier in this paper, Ireland's ratio of police officers to 100,000 inhabitants is somewhat behind most of its fellow EEA members (and England and Wales, and Scotland), based on 2020 data. In this section, the amount of public money required to adjust the ratio to that of this peer group is calculated.

N.B.: It should be noted that for the purposes of comparison with Ireland's European peers, police officer numbers are expressed in terms of headcount rather than WTE⁵⁴.

⁵⁰ Calculations may be affected by the rounding up/down of figures.

⁵¹ CSO Population and Labour Force Projections 2017-2051.

⁵² These are approximate figures which have been the subject of rounding up/down where appropriate.

⁵³ In the context of comparing Garda numbers with European counterparts, headcount rather than WTE is used, given that Eurostat figures appear to be based on that criterion.

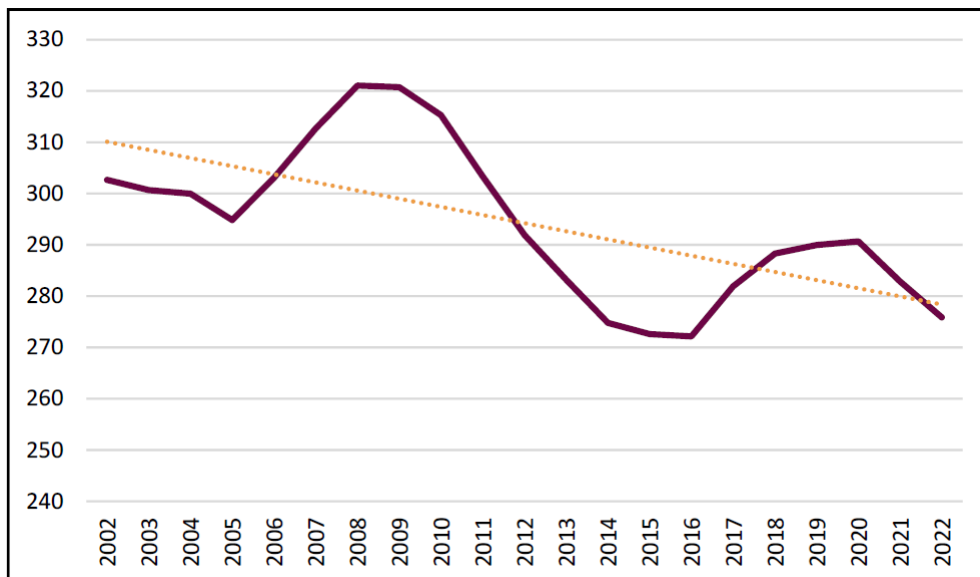
⁵⁴ Correspondence between the PBO and Eurostat indicates that their published figures are based on headcount.



Table 7: Gardaí per 100,000 Inhabitants

Year	Gardaí per 100,000
2002	302.62
2003	300.69
2004	299.96
2005	294.81
2006	303.12
2007	312.69
2008	321.01
2009	320.75
2010	315.27
2011	303.36
2012	291.86
2013	283.16
2014	274.79
2015	272.57
2016	272.18
2017	281.88
2018	288.29
2019	289.95
2020	290.67
2021	282.82
2022	275.84

Figure 6: Gardaí per 100,000 Inhabitants



Source: Author's calculations based on AGS Annual Reports, World Bank, CSO

Average

The 2020 average across the EEA/Britain area was 327.8 police officers for every 100,000 inhabitants, while Ireland had 290.7 Gardaí for every 100,000 inhabitants. Table 7 and Figure 6 above show, respectively, the numbers and pattern of Ireland's police officer-per-100,000 inhabitants, from 2002 to 2022 inclusive.

As can be seen, there has been a general downward trend in the ratio, which decreased sharply between 2020 and 2022⁵⁵.

⁵⁵ Further, as of 30 April 2023, Garda headcount is 13,995, a further decrease on the end 2022 number (14,133), suggesting that the ratio could well drop further in 2023. These updated figures can be found in the most recent [Garda Commissioner's Monthly Report to the Policing Authority](#).



Table 8 below sets out the total excess cost (in March 2023 terms) of moving Ireland's 2022 ratio to reach the EEA/Britain average by 2037 (in line with CSO's M1F2 Population Growth criterion), if additional officers were recruited in equal proportion on an annual basis.

A dashboard showing the other Population Growth criteria and their effects on the calculations in Tables 8 and 9 can be found [here](#).

Table 8: Incremental Table of Cost of Ratio of Ireland's Police per 100,000 inhabitants, reaching EEA/Britain Average, in Line with M1F2 Population Growth 2022-2037, in €million

Year	Population	Headcount at 2022 Ratio	Ireland Police per 100,000	Headcount Moving Towards EEA/Bri/Swi Avg 2022 Ratio	Headcount Cost	Excess 2022 Ratio Headcount Cost	EEA/Bri/Swi Ratio Cost	Excess EEA/Bri/Swi Ratio Cost
2022	5,101,144	14,133	277.1	14,133	€1,186.9	€0	€1,186.9	€0.0
2023	5,156,660	14,287	280.4	14,306	€1,199.8	€12.9	€1,201.4	€14.5
2024	5,211,092	14,437	283.8	14,478	€1,212.5	€25.6	€1,215.9	€29.0
2025	5,264,348	14,585	287.2	14,651	€1,224.9	€38.0	€1,230.4	€43.5
2026	5,316,742	14,730	290.6	14,823	€1,237.1	€50.2	€1,244.9	€58.0
2027	5,368,212	14,873	294.0	14,996	€1,249.0	€62.1	€1,259.4	€72.5
2028	5,418,977	15,014	297.4	15,168	€1,260.9	€74.0	€1,273.9	€87.0
2029	5,469,265	15,153	300.7	15,341	€1,272.6	€85.7	€1,288.4	€101.4
2030	5,519,004	15,291	304.1	15,514	€1,284.1	€97.2	€1,302.8	€115.9
2031	5,568,301	15,427	307.5	15,686	€1,295.6	€108.7	€1,317.3	€130.4
2032	5,617,093	15,562	310.9	15,859	€1,307.0	€120.0	€1,331.8	€144.9
2033	5,665,931	15,698	314.3	16,031	€1,318.3	€131.4	€1,346.3	€159.4
2034	5,714,832	15,833	317.7	16,204	€1,329.7	€142.8	€1,360.8	€173.9
2035	5,763,710	15,969	321.0	16,376	€1,341.1	€154.2	€1,375.3	€188.4
2036	5,812,482	16,104	324.4	16,549	€1,352.4	€165.5	€1,389.8	€202.9
2037	5,861,095	16,238	327.8	16,722	€1,363.7	€176.8	€1,404.3	€217.4
Total Excess 2022 Ratio HC Cost:						€1,445.0	Total Excess EEA/Bri/Swi Ratio Cost:	€1,739.1
							Net Excess Cost:	€294.1

Source: Author's calculations based on AGS Annual Reports, World Bank, CSO

In order to maintain its 2022 ratio until 2037, Garda headcount would have to increase from 14,133 to approximately 16,238. Based on the base calculation for each extra sworn officer set out earlier in this note, this implies an excess cost of around €1,445 million.

Moreover, in order to attain the (2020) EEA/UK ratio of 327.8 officers per 100,000 inhabitants by 2037, Garda headcount would have to increase further to approximately 16,722 officers. This implies an excess cost of approximately €1,739 million.

Based on the foregoing, it is estimated that the net cost of moving Ireland's 2022 ratio to the 2020 EEA/Switzerland/Britain average in equal steps until 2037 would be approximately **€294 million**.

Leaders

As already stated, there are a number of challenges in identifying suitable comparators for Ireland, given the range of factors which may be used to determine the size and/or composition of police forces.

In terms of matching the leaders among the EEA/Switzerland/Britain cohort, and as set out earlier in this note, it is considered that it would be most appropriate to compare Ireland's ratio of officers to inhabitants with that of Portugal⁵⁶, who are fourth in the table in Figure 4, albeit significantly below the top three countries, at 442.8 officers per 100,000⁵⁷.

⁵⁶ Portugal's 2020 ratio.

⁵⁷ It is likely that the ratios of the first three nations in the Figure 5, Cyprus, Greece and Croatia, may be significantly influenced by their respective recent security situations, e.g., a significant part of Cyprus's northern territory is the subject of a long-standing dispute with Türkiye. Therefore, these three countries are not appropriate comparators for Ireland.



Table 9: Incremental Table of Cost of Ireland's Ratio of Police per 100,000 inhabitants, reaching Portugal Ratio, in Line with M1F2 Population Growth 2022-2037, in €million

Year	Population	Headcount at 2022 Ratio	Ireland Police per 100,000	Heacount Moving Towards Portugal Ave	2022 Ratio Headcount Cost	Excess 2022 Ratio Headcount Cost	Portugal Ratio Cost	Excess Portugal Ratio Cost
2022	5,101,144	14,133	277.1	14,133	€1,186.9	€0.0	€1,186.9	€0.0
2023	5,156,660	14,287	288.1	14,694	€1,199.8	€12.9	€1,234.0	€47.1
2024	5,211,032	14,437	299.2	15,258	€1,212.5	€25.6	€1,281.4	€94.5
2025	5,264,348	14,585	310.2	15,821	€1,224.9	€38.0	€1,328.7	€141.8
2026	5,316,742	14,730	321.3	16,385	€1,237.1	€50.2	€1,376.0	€189.1
2027	5,368,212	14,873	332.3	16,949	€1,249.0	€62.1	€1,423.4	€236.5
2028	5,418,977	15,014	343.4	17,512	€1,260.9	€74.0	€1,470.7	€283.8
2029	5,469,265	15,153	354.4	18,076	€1,272.6	€85.7	€1,518.0	€331.1
2030	5,519,004	15,291	365.5	18,639	€1,284.1	€97.2	€1,565.3	€378.4
2031	5,568,301	15,427	376.5	19,203	€1,295.6	€108.7	€1,612.7	€425.8
2032	5,617,093	15,562	387.6	19,766	€1,307.0	€120.0	€1,660.0	€473.1
2033	5,665,931	15,698	398.6	20,330	€1,318.3	€131.4	€1,707.3	€520.4
2034	5,714,832	15,833	409.7	20,894	€1,329.7	€142.8	€1,754.7	€567.8
2035	5,763,710	15,969	420.7	21,457	€1,341.1	€154.2	€1,802.0	€615.1
2036	5,812,482	16,104	431.8	22,021	€1,352.4	€165.5	€1,849.3	€662.4
2037	5,861,095	16,238	442.8	22,584	€1,363.7	€176.8	€1,896.6	€709.7
					Total Excess 2022 Ratio HC Cost:	€1,445.0	Total Excess Portugal Cost:	€5,676.6
					Net Excess Cost:			€4,231.6

Source: Author's calculations based on AGS Annual Reports, World Bank, CSO

Table 9 indicates that approximately €5,676 million would need to be spent from 2022 to 2037 in order for Ireland's ratio to reach Portugal's 2020 ratio in that time frame. Were Garda headcount to be kept constant at its 2022 ratio, the next excess cost of bringing that ratio up to Portugal's 2020 figure would be approximately **€4,232 million**.

Table 9 also indicates that this would bring Garda headcount up to around 22,584 officers by 2037.

Conclusion

Garda strength and civilian staff costs will increase substantially if current force strength targets are to be met. It is noted that as of March 2023, approximately €87.8 million would be required simply to meet the Garda WTE recruitment target, and over €50 million to meet the civilian staff WTE target. Further, approximately €1,419 million would be required simply to maintain the 2022 ratio of Garda WTE to the population until 2037, with around €224 million required in order to maintain the 2022 ratio in the case of civilian staff, if M1F2 projections were kept pace with in that period. This does not account for the existing Garda positions and/or entirely new roles to be performed by civilians in the coming years.

Further, notwithstanding possible distinctions among different police forces, Ireland's police officer-to-population ratio is below the average among their EEA and British counterparts, and far below that of those nations with the highest ratios. Were Ireland to seek to gain parity with the 2020 average ratios among the EEA/Switzerland/Britain cohort from 2022 to 2037, it would cost an additional €294 million (approx.), while circa €4,232 million would be required in order to attain the levels of Portugal. The foregoing figures incorporate the costs associated with maintaining headcount in proportion to M1F2 CSO population projections in the 2022-2037 period. Moreover, these figures disregard the necessity for a proportionally increased civilian workforce. It should be reiterated that opinion is divided on the effectiveness or otherwise of increased police numbers on crime levels.

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