

## **Joint Press Statement from An Garda Síochána and the Mental Health Commission on the publication of the Report of the Working Group on Police and Mental Health Services**

In May 2005 the Mental Health Commission and An Garda Síochána established a joint Working Group to review best practice models of cooperation between the police and mental health services with a view to making recommendations for enhanced liaison and joint working systems between An Garda Síochána and the mental health services in Ireland.

An Garda Síochána and the Mental Health Commission today jointly welcome the publication of the report of the Working Group on Police and Mental Health Services, which will influence and inform future working relationships between An Garda Síochána and the Mental Health Services.

On the publication of the report, the Garda Commissioner, Fachtna Murphy, and the Chairman of the Mental Health Commission, Dr Edmond O’Dea, thanked the members of the working group who compiled the report and complimented them for their rigorous examination of this important area of health care. They also expressed appreciation to all those who participated in the focus groups and acknowledged that listening to the experiences of those directly involved was critical in compiling the report.

Speaking at Garda Headquarters today Commissioner Murphy said:-

*“As Commissioner I am fully committed to ensuring that the recommendations relating to An Garda Síochána will be fully implemented. This report provides guidelines for dealing with mental health issues that are based on an integrated and community-based approach. An Garda Síochána places the community to the forefront of the problem-solving approach to issues in our society and, through close interaction and an appreciation of the problems we face, we can work together to provide a safer community for all”*

The Chairman of the Mental Health Commission Dr Edmond O’Dea said:

*“We are very pleased at the level of Garda commitment to the implementation of the recommendations of this report. The Report requires action of other parties too and we look forward to the swift implementation of the recommendations by all concerned. What is required is not significant financial outlay but rather the will to address the issues raised, and the Commission will closely monitor the progress being made.”*

### **NOTE TO EDITORS**

Internationally, model prototypes and programmes have been developed to enhance liaison between the various service providers and improve the welfare and dignity of the service users and their families, and the recommendations in the Working Group report promote

interagency cooperation and joint working initiatives, providing positive outcomes for the police, mental health personnel, the service users and the community at large.

A copy of the Working Group report is available on the websites of An Garda Síochána [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie) and the Mental Health Commission [www.mhcirl.ie](http://www.mhcirl.ie)

### **Membership of Working Group on Police and Mental Health Services**

Dr. John Owens,	Chairman of Working Group
Ms Bríd Clarke, CEO	Mental Health Commission
Dr Philip Wiehe,	General Practitioner
Superintendent John Shannahan,	An Garda Síochána (Replaced in 2008)
Superintendent Fergus Healy,	An Garda Síochána
Ms Vicki Somers,	Principal Social Worker, HSE
Dr Mary McGuire, Consultant Psychiatrist,	Clinical Director Roscommon County Hospital
Mr Diarmaid McGuinness,	Mental Health Commission
Mr Gerry Coone,	Psychiatric Nurse, Mental Health Commission
Mr Martin Connor, Director of Nursing,	St Ita's Portrane (Retired 2008)