

Statement from An Garda Síochána

Due to restrictions with the Garda email system such as e-mail size and storage, the Commissioner occasionally used a Gmail address to ensure that Garda business has been discharged effectively. At all times, there has been due regard to the sensitivity of any information being transmitted in this way. Such issues with the Garda email system were identified by the Garda Inspectorate 2015 Report and are currently being addressed as part of the organisation's mobility strategy.

It is standard procedure and an essential requirement that all Garda personnel with mobile devices have Gmail accounts installed on these devices by Garda ICT Security personnel to ensure such devices are constantly secured and correctly configured. The Commissioner takes all recommended security measures when using Gmail such as regularly changing the password, using a mix of letters, numbers and symbols for the password, and independent device authentication.

An Garda Síochána's policy on email use dates from 2012 and does not take into account advances in technology since then such as the need for mobile devices to be associated with a commercial email address in order for them to be secured and configured. The 2012 policy has recently been reviewed and a new policy is being finalised.

An Garda Síochána has strict security controls in relation to the use and access to Garda IT systems. Devices issued to the Commissioner are secured by secure connections and utilise strong encryption technologies. Access to the PULSE database on any Garda Síochána devices is segregated by secure containers which does not store any Garda data on the device. This is coupled with strong users password policies and strong authentication.

An Garda Síochána is satisfied that the Commissioner's systems are secure and there is no evidence that they have ever been compromised. The Commissioner is well aware of her obligations to protect national security and policing operations and would under no circumstances allow them to be compromised.

The Commissioner will be shortly submitting a report on this matter to the Department of Justice and Equality, and the Policing Authority.