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48 extra gardaí to patrol streets of Cork

■ Anti-social behaviour, drug
dealing, and shoplifting targeted

Ann Murphy

Close to 50 extra gardaí have been assigned to Cork City as a new permanent "high-visibility policing plan" gets under way, targeting anti-social behaviour, drug dealing, shoplifting, and public order.

Aggressive begging will also come under the remit of the policing plan, which will see more garda foot patrols across the city centre.

The foot patrols come "in locations that were selected following feedback from the community and businesses in the city as well as our own crime location data", according to An Garda Síochána.

Under the plan, repeat offenders will be targeted with a "pro-arrest policy", while strong opposition to bail will also be made in the courts, "where appropriate".

The allocation of 48 gardaí to the Cork City Garda Division brings the number of gardaí in the division to 722, according to a spokeswoman.

The 48 gardaí include 36 probationers. The remaining 12 have been transferred to Cork City from other locations.

Under the high-visibility policing plan for the city centre, there will be 11 beats across the city which have been selected for daily patrols between 8am and 4am.

"Gardaí will be at each of these high-visibility posts/beats at all times during the operating hours to provide continuous reassurance to members of the public and promptly deal with incidents," said a Garda spokeswoman.

There will be 11 gardaí on duty for the operation during daytime hours, with 12 on duty during the night.

The plan will also be backed up by members of the Cork City Garda roads policing unit, public order unit, detectives, and plain-clothes gardaí.

A similar initiative has been launched in Dublin. Garda commissioner Justin Kelly told the Oireachtas justice committee two weeks ago that the pilot would be next rolled out to Cork.

The policing plan for the city centre will continue after Christmas and the new year period.

Businesses in Cork City have welcomed the move, given concerns in recent years about a perception among the public that the city centre does not feel safe.

The Cork Business Association has welcomed the new allocation of gardaí and the rollout of the policing plan.

"Compared with what we are used to getting, it is extraordinary," said association president Dave O'Brien.

He said the association has been campaigning for such a measure "for years and never really getting what we were looking for".

There were 1,309 theft-related offences in Cork city centre last year, up from 1,195 in 2023 and 939 in 2022.

There were 852 public order offences in the same area last year, while burglary-related offences rose from 28 in 2022 to 66 last year.

Eileen Foster, the assistant commissioner for the southern region, said: "These high-visibility foot patrols in Cork city centre increase Garda visibility and offer public reassurance that public realms and amenities in Cork city centre are and continue to be safe places to live, visit, socialise, conduct business, and enjoy."

Chief superintendent Thomas Myers said the measures are "an acknowledgement that Cork City needed additional resources".

Earlier this month, four wardens began patrolling the city under the city centre warden scheme launched in a pilot project in partnership between Cork City Council, Cork Business Association, and gardaí.

Although the wardens do not have enforcement powers like gardaí, their remit is to maintain close contact with law enforcement, and to raise any issues directly with relevant services.

The two-year pilot project is funded by the Department of Justice and Cork City Council.

Souper stars



Kate Durrant, a founder member of St Fiacre's Food Hamper Conference of St Vincent de Paul in Cork, launching the Irish Examiner's SVP fundraising drive, including the Little Acts of Kindness campaign. SEE: News 2

Picture: Chani Anderson

Disability pay applications rejected at 'savage scale'

Paul Hosford

Acting Political Editor

Disability payment applications are being rejected at a "savage scale", with at least a quarter of rejected cases subsequently granted on appeal in the last 13 years.

Since 2015, some 144,649 applications have been rejected for payments, but 37,639 of those were overturned on appeal, according to figures released to Aontú TD Peadar Kirby, who said they were "scandalous".

"What we see is that a large number of people are having their applications for disability allowance rejected by the Department of Social Protection each year. Last year, the number of rejected claims was over 20,000, higher than any previous year," he said.

"We can also see that between 3,000 and 5,000 people are successfully appealing the decision to refuse them the allowance each year.

These figures indicate that for at least 25% of rejected applications, the department is later admitting it was wrong to initially reject the application.

"Either the department is not doing its job correctly in how it processes and makes determinations on each application or else the application process is too difficult and is leaving genuinely disabled people abandoned without financial assistance."

Mr Kirby called for an



Peadar Kirby: Called for an internal department audit.

internal department audit into rejected applications to determine how many of them were wrongfully rejected in light of the high rate of successful appeals.

The Department of Social Protection said that just because an appeal is successful, that does not always mean the original decision was incorrect.

It said social welfare schemes such as disability allowance require an individual to submit "substantial evidence regarding their medical condition, the extent to which their condition restricts their employment opportunities, their means, and habitual residency".

The department said unfavourable decisions are explained in writing, and it is "open to any person to request a review and/or an appeal of any statutory decision".

Any new evidence or information provided will then be considered as part of this review or appeal, it said.

'Devastating' crash leaves two dead, two injured

Alison O'Reilly

Two men are dead and a mother and daughter are fighting for their lives after a second horror crash in the space of just over a week.

The scene of yesterday morning's collision in Co Meath between a lorry, a bus, and a car is fewer than 50km from where five people in their 20s died last week in Co Louth.

Yesterday's accident happened on the R132 in Gormanston Cross at about 6.30am.

The lorry driver, a man in his 40s, and the driver of the Bus Éireann vehicle, a man in his 50s, were pronounced dead at the scene.

The driver of the car, a woman in her 40s, was taken to Beaumont Hospital in Dublin for treatment of serious injuries, while her teenage daughter was taken to Temple Street hospital with serious injuries.

It is understood that up to 12 people on the bus were also treated for their injuries. Emergency services remained at the scene all day while gardaí put traffic diversions in place.

It brings to 161 the number of people killed on Irish roads this year, up seven compared to the same period in 2024, while the number of fatal accidents has also risen.

There have been 152 road accidents involving fatalities as of yesterday, compared to 141 at this stage of November last year, according to official Garda statistics.

Jean O'Sullivan, CEO of Bus Éireann, said: "We are devastated by this tragic incident."

"Our thoughts are with the family, friends, and colleagues of our Bus Éireann driver who has sadly lost his life, and with the family and friends of the driver of the other vehicle, who also passed away."

The loss of a colleague is a shock to everyone across Bus Éireann, and co-workers are devastated at the loss, she said.

"Our thoughts are also with our passengers and with the occupants of the third vehicle who have been injured and are receiving care in hospital."

"At Bus Éireann, safety is our highest priority, and we, of course, are co-operating with the relevant authorities. We remain committed to supporting all those affected and assisting the authorities in every way we can."

Minister of state with responsibility for road safety Sean Canney said that the "devastating incident" at Gormanston Cross has "left me and the nation shocked and upset".

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the families and communities of those involved, including our colleagues in Bus Éireann, as they try to cope with this tragic incident."

"The emergency services that are attending the scene today have my utmost admiration for their dedication and professionalism during these difficult times."



Gardaí at the scene of the fatal collision in Co Meath involving a lorry, a bus, and a car.

Picture: Eamonn Farrell/RollingNews.ie

Capitalflow Munster Expansion



Pictured: Stuart Curtin, Lending Director Munster

Capitalflow is delighted to announce the expansion of our Cork office, led by newly appointed Lending Director for Munster, Stuart Curtin.

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Ukraine hope

Western leaders have pushed back against an initial plan for peace in Ukraine, raising concerns about the prospect of a cap on Ukraine's armed forces and land being ceded to Russia, but are hopeful that a resolution can be found.

World: 18

Victim's recording helps to seal rapist's conviction

A Cork teenager managed to record a man who was about to rape her and that proved crucial to helping gardaí build a case against him — which resulted in him being jailed for six years.

Kyle Hayes-Condon, aged 25, of Páirc An Tobair, Clon-

kilty, raped the then 17-year-old down a laneway just yards from her home.

"I could see my house just before he dragged me down the shortcut and started doing the most unimaginable things to me that I or anyone would never think would happen so close to home," the now 18-year-old said.

"It made me feel so defeated — if it can happen so close to home, it can happen anywhere."

The fact that the victim

had the presence of mind to video record and to record the voice of her attacker in the moments before anything happened, were crucial in leading gardaí to the home of the accused without delay.

The attack happened at around 3am on February 16 in West Cork. The teenager got a lift home from a party but got out of the car some distance away and walked the last leg of the journey.

She was nearly home when Hayes-Condon emerg-

ed. He had spent the evening taking cocaine. He later told gardaí he consumed seven bags of cocaine that day.

Judge Lankford noted: "He offered her cocaine. He grabbed her from behind and dragged her to a grassy area. The ground was soft and mucky. She repeatedly said no and begged him to release her. He told her to shut up. She was absolutely terrified and believed she would be killed."

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