

An Garda Síochána na hÉireann

Ireland's National Police and Security Service



Friday, 28 November 2025

Dear Mr. Wixted,

On behalf of the Assistant Principal, Corporate Services, please be advised that a response was sought from the relevant section within An Garda Síochána and the following is provided by way of return:

What impact have the changes in the laws governing the sale and purchase of sexual services in your country had on?

A - Levels of prostitution or the sale of sexual services as they have been observed or recorded by police, statutory and other service providers

In Ireland, Section 25 of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017 created the offence relating to the purchase of sexual services.

Since the introduction of the legislation relating to the specific offence of “payment etc. for Sexual Activity with a Prostitute”, the Organised Prostitution Investigation Unit, within the Garda National Protective Services Bureau have not observed a decrease in the number of individuals advertising sexual services for sale in Ireland, the figures have remained consistent depending on the time of year.

Following the introduction of the legislation, the GNPSB outline that An Garda Síochána did obtain admissions under caution in relation to the payment for sexual activity, however, with the passage of time, the amount of admissions has decreased significantly. They put forward a reason for this decrease in admissions, indicating that individuals are educating each other on forums within the adult services platforms. The forums on the adult services platforms provide information on what to say to Police if you are stopped on suspicion of paying for sexual services.

At present, the legislation requires an admission to paying for sexual services in order to receive a direction to prosecute. The GNPSB have expressed a view that legislation needs to be strong enough for Police Officers to be in a position to enforce it and bring prosecutions, which can be achieved with strong legislation that does not rely on an admission but where it can be

reasonably inferred that an individual has paid for or engaged the services of a Prostitute based on the circumstances where the individual was found or observed by a Police Officer.

B - The use of violence towards those active in the sex industry, particularly women and girls, either observed or recorded by police, statutory and other service providers

The GNPSB have outlined that over the years it had been recognised that assaults, sexual assaults and crimes against sex workers go unreported due to the misconception that they will be prejudged by Police in Ireland. To combat this misconception and to improve engagement, the Organised Prostitution Investigation Unit (OPIU) within the GNPSB established a liaison service for individuals engaged in the sex trade to report a crime or seek support. A strong rapport has been built up within the sex worker community over the past number of years which has resulted in a significant increase in sex workers reporting crimes against them. The GNPSB indicate that there has been an increase in sex workers contacting the liaison members seeking advice and support having received the liaison phone numbers from other sex workers.

The increased rapport within the sex worker community has been achieved as a result of regular welfare visits with individuals engaged in the sex trade.

C - The number of offences and successful prosecutions of those purchasing sexual services

There were 88 prosecutions initiated between 01/01/2022 and 30/09/2025 with offence type of "Pay For Sexual Activity With a Prostitute".

This information is based upon operational data from the PULSE system as was available at 03:00 am on 24/11/2025 and is liable to change.

Figures in relation to prosecutions initiated are based on valid charges or summons created by An Garda Síochána up to and including 30/09/2025.

This does not include re-issued summons or charges.

An Garda Síochána cannot provide prosecution outcomes as these are the remit of the Courts Service.

Have there been challenges for the police, prosecution bodies or the courts in implementing and administration the new laws? If so, can you provide further detail.

Challenges:

- The view of the GNPSB is that a main challenge for Police in Ireland since the implementation of the legislation in 2017 is the requirement for an admission from the suspect in order to achieve a prosecution, this can be despite knowing or finding the individual in an operating brothel with a sex worker.

- The GNPSB outline that another challenge relates to the educating of buyers on the advertising platforms on what to say to Police to avoid a prosecution.
- In Ireland, the offence is a summary offence with a class E fine. There is no power of detention, to allow the questioning of the suspect.

The GNPSB is of the belief that the challenges may be alleviated where legislation allows for it to be reasonably inferred that an individual has paid for or engaged the services of a prostitute based on the circumstances where the individual was found or observed by a Police Officer.

Additionally, consideration of a fine on the spot for first time offence of paying for sexual activity with a prostitute will also make the legislation more enforceable for Police Officers.

Sent on behalf of

**Assistant Principal C. Byrne,
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An Garda Síochána**

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