

OIFIG AN AIRE DLÍ AGUS CIRT AGUS COMHIONANNAIS
OFFICE OF THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

Mr Tom O'Neill
Meetings Administrator
Corporate Services Department
South Dublin County Council
County Hall,
Tallaght
Dublin 24



11 March, 2015

Dear Mr O'Neill


I am directed by the Minister for Justice and Equality, Ms Frances Fitzgerald TD, to refer further to your correspondence regarding the policing at Anti-Water Meter protests in Dublin City and the South Dublin Region.

The statutory functions of An Garda Síochána include the preservation of peace and public order, protecting life and property and vindicating the human rights of individuals. Accordingly, Gardaí have attended routinely at water meter installations and protests where it has been necessary to perform these functions.

An Garda Síochána endeavour as best they can to facilitate peaceful protests but people engaging in legitimate protest action have a duty to obey the law. Facilitated by members of An Garda Síochána, tens of thousands people across the country protested with dignity against water charges. Contrast those events with other forms of protest carried out by a small few where people have been intimidated and prevented from going about their lawful business. The Gardaí would be rightly criticised if they did not take appropriate action to prevent unlawful actions which, interfere with the rights of others.

But if a person has a complaint in relation to the actions of An Garda Síochána there are mechanisms in place for persons who feel that the actions of the Gardaí require examination. To this end, the Garda Síochána Act 2005 established the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission. This is the independent body set up under the Act to receive and investigate complaints alleging misbehaviour on the part of members of the Garda Síochána.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Aidan Filgate", written over a horizontal line.

Chris Quattrociocchi
Private Secretary to the
Minister for Justice and Equality