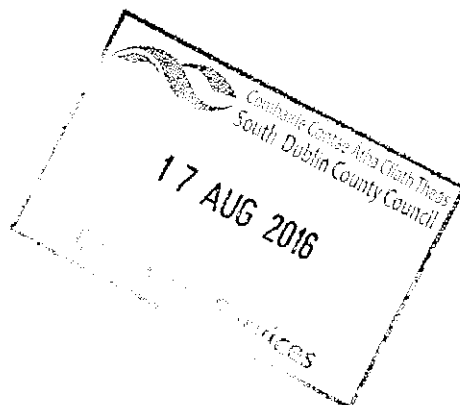




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OFFICE OF THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

Mr Tom O'Neill
Meetings Administrator
Corporate Services Department
South Dublin County Council
County Hall
Tallaght
D24 YNN5



Your reference: M7/0616
Minister's reference: 0706162932

Re: Motion passed at meeting of South Dublin County Council on 20 June 2016 concerning the upper age limit for joining An Garda Síochána.

15 August 2016

Dear Mr O'Neill,

I am directed by the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality, Ms Frances Fitzgerald TD, to refer to your representation of 28 June 2016 concerning the above-referenced Motion.

The recruitment process is managed by the Public Appointments Service (PAS) on behalf of the Garda Commissioner in compliance with the Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA) Code of Practice. This Code of Practice, titled '*Appointment to positions where the Garda Commissioner has Statutory Responsibilities*', reflects the following core principles:

- (1) probity
- (2) merit
- (3) best practice
- (4) fairness and consistency
- (5) openness, accountability and transparency.

In this regard, the age limit for any candidate wishing to join An Garda Síochána has been revised upwards in recent years. The applicable age limit is now set by regulation 4(a) of the Garda Síochána (Admissions and Appointments) Regulations 2013, which states:

4. Subject to the provisions of these Regulations, a person is eligible to apply for admission as a trainee where, on the closing date specified in the advertisement for the competition to which the admission relates—(a) the person has attained 18 years of age but has not yet attained 35 years of age.

This regulation applies without discrimination to everyone and there are no plans to make any further revision to the age limits. The upper age limit of 35 years was set following a comprehensive examination of the issues surrounding recruitment into An Garda Síochána.

In particular this assessment took account of developments in equality legislation and also the following criteria:

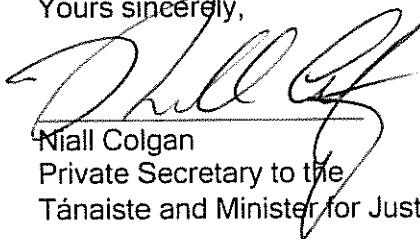
- (1) the cost of training
- (2) the need for recruits to serve for a sufficient period of time as full members of the service so as to recoup this cost
- (3) the operational requirements of the service in terms of having an age profile appropriate to the physical demands placed on members in the course of their duty.

You may wish to note that there is an ongoing civilianisation programme in An Garda Síochána, for which the maximum age limit is in excess of 35 years. These civilian staff members are civil servants who provide important support services across a wide range of work areas including human resources, information and communications technology, finance and procurement, and research and analysis. Civilian personnel wholly or largely staff several vital operational support areas such as the Garda Central Vetting Unit, the Garda Information Services Centre, and the Fixed Charge Processing Office. An accelerated civilianisation programme has been underway in An Garda Síochána since October 2006, and significant progress has been made to date in the recruitment of new staff under this programme. The Garda Commissioner is committed to developing the civilian support and management function within An Garda Síochána to a level commensurate with best international practice. Moreover, the Programme for Government aspires to increasing civilianisation so as to release more Gardaí for frontline policing duties. As a rule, recruitment of civilian staff to An Garda Síochána is carried out in association with the PAS. Recruitment takes the form of either general civil service open competitions or special competitions for particular professional or senior managerial positions, and details of such competitions are advertised on the PAS website www.publicjobs.ie.

In addition, the Programme for Government aspires to doubling the size of the Garda Reserve. The upper age limit for joining the Garda Reserve is 60 years of age (as per section 4 of the Garda Síochána (Reserve Members) Regulations 2006), and members of the Reserve contribute significantly to the efforts of An Garda Síochána in fighting crime and safeguarding our communities.

The Tánaiste remains determined that An Garda Síochána will continue to provide a modern, fit-for-purpose policing service, appropriate to the needs of twenty-first century Ireland. I hope that the foregoing information is of assistance to you and to South Dublin County Council.

Yours sincerely,



Níall Colgan
Private Secretary to the
Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality