



SIPTU RESPECT
TRANSPORT WORKERS CAMPAIGN

TRAVEL SAFE

Policy proposals for improving security
and public well-being on the Public
Transport Network in Ireland



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Members of the SIPTU Respect Transport Workers campaign, led by Respect Transport Workers spokesperson and Dublin Bus Driver, Suzanne Armstrong (centre), hand deliver a letter seeking a meeting with the National Transport Authority at the organisation's headquarters in Harcourt Lane, Dublin 2 on 2nd October, 2024.



SIPTU TEAC Division Organiser, Adrian Kane, Dublin Bus Driver, Suzanne Armstrong and SIPTU NEC member, Stephen Millane, at the launch of the SIPTU Respect Transport Workers campaign in Liberty Hall, Dublin, on 20th February 2024.



Female Dublin Bus drivers and SIPTU members pictured in the Donnybrook Depot in May 2024.



Introduction

Worker and passenger security on public transport is impacted by an array of issues from fare evasion, trespassing, anti-social behaviour, sexual harassment and abuse, drug use, and maintaining public order during large movements of people, to, in other jurisdictions, preventing terrorism.

As homelessness and drug abuse become an increasing feature of our society these problems have a notably greater impact on our public transport system, where people in these situations may sleep in stations, continually travel on public transport or carry out drug exchanges. These issues are far from unique to Ireland. However, Ireland is an increasingly singular case in that the creation of a stand-alone policing, or other enforcement body, has not been part of the State response to the particular challenges of providing security for those working or utilising the public transport network.

For several years, this issue has been a major concern of SIPTU members employed within the public transport network. In early 2024, the SIPTU Transport Sector undertook a major survey of its members concerning security issues on the network. The results were both stark and disturbing. As outlined in this document (see Appendix B), the surveys highlighted the extent and worsening situation concerning anti-social behaviour throughout our public transport network. This was to a degree that it is impacting on workers' right to a safe working environment and challenging the need to increase travel by public transport for environmental reasons.

These surveys also clearly confirmed our members' support for the creation of a public transport policing unit, a policy of the Union for several years which has been affirmed in motions to SIPTU Biennial Delegate Conferences and SIPTU Divisional Biennial Delegate Conferences.

In response to our members' concerns, the SIPTU Respect Transport Workers campaign was launched in February 2024. This campaign has seen the issue of anti-social behaviour and its associated problems on the public transport network brought to the attention of the media, politicians and the Garda Síochána. The central demand of the campaign, for a new type of policing unit for our public transport network, has received widespread political backing.

This document, *Travel Safe*, aims to move the discussion on from the need for a specific policing unit on our public transport network to what form it should take. In compiling it we wish to thank our members in the SIPTU Transport Sector for their input, which has been the essential component, the SIPTU Communications Department, the SIPTU Research Department as well as the assistance of several elected representatives.

Every person in Ireland deserves to go to work or travel in an environment in which they do not feel under undue threat – everyone deserves to *Travel Safe*.

In solidarity,

Adrian Kane

SIPTU Transport, Energy, Aviation and Construction Divisional Organiser

Policy Proposals

In response to the clear issues which must be addressed in relation to security on our public transport network the SIPTU Transport Sector is proposing:

- 1) **The establishment of a new National Public Transport Police service.**
This is a nationwide network of 'Authorised Officers' similar to the currently existing Airport Police service.
- 2) **The National Public Transport Police will also include Public Transport Assistance Units.**
These are specifically trained social care intervention officers to deal with those causing a public disturbance on the public transport network but who are more applicable for intervention in relation to underlying social care issues (drug abuse, homelessness etc) rather than within a purely legal framework.

National Public Transport Police (Póilíní Náisiúnta Iompair Phoiblí)

Policing in Ireland

The concepts of 'plural policing' and 'policing mix' are used in the policing literature to describe the ways in which policing is often undertaken by a multiplicity of public and private actors. In public transport 'non-police agents', such as private security firms and fare enforcement officers, are an increasingly visible presence. The overlaps in remits and powers between such security/policing actors and public police forces may complement or disrupt efforts to make public transport safer.

An Garda Síochána (AGS) is a single police force. As such, AGS is not comparable with the approach in a number of other countries, in which some forces are responsible for particular jurisdictions/territory within a country, or for particular elements of crime detection and prevention, including transport.

Ireland does, however, have an existing transport related policing force – the Airport Police Service (APS). APS is responsible for general policing and aviation security duties at state airports. The Airport Police are 'Authorised Officers' under the Airports and Aviation Acts 1936 to 2014 and as such have full policing powers within the State airports. Airport police are employees of the airport in which they are deployed.



NPTP Proposal

SIPTU proposes that the Government introduce legislation to create a nationwide network of 'Authorised Officers', similar to the Airport Police, with the aim of policing our public transport network. Members of the force would have the power of arrest and be funded jointly through the State, National Traffic Authority (NTA) and public transport company contributions.

- Officers of the National Public Transport Police (NPTP) would have powers of arrest within the restricted locations of transport vehicles and their environments, with location bases in major transport hubs, including train stations, bus depots and possibly ferry terminals.
- It is proposed that such a new policing service would initially be located in our major cities (Dublin, Cork, Limerick) with an initial recruitment of 100 officers.
- The operation of the unit would be under the auspices of the Department of Transport and co-ordinate its work directly with the National Transport Authority and other stakeholders.
- It could still be under the operational control of the AGS or set up under legislation to be under the control of another body (NTA or Department of Transport etc).
- It would coordinate with and seek to benefit from the experience of the recently created Police Service of Northern Ireland's (PSNI) Safe Transport Team. This Team is a dedicated number of police officers working alongside Translink (Northern Ireland's public transport provider) staff to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour at stations and on-board public transport. The Safe Transport Team was initially created as a six-month trial in September 2020. It is now a permanent team, co-funded by Translink.

The Benefits

- State control of security provision on the public transport network. The growing issue of public transport network specific crime and antisocial behaviour is one that is resulting in the growing use of private companies to provide security services. The problems with such an approach are that these workers have no arrest powers and are not under the direct control of a specified public body. While the NPTP would not entirely replace these roles we believe it would be preferable if those entrusted with the provision of security for transport workers and the public were members of a public body.
- Increase the use of public transport by groups such as women and the elderly who may feel particularly at risk due to increasing antisocial behaviour and crime.
- Bring Ireland into line with best practice internationally in terms of policing the public transport network.
- Due to the transport network specific tasks of the NPTP service the cost and time for training its 'Authorised Officers' would be significantly less than for members of AGS.





Challenges

- The establishment of the NPTP would include costs associated with an investment in infrastructure to support the service, recruitment and training, wages and vehicles. In (Appendix A) we provide an approximation of the costs that might be involved in the establishment of the service. However, overall due to an increase in public transport use accruing from the creation of a safer environment and the transfer of resources from current policing and private security measures such a force could well be at least cost neutral to the exchequer in the longer-term.
- It would be a major departure for policing in Ireland which has been largely maintained strictly under the auspices of the AGS. Unlike, in nearly every other international example Ireland does not have a history (since 1922) of having more than one policing force in operation in the State, with the exception of the Airport Police Service. This would necessitate a degree of organisational change in our national approach to policing.
- Internationally there are many differing funding models for transport policing services. These include funding by public transport agencies (use of passenger and other revenues), by private transport providers, tax-funded by national/local government, or a mix of funding sources. Mixed funding is increasingly a feature where there are a range of personnel involved in the policing and security of the same transport network. Resolving this issue would necessitate in-depth analyses and discussion between all stakeholders and the Government.
- Internationally public transport network policing has generally emerged from policing the rail network. A number of countries also have dedicated road traffic policing. Irish public transport is more reliant on the bus network and thereby has a larger fleet and disparate bus stops/stations to monitor. Further, Ireland has a number of transport actors/providers – Irish Rail (DART and InterCity rail), Transdev Ireland (Luas), Bus Éireann – with differing approaches to security.

Public Transport Assistance Units (An tAonad um Chúnaimh Iompair Phoiblí)

Internationally progressive Governments, at national and local level, have sought to disentangle the policing of criminality and antisocial behaviour from other social issues which have emerged on public transport (e.g. people in addiction and unhoused people) and have developed safety/social inclusion teams.

In 2023, Brussels public transport company STIB-MIVD received funding from the Brussels government (Brussels Mobility Minister and Minister for Cleanliness and Social Action) for 25 staff in social intervention teams to work with drug users and unhoused people on the Brussels public transport network. This project was in turn based on a scheme run by the local rail authority in Paris, the Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens (RATP), which has been providing integrated treatment for the unhoused and drug users in metro stations since 1994.

The Respect Transport Workers surveys found that drug use by passengers was identified as a core motor of the increase in crime and antisocial behaviour on the public transport network. This situation has been exacerbated by social changes during the Covid-19 pandemic which led to increased drug dealing on the public transport network and changes in drug use (with the growth in crack cocaine use being of particular concern).

While it maybe appropriate in many cases for a criminal justice approach in relation to persons involved in drug use or unhoused on the public transport network, we believe that it would be much more beneficial to also seek to address these issues through a social care approach.

The SIPTU Transport Sector is proposing that the NPTP also operate Public Transport Assistance Units (PTAU) who would provide care and seek to engage the correct agencies on behalf of persons causing a public nuisance on the public transport system largely due to drug use and/or there homeless status.

- These two or more person teams would be specifically trained to assist persons in need, while also ensure the safety of other passengers and transport staff.
- The PTAU teams would provide 24-hour interventions on the request of transport staff and as part of patrols of major transport hubs.
- The PTAU teams would liaise with service providers in order to assist persons in distress away from the public transport system and towards appropriate social care settings.
- It would be envisaged that up to 30 staff would initially provide these services within Dublin, Cork and Limerick.

Comparative international transport policing examples

The following examples concern public transport policing in a number of European, North American and Australian countries/cities. The examples contain the varying governance models, funding and remit of these services.

Northern Ireland

The Police Service of Northern Ireland's (PSNI) Safe Transport Team (under the Road Policing Unit) is a dedicated team of police officers working alongside Translink (Northern Ireland's public transport provider) staff to tackle crime and ASB at stations and on-board public transport. The Safe Transport Team was initially created as a six-month trial in September 2020. It is now a permanent team, co-funded by Translink.

UK

British Transport Police

The British Transport Police (BTP) work on the railways in England, Wales and Scotland. The force has four divisions - London and the South East; South West, Wales, Midlands and the North; Scotland; and, Counter Terrorism, which includes a dog section and Specialist Response Unit for unattended items.

Unlike territorial police forces, which come under the Home Office, the Department for Transport is responsible for the BTP. Further, unlike other tax-funded forces, the BTP is predominantly funded by the rail operator.

As outlined by the British Transport Police Authority: "British Transport Police is funded by the companies that provide passenger, freight and infrastructure services on railways across England, Scotland and Wales. The

Police Authority enters into a Police Service Agreement with each of these companies, indicating the level of policing resource that will be allocated to its lines and services. It maintains similar arrangements with Network Rail and London Underground.”

The Department of Transport manages these funding arrangements and police data is used to determine how much each transport operator pays towards the force. At end-March 2023 the force had 2,973 officers.

London

The intricacies of UK transport policing are particularly evident in London. Transport for London (TfL) funds more than 2,500 officers across the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), British Transport Police (BTP) and the City of London Police (CoLP). In the MPS this includes funding for the Roads and Transport Policing Command (RTPC). The CoLP is responsible for the City of London, and within it the TfL-funded officers focus on areas such as promoting safer travel at night and tackling crime and antisocial behaviour on buses. Further, there are MPS Safer Transport Teams, which focus primarily on the bus and road networks and BTP Neighbourhood Policing Teams working on the rail, Tube and DLR networks.



EU

Belgium

Belgium has an integrated police force with a federal (Police Fédérale) and local level (Police Locale). Policing falls within the remit of Home Affairs and receives central government funding. The directorate of railway police (SPC) is part of the Federal Police and has responsibility for patrolling Belgium’s railways and joint patrols on international trains. While Belgium has an Airport Police and Railway Police who undertake the border checks at the Eurostar terminal.

The Federal Railway Police conducts operations, sometimes in cooperation with local police, or security partners of the transport organisations. For example, the National Railway Company of Belgium’s (SNCB) Securail carry out patrols and attend to incidents on the railway. The Federal Railway Police and Securail conduct joint checks and visibility actions.

Netherlands

The Netherlands has one national police force, Politie, under the Ministry of Justice and Security. Through its Central Unit the force has responsibility for public transport policing. In 2016, central government, transport operators, unions, the police and subnational authorities launched a Social Safety Action Programme to address violence on the public transport system. A range of measures are in place to address crime and ASB. The Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management is responsible for railway laws and policy, while the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and the Ministry of Justice and Security take the lead on care and shelter for vulnerable people on the public transport system.

Dutch Railways (NS) also employs Safety and Security Assistants who can undertake ticket checks, ensure NS rules are followed and keep the peace at stations and on trains. In busy parts of Amsterdam, including in train stations and public transport, there are municipal enforcement officials (handhavers). They monitor littering, noise and other issues and have the power to request identification and to issue fines.

France

There is a complex web of policing and security services for transport services in France and in Paris in particular. This architecture of policing authorities includes the transport security provided by the National Gendarmerie, the National Railway Police Service (SNPF), the Regional Sub-Directorate of the Transport Police (SDRPT) in Paris and surrounding areas, the Interdepartmental Public Transport Security Service (SISTC) in some large cities beyond the capital, and Public Transport Security Brigades (BSTC) in smaller cities.

The National Railway Police Service (SNPF) was created by the Minister of the Interior in 2006. It has a national jurisdiction, under the authority of the Central Director of the Border Police, to ensure the security of rail networks across the country.

Sûreté Ferroviaire (Railway Security) is the part of SNCF (French railway provider) which provides security for the protection of passengers, property and staff on the national rail network. Sûreté Ferroviaire officials have powers to uphold law and order, enforcing compliance with legislation, regulations and government decrees related to the railways. They wear a distinctive uniform and are armed in accordance with legislative rules. The National Security Command Centre (Poste de Commandement National Sûreté or PCNS) coordinates the work of officials and is in direct contact with the French police.

Paris

Within the wider French system, the Regional Sub-Directorate of the Transport Police (SDRPT) and the Railway Network Brigade (BRF) are two of the units responsible for transport systems in Paris and surrounding areas. The SDRPT and the BRF fall under the remit of the Prefect of Police of Île-de-France (under the supervision of the Ministry of the Interior). The railway brigade has 1,200 officers across 700 stations and 6,000 trains, metro and RER trains. The brigade is divided into three parts – the General Security Department, the Paris Station Police Department and regional transport security.

The transport operator Regie Autonome des Transports Parisiens (RATP) also operates a network protection and security group (Groupement de Protection et de Sécurité des Réseaux, GPSR) with licensed and armed (non-lethal weapons) GPSR officers.

Australia

Australia has a federal and state police system. The Department of Home Affairs is the lead department for law enforcement and crime prevention. The Australian Federal Police is the primary law enforcement agency, which investigates Commonwealth offences and state offences with a federal aspect. General law enforcement duties are undertaken by state police forces, which are responsible to a state government minister (often a Minister for Police). Local governments may also have authorised officers/council rangers to enforce certain state laws and by-laws/ordinances. There are also a number of enforcement agencies with specific mandates, e.g., Australian Border Force.

Victoria

Victoria Police (VicPol) is made up of a number of divisions/units, including the Transit Safety Division. The Transit Safety Division works on the Victorian Public Transport System and consists of police officers, protective services officers (PSOs) and Victorian Public Service employees.

PSOs are members of Victoria Police and receive 12 weeks training at the Victoria Police Academy. Between 6.00 pm and the last train, PSOs patrol the 200-plus metropolitan railway stations and four regional railway stations and patrol trains, trams, and major bus interchanges. PSOs have a number of powers – to request a person's name and address; arrest and detain persons; search people and property; seize items such as weapons, graffiti implements, drugs and alcohol; issue infringement notices; and issue a direction to 'move on' from the area. PSOs are supported by Victoria Police officers, who conduct targeted patrols. Train stations also have 'safety zones', specific marked areas on a platform which are well lit, under video surveillance, and located within reach of the public emergency communication system.

In addition to the PSOs there are a number of other metropolitan train safety and security staff – transit police officers (VicPol officers assigned to public transport duties), authorised officers (focus on fare evasion and employed by public transport operators), customer service staff (employed by transport operators), and private security (employed by transport operators or Public Transport Victoria).

VicPol and the PSO programme falls within the broader Department of Justice and Regulation portfolio. The Chief Commissioner of Police (CCP) reports directly to the Minister for Police. In addressing safety of the public transport system, VicPol works with the Department of Transport (which supervises the train franchisee). The Transit Safety Division is managed by the Deputy Commissioner, Public Safety and Security. In 2022, Safe Transport Victoria (ST Vic) was established following a merger of the Transport Safety Victoria and the Commercial Passenger Vehicles Victoria.

New South Wales (NSW)

Since 2012, NSW Police have had responsibility for Sydney's public transport network (buses, trains, ferries) under the dedicated Police Transport Command (PTC). Under this approach, transit officers – designated public transport staff with limited authorities – were gradually replaced by PTC police officers, who have powers of arrest and search. This change followed review of the operation of the transit officers, which found that the officers did not have the authority or the equipment to adequately address crime on public transport. The system of transit officers had previously developed to take over responsibility for rail security from private security guards.

Timeline – transport security measures in New South Wales.

1995 State Rail signs memorandum of understanding with NSW Police.

2002 Creation of RailCorp transit officer division.

2012 Creation of Police Transport Command.

The PTC, which comes under the remit of the Minister for Police, focuses on alcohol related crime, ASB, theft, assaults and sexual offences across the transport network. The role of PTC officers includes: high visibility mobile patrolling; covert and undercover operations; prevention of anti-social behaviour; detection and investigation of transport offences; responding to transport emergencies; and assisting at major public events. The PTC also engages in multi-agency operations.



North America

Canada · Vancouver

The Metro Vancouver Transit Police is the only dedicated transit police service in Canada and oversees public transport in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. It is designated as a dedicated policing unit by the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General. Transit police undertake a range of activities, including fare enforcement, addressing sexual offences and frontline workplace assaults, and helping vulnerable people. The Transit Police are funded from the same budget as the public transport provider TransLink but are accountable to the Metro Vancouver Transit Police Board. Transit Police officers are provincially designated police officers, with the same powers as municipal police officers. The service operates a number of Specialty Units.

Transport safety is also provided by Transit Security officers, who primarily patrol the bus system. They service fare infraction notes, enforce transit bylaws, rules and regulations, and have some powers of arrest.

Examples from US cities

As described by the Transit Center (2021), in the United States, 'the organisational structures and policing approaches of transit police vary according to different local and regional contexts— some transit police are part of the local municipal police departments, while others are stand-alone police forces specific to the transit agency'. For example, the checking of tickets can fall to a number of different agencies/officers in different parts of the country, including municipal police officers, transit agency police officers, and civilian fare inspectors. The Transit Center argues that increased surveillance and militarised police/security on US transit systems has amplified the profiling and abuse of people from marginalised groups using public transport.

New York

In New York, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority Police Department (MTA police) is responsible for Grand Central Terminal, Penn Station and commuters of the Metro-North, Long Island Railroad and Staten Island Railway. Grand Central Terminal and Penn Station are also patrolled by New York State Police troopers and anti-terrorist National Guard units. The MTA police workforce of approximately 1,200 is a mix of sworn officers and civilians and is accredited by the New York State Department of Criminal Justice Services. The force has a number of special units, including canine, homeless assistance unit, and counterterrorism.

Prior to April 1995, New York City was obligated to reimburse MTA New York City Transit for the transit police force. As a result of the April 1995 merger of the transit police force into the New York City Police Department, New York City no longer reimburses MTA New York City Transit for the costs of policing the Transit System on an ongoing basis since policing of the Transit System is being carried out by the New York City Police Department at New York City's expense. MTA New York City Transit continues to be responsible for certain capital costs and support services related to such police activities, a portion of which is reimbursed by New York City. MTA New York City Transit received approximately \$3.4 and \$4.5 for the years ended December 31, 2023 and 2022, respectively, from New York City for the reimbursement of transit police costs.

MTA HQ bills MTA Metro-North Railroad through its consolidated services for MTA police costs in the New Haven line of which MTA Metro-North Railroad recovers approximately 65% from Connecticut Department of Transportation. The amounts billed for the years ended December 31, 2023 and 2022 were \$31.4 and \$24.4, respectively. The amounts recovered for the years ended December 31, 2023 and 2022 were approximately \$20.4 and \$15.9, respectively.

Policing responsibilities in and around New York overlap. For example, the Amtrak Police Department also covers rail in New York, as part of its work across the government-owned passenger train system across 46 States, the District of Columbia and three Canadian provinces. Amtrak Police had less than 500 staff in 2022. The Port Authority Police Department also has responsibility to protect commuters in the city. This force is funded by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, a largely self-funding public agency, based on revenue gained from passengers, tolls, fees and rent.

Other transit police examples in neighbouring States are the New Jersey NJ TRANSIT Police Department (NJTPD), with responsibility for the State's public transport network (NJ TRANSIT), and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Transit Police. Both are funded primarily through their overarching public transport organisation.

Los Angeles (LA)

In June 2024, LA's Metro Board voted to establish its own Transit Community Public Safety Department, phasing out its current model contracting with the LA Police Department, LA Sheriff's Department, and the Long Beach Police Department. In addition to these contracted services, transit security officers also provide security across the Metro network, including fare checks and patrols of buses and trains.

The move towards an in-house service reflects the Board's assessment that it would reduce costs and improve safety. The Metro Office of the Inspector General conducted a review of Metro Transit Security Services Performance in 2021 and 2022. Amongst a range of findings and recommendations the review highlighted the importance of ensuring a more visible security presence across the network. It is estimated that the new Transit Community Public Safety Department would cost \$198 million per annum, with a daily deployment of 386 sworn officers, 34 transit officers plus homeless outreach crews and others. The Metro previously operated its own MTA Transit Police Department (1989-1997). This Department subsequently merged with the wider police departments and was contracted back in to patrol the Metro system.



Political Party support for the establishment of a Transport Police Service

Most political parties in Ireland have made a strong commitment to the creation of a transport policing service. Below are some of their publicly stated positions on the issue.

Fianna Fáil

“Crime and anti-social behaviour can be a particular problem on public transport, and we believe a targeted approach is needed. We will recruit more Gardai and we are also committed to bring forward proposals for a dedicated transport police for public transport services.”

Opening address by An Tánaiste and Fianna Fáil Leader Micheál Martin at the 82nd Ard Fheis, 12th April 2024

Labour Party

“The obvious solution is to establish a dedicated public transport police unit...Now more than ever, we must focus on and defend the safety of our transport workers. Action must be taken to ensure that they can carry out their duties without fear or threat.”

Labour Party Transport Spokesperson, Duncan Smith, 17th April 2024

Sinn Féin

“Having campaigned heavily for a transport policing division alongside workers and commuters over the last three years, I was pleased to hear the government had finally listened to what our transport workers and commuters had asked for, for so long. However there has been absolutely no progress on this announcement since.”

Sinn Féin Communications and Transport Spokesperson, Martin Kenny, 24th June, 2024

Social Democrats

“Crime and antisocial behaviour on our public transport network are increasingly a problem. A dedicated Garda Transport Unit is the logical answer. It can both act as a deterrent and ensure people and transport staff can feel safe on our buses, trains, and trams. It is important that this is rolled out not just in Dublin but across the network.”

Social Democrats Spokesperson on Transport, Catherine Murphy, 18th October 2024



Acknowledgements

SIPTU Transport Sector members

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The Respect Transport Workers Campaign Organising Committee

Adrian Kane, SIPTU Transport, Aviation, Energy and Construction Divisional Organiser

John Murphy, SIPTU Transport Sector Organiser

Stephen Millane, Dublin Bus worker and SIPTU NEC member

Tommy Wynne, Irish Rail worker and SIPTU NEC member

Suzanne Armstrong, Dublin Bus Driver and SIPTU Shop Steward

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The Office of Ged Nash TD

Daragh Hamilton, Researcher

Houses of the Oireachtas Library and Research Service



Appendix A

Cost of Proposed National Public Transport Police

According to the Minister for Transport¹, Irish Rail, Bus Éireann and the Luas employs private security personnel (Dublin Bus nor Go-Ahead Ireland do not). The cost of employing such personnel between 2018 and 2022 is estimated to have been €52 million. It would appear that the cost is approximately €10 million per year.

A cautious estimate of the cost of introducing a new transport police agency must make a number of assumptions. The following assumes an average wage of €50,000 per year with an additional €20,000 per employee in employers' PRSI and in-work benefits (e.g. pension contributions). It further assumes that payroll expenditure makes up 67 percent of total operating expenditure (based on public service budgets for the Garda²).

Stylised Annual Expenditure: National Public Transport Police (€ 000)

Number of Employees	Payroll	Non-Payroll	Total Cost
70	4,900	2,400	7,300
100	7,000	3,400	10,400
150	10,500	5,200	15,700

A transport police agency with 150 employees (some of these would be administrative and support staff) could see a budget of nearly €16 million. This is an estimated gross cost. This would replace existing expenditure - private security personnel – so the overall net cost would be considerably less.

This doesn't factor in the benefits of redirecting Garda personnel to non-transport activities, resulting in a 'freeing-up' of resources. Further, this doesn't factor in the savings from reduced anti-social behaviour. These costs include Garda time, court costs, damage from vandalism, consumer loss, etc. It also includes the 'intangible' of people's perception of public transport safety. If more people use public transport because of improved perceptions this will result in higher income for public transport companies and lower environmental costs.

For an agency of 150 total staff, we could conservatively estimate the net cost at less than €10 million. This is equivalent to less than 0.5% of the total Garda budget.

¹Public Transport: 30 Nov 2023: Dáil debates (KildareStreet.com)

²Budget 2025 Estimates for Public Services 2025: <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/306462/937e76b7-1360-4f5d-8b70-3ff0557b8fb8.pdf#page=null>

Appendix B

Dublin based bus drivers

The survey of more than 320 bus drivers employed by both Dublin Bus and Go-Ahead Ireland disclosed that more than one in ten drivers have experienced physical abuse and the majority believe the situation has got worse in the last 12 months. The situation was markedly worse for drivers from an ethnic minority background. Only 5% of this group said abuse at work was not an issue for them. Among respondents from the black community all of them said that they had an issue with abuse from passengers.



“Over the years I have seen a number of incidents and assaults, racial attacks, the use of illegal substances on the buses women being abused and a number of sexual assaults.”

Vanessa O'Keefe
Driver
Dublin Bus

“Transport police is needed badly, not enough security and they don't have enough power to deal with most situations especially from youths who cause the most offences.”

A survey respondent



“I have experienced multiple assaults myself, one that was extremely serious in nature. Myself and many of my colleagues have been assaulted, threatened with violence, threatened with sexual violence, it is daily occurrence.”

Alan O'Brien
Customer Assurance Agent
Transdev/Luas

“I was assaulted just over two years ago and received nine stitches beside my eye, as a result I was out of work for 14 weeks.”

A survey respondent

Luas

Anti-social behaviour and abuse was an issue for nearly all respondents (98%) employed on the Luas service in Dublin, with 84% saying it was a major concern. Nearly three quarters (73%) said that abuse was a daily occurrence for them, while just under a quarter (24%) said it occurred at least once a week. For the vast majority of these respondents (84%) the problem has got markedly worse over the last year. Nine out of ten (89%) of these workers wanted a greater police focus on the issue.



“Over recent years I have noticed an awful lot of anti-social behaviour taking place on trains. This includes people being assaulted, sexual assaults, drug abuse, people dealing drugs on trains. There is abuse of drivers and other staff. I support the Respect Transport Workers campaign.”

Alan Dawson
Driver
Iarnród Éireann



Iarnród Éireann

The survey of more than 140 SIPTU members in Irish Rail, employed across several grades including drivers, ticket staff and station operatives, disclosed that verbal abuse was the greatest issue but worrying numbers also reporting being physically assaulted during their work. Over half of the respondents said they experience abuse every week with more than one in ten saying it was a daily occurrence.

“I had to endure two passengers racially abuse a female with no response from security. As a human morally where do I stand? That isn’t to be accepted and tolerated in any walk of life but because I’m a driver and the procedure is to stay in your cab at all times or I can be reprimanded - it’s a catch 22 and it’s horrible to be in that.”

A survey respondent

56%

said anti-social and abusive behaviour has got worse in the last 12 months

36%

said anti-social and abusive behaviour was an issue.

21%

said anti-social and abusive behaviour occurred daily

30%

said anti-social and abusive behaviour occurred weekly

Bus Éireann and Aircoach

More than two thirds of respondents employed by Bus Éireann and Aircoach said that abuse while at work is an issue of concern for them. Nearly 40% of these respondents said they dealt with abusive behaviour on a weekly or daily basis.



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