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To ask the Minister for Health his views on the pressure being put on members of An Garda Síochána to respond to calls for help from young persons with mental health issues or suicidal ideation.

Dear Deputy,

The HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP) has been requested to respond to your question above.

The HSE NOSP considers members of An Garda Síochána as key gatekeepers in the community, in the context of suicide prevention, and suicide bereavement work. The term gatekeeper refers to “individuals in a community who have face-to-face contact with large numbers of community members as part of their usual routine”. The NOSP National Education and Training Plan identifies and targets key gatekeepers who may be trained to identify persons at risk, support them, and refer them as appropriate to relevant services. This plan is one of the key components of work to achieve the vision of [Connecting for Life, Ireland’s National Strategy to Reduce Suicide](#).

- For more information on the NOSP Education and Training Plan, including a summary of training programmes available to different gatekeepers, visit <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/connecting-for-life/publications/nosp-national-education-and-training-plan.html>.

Specifically, following close collaboration with the HSE NOSP, the completion of safeTALK and ASIST (Applied Suicide Prevention Skills Training) is now a requirement of the BA in Applied Policing for all Garda Trainees in the Foundation Programme at Templemore training college.

Further initiatives are focussed on embedding suicide prevention training among Garda personnel. For example, safeTALK training was piloted across a number of Garda stations in Dublin in 2020 with a view to national roll out in 2021. This roll out paused during the pandemic and will be ongoing into 2022.

Furthermore, members of An Garda Síochána maintain close working relationships with local [HSE Resource Officers for Suicide Prevention](#) and [Suicide Bereavement Liaison Officers](#). These relationships are key in implementing local Connecting for Life actions, and members often participate in suicide prevention and postvention training programmes, or related initiatives, at CHO area level.

I trust this information is helpful for you.

Yours sincerely,



Mr John Meehan

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& Head of National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP)

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