

Press release

# Minister McEntee commends the dedication and professionalism of frontline services, as she marks National Services Day 2020

From [Department of Justice and Equality](#)

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The Minister for Justice and Equality Helen McEntee TD today commended the dedication and professionalism of frontline services on National Services Day, 5 September 2020.

Minister McEntee said:

"As Minister for Justice, it is my deep privilege to work closely with some of our frontline emergency services, namely An Garda Síochána and the staff of the Irish Prison Service. I have seen at first hand their tremendous professionalism and dedication, in what can be very challenging circumstances. I am delighted to have the opportunity to publicly thank them and all our emergency services for the quiet heroism of their chosen career."

In 2018, the government declared the first Saturday in September as National Services Day. This is an annual day to honour frontline and emergency workers including first responders of all types. In previous years, the event was marked by a major parade through Dublin city as well as other forms of public engagement. This year, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, no parade is taking place.

Minister McEntee said:

"The demands placed on our emergency workers have perhaps never been greater than this year, as we live through the COVID-19 pandemic. This has been a frightening and uncertain time for all of us. But our emergency workers - despite any private fears they may have had for themselves or their loved ones – have continued to fully perform their duties and have indeed increased their efforts to support the public. We owe them, and their families, a deep debt of gratitude for their outstanding professionalism, dedication and care."

Minister McEntee continued:

"Throughout this pandemic and all across Ireland, the women and men of An Garda Síochána have stepped up their engagement with the community and have reached out to those who are in greatest need, alone or afraid. And I am conscious our prison staff, including prison

officers and medical personnel, have taken extraordinary measures to shield prisoners from the threat of the virus. Theirs is a true spirit of service, which they share with other frontline services, including first responders and health professionals."

Minister McEntee also reflected on the loss in June this year of Detective Garda Colm Horkan.

She said:

"On this day, I think particularly of Detective Garda Colm Horkan, who tragically lost his life in the service of the State this year. In his selfless commitment to community and country, Detective Horkan represented the very best of An Garda Síochána and indeed of all our frontline services. We remember and honour him today."

The Minister concluded by saying:

"While the pandemic has prevented us holding a parade in their honour this year, I join with the Frontline Emergency and Security Services Eire Forum in asking members of the public to take some time today to remember and pay a warm tribute to the women and men of our frontline and emergency services."