



## STATEMENT GRA

### Dublin riot reinforces need for early vaccination of gardaí – GRA

28.02.2021

The GRA believes Saturday's rioting in Dublin reinforces the need for early vaccination of gardaí.

Damien McCarthy who represents the DMR South Central Division where many of the garda on duty on Saturday are based, said the incidents highlighted the multitude of dangers faced by gardaí policing the Covid restrictions.

Garda McCarthy said: "It is clear that a certain element turned up at the demonstration to inflict harm on gardaí.

"Our priority is the health and welfare of members and our immediate concern is that those injured on Saturday make a full recovery and receive all the support they need.

"There were at least a dozen gardaí who sustained injuries as result of missiles thrown, and one member was hospitalised and will be undergoing surgery later this week.

"These engagements meant our members came in close contact with numerous people who refuse to follow public health advice and are therefore more likely to have the virus.

"Our members' normal duties involve close physical contact with people but on Saturday we were involved in hundreds of physical engagements with people who are at higher risk of infection.

"This happened on the streets but it also affected Garda stations where members who were not involved in policing on Saturday may also be exposed to infection through their colleagues.

"We are meeting with local Garda management tomorrow but we need to also meet the Minister and Commissioner urgently to address some of the wider concerns highlighted by this incident.

"We believe the argument for priority vaccination of gardai is all the more compelling in light of our members' exposure on Saturday and demonstrations allegedly planned for the near future."