



STATEMENT FRANK THORNTON GRA PRESIDENT

New GRA President warns of dangers for young gardaí

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The new President of the Garda Representative Association (GRA) Frank Thornton has expressed concern for the safety and wellbeing of young gardaí.

Speaking today shortly after being elected President of the GRA at its first-ever Annual Delegate Conference conducted by Electronic Communications Technology, Mr Thornton said that younger gardaí have significant training and supervision needs.

Mr Thornton said: "About a third of frontline gardaí have been recruited in the past six years and are still relatively inexperienced. There are also gardai working the frontline who have not completed their training.

"We are seeing increasing violence against gardai and all-time high levels of weapons seizures. More experienced gardai can sometimes identify threats that perhaps, younger members may not see making them vulnerable to serious injury.

"We should also be aware of the potential mental health effects of policing. A Garda survey last month showed many members believe there is a stigma attached to seeking mental and emotional support.

"This is very worrying especially considering that gardaí sometimes witness gruesome and distressing scenes that can be traumatic. Identifying the threat and preparing yourself is something that comes with experience, so again newer recruits may be more at-risk.

"This aspect of the dangers of policing is often overlooked, so during my presidency I will be emphasising the need for suitable deployment and supervision of inexperienced members and for the continued improvement to support services."