



Garda Representative Association

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STATEMENT BY FRANK THORNTON, GRA President

RE: Outdoor drinking and the use of discretion

22.06.2021

“While the Garda Representative Association welcomes both the Minister and Commissioner acknowledging the rights of members to utilise ‘discretion’ when dealing with outdoor dining, the powers of Garda discretion are being eroded in practice.

“In recent times the message is coming to our members loud and clear that should you observe any breach in the law there has to be direct action or else the gardai concerned may face disciplinary action.

“The common sense approach is one that has always been applied with strong and sound policing, yet this recent atmosphere of fear has adversely affected the ability of our frontline gardai to safely manage this.

“The reality for frontline gardai is that they will inevitably find themselves dealing with situations under the policing of current public health guidelines armed with little more than their own operational experience and professional judgment.

“The question being asked by the members we represent is whether this instruction applies only to the isolated issue of unlicensed outdoor drinking or is applicable to other spheres of policing.”