



GRA STATEMENT

Donnelly must explain why NIAC have ignored the risk of policing the pandemic

30.03.2021

Many GRA members will be dismayed by the decision of the National Immunisation Advisory Council (NIAC) to ignore the risks involved in policing the pandemic, GRA president Frank Thornton has said.

The Minister for Health must explain the circumstances in which this decision was made, he added.

Garda Thornton said: "How has NIAC only now drawn the conclusion that gardaí are not at risk? Was there policing competence involved in the decision?

"Was the Department of Justice and the Garda medical officer consulted? Did NIAC have regard for the employers' duty of care? These and other questions must be answered by the Minister for Health.

"Without consultation or transparency, this drastic change in policy will see our members continue to be exposed to a high-risk working environment.

"Our concerns over the health and safety of our members has never been as high.

"We have continuously stated the elderly and most vulnerable in society along with frontline health care workers are priority and our position remains the same.

"Members of An Garda Siochana should be categorised with other frontline workers including those in health care given our unique role in the fight against Covid.

"Gardaí will not forget the way we have been treated during this crisis. We are the second pillar of the response to the pandemic and we are now being told that we are no more at risk than someone who can work from home.

"Gardaí do not have this option and when situations arise where there is a heightened risk of Covid infection, we are called to sort it out.

"No-one else in Irish society is expected to wrestle with people who may be infected or refuse to wear masks or are in home quarantine because they are coming from a high-risk country.

"The treatment of members of An Garda Siochana is shocking. We have endured so much, given so much, and received little or nothing from this Government."