



First Galway Man to Lead the Gardaí

Dónall Ó Cualáin | Career History

Dónall Ó Cualáin was appointed Acting Garda Commissioner in September 2017 and served in that role until his retirement in September 2018. He was the first Galway man to hold the highest rank in An Garda Síochána.

He was born in Leitirmóir in 1959 but grew up and went to school in Carna. His father was a National School Teacher in the area and his mother, originally from Kilrickle, Co. Galway, was the District Nurse in Leitirmóir.

Prior to joining An Garda Síochána, Dónall Ó Cualáin worked with Beirtreach Teo. and Taighde Mara while completing a Certificate in Aquaculture in the Galway Regional Technical College, as the present Atlantic Technological University (ATU) was then called. He worked in fish farming in both Connemara and Oranmore until 1983, when he joined An Garda Síochána.

Throughout the course of his Garda career, he attained the following professional qualifications:

- ◆ Grid Leadership (2004)
- ◆ Degree in Public Administration – Institute of Public Administration
- ◆ International Exchange Programme – Community Policing – Boston College (2007)
- ◆ Executive Masters in Business Administration – National University of Ireland, Galway (2008)
- ◆ Innovations in Governance – JFK School of Government – Harvard University (2008)
- ◆ Garda Executive Leadership Programme – Michael Smurfit Business School – University College Dublin (2009).

Having joined An Garda Síochána on the 20th of July 1983, he served in the following Stations:

1983	Donnybrook, Dublin
1987	Garda Technical Bureau, Garda Headquarters (HQ)
1988	Rannóg na Gaeilge, Garda College, Templemore (promoted to Sergeant 1990)
1993	Sergeant, Cill Rónáin, Aran Islands, Co. Galway
1993	Sergeant, In-Service School, Mill Street, Galway
1994	Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal (on promotion to Inspector)
1994	Inspector, Organisation Development Unit, Garda HQ
1996	Inspector, Western Regional Office, Mill Street, Galway
1999	Glenties, Co. Donegal (on promotion to Superintendent)
2002	Superintendent, Ennistymon, Co. Clare
2003	Superintendent, Mill Street, Galway
2006	Castlebar, Co. Mayo (on promotion to Chief Superintendent)
2006	Chief Superintendent, Sligo
2007	Chief Superintendent, Mill Street, Galway
2012	Southern Regional Office, Anglesea Street, Cork (on promotion to Assistant Commissioner)
2012	Assistant Commissioner, Western Regional Office, Mill Street, Galway
2014	Acting Deputy Commissioner, Strategy and Change Management, Garda HQ.
2015	Governance and Strategy, Garda HQ (on promotion to Deputy Commissioner)
2017	Acting Commissioner from September 2017 until retirement in September 2018

A fluent Irish speaker, Acting Commissioner Ó Cualáin was a champion of the language throughout his career in An Garda Síochána. He was the Chief Superintendent at Galway Garda Station when the Office of the Coimisinéir Teanga was created in 2003.

Acting Commissioner Ó Cualáin served in every province in the State and always believed in the concept of the Garda as a community policeman, stemming from the historical ties the force maintained with the community. This relationship, he feels, was and is the ‘family silver’ when it came to policing in Ireland in that Gardaí were both of the community and with the community. This unique tie, while becoming strained in recent times, has never been broken.

As the most enjoyable part of his career, he cites the variety of roles involved and he feels that he was allowed to have five or six separate careers in one, across the operational, tactical and strategical spectrum of An Garda Síochána.



An Chéad Fhear as Gaillimh leis na Gardaí a Stiúradh

Dónall Ó Cualáin | Stair Ghairme

Ceapadh Dónall Ó Cualáin ina Choimisinéir Gníomhach i Meán Fómhair 2017 go dtí gur éirigh sé as i Meán Fómhair 2018. Ba é an chéad fhear as Gaillimh a raibh an chéim is airde sa Gharda Síochána aige.

Rugadh i Leitir Móir é sa bhliain 1959 ach d’fhás sé aníos i gCarna agus is ann a d’fhreastail sé ar scoil. Múinteoir bunscoile sa cheantar ab ea a athair agus ba í a mháthair, arbh as Cill Ríoch, Co. na Gaillimhe ó dhúchas di, an tAltra Dúiche i Leitir Móir.

Sula ndeachaigh sé sa nGarda Síochána, d’oibrigh sé le Beirtreach Teo. agus Taighde Mara, fad a bhí teastas sa Dobharshaothrú á chur i gcrích aige i gCeardcholáiste Réigiúnach na Gaillimhe. D’oibrigh sé i bhfeirmeoireacht éisc i gConamara agus in Órán Mór araon go dtí an bhliain 1983 nuair a chuaigh sé sa Gharda Síochána.

Ghnóthaigh sé na cáilíochtaí gairmiúla seo a leanas le linn a ghairme:

- ◆ Cúrsa Ceannaireachta Grid, (2004).
- ◆ Céim - Riarachán Poiblí - Institiúid Riaracháin Phoiblí.
- ◆ Clár Malartáin Idirnáisiúnta - Póilínacht Phobail – Boston College, (2007)
- ◆ Máistreacht Feidhmiúcháin sa Riarachán Gnó, OÉG, (2008).
- ◆ Nuálaíochtaí i gCúrsaí Rialachais – JFK School of Government – Ollscoil Harvard, (2008)
- ◆ Clár Ceannaireachta Feidhmiúcháin an Gharda Síochána le Scoil Ghnó Michael Smurfit i gColáiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath, (2009).

Chuaigh sé sa Gharda Síochána ar an 20 Iúil, 1983, rinne sé seirbhís sna stáisiúin seo a leanas:

1983	Domhnach Broc, Baile Átha Cliath.
1987	Biúró Teicniúil an Gharda Síochána, Ceanncheathrú an Gharda Síochána.
1988	Rannóg na Gaeilge, Coláiste an Gharda Síochána, An Teampall Mór (Fuair Ardú céime go Sáirsint 1990).
1993	Sáirsint, Cill Rónáin, Oileáin Árann.
1993	Sáirsint, Scoil Inseirbhíse, Sráid an Mhuilinn, Gaillimh.
1994	Baile Sonnáin, Dún na nGall (ar ardú céime go Cigire a fháil dó).
1994	Cigire, Aonad Forbartha Eagraíochta, Ceanncheathrú an Gharda Síochána.
1996	Cigire, Oifig Réigiúnach an Iarthair, Sráid an Mhuilinn, Gaillimh.
1999	Na Gleannta, Dún na nGall (ar ardú céime go Ceannfort a fháil dó).
2002	Ceannfort, Inis Díomáin, Co. an Chláir.
2003	Ceannfort, Sráid an Mhuilinn, Gaillimh.
2006	Caisleán an Bharraigh, Maigh Eo (ar ardú céime go Ard-Ceannfort a fháil dó).
2006	Ard-Ceannfort, Sligeach.
2007	Ard-Ceannfort, Sráid an Mhuilinn, Gaillimh.
2012	Oifig Réigiúnach an Deiscirt, Sráid Anglesea, Corcaigh (ar ardú céime go Coimisinéir Cúnta a fháil dó).
2012	Coimisinéir Cúnta, Oifig Réigiúnach an Iarthair, Sráid an Mhuilinn, Gaillimh.
2014	Leas-Choimisinéir Gníomhach, Straitéis agus Bainistiú Athruithe, Ceanncheathrú an Gharda Síochána.
2015	Rialachas agus Straitéis, Ceanncheathrú an Gharda Síochána (ar ardú céime go Leas-Choimisinéir a fháil dó).
2017	Leas-Choimisinéir ó Mheán Fómhair 2017 go dtí gur éirigh sé as i Meán Fómhair 2018.

Ina chainteoir líofa Gaeilge thacaigh an Coimisinéir Gníomhach Ó Cualáin leis an teanga san eagraíocht i rith a ghairme. Ba é a bhí ina Ard-Ceannfort i Stáisiún Gardaí na Gaillimhe nuair bunaíodh Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga sa bhliain 2003.

Rinne an Coimisinéir Gníomhach Ó Cualáin seirbhís i ngach cúige sa Stát agus chreid riamh i gcoincheap an Gharda mar Phóilín Pobail, coincheap a bhfuil bunús leis sa cheangal stairiúil a choinnigh an fórsa leis an bpobal. Dar leis, is ionann an caidreamh sin agus an “family silver” mar a bhaineann sé le póilínacht sa tír seo sa chaoi is gur ón bpobal féin a tháinig na Gardaí agus go raibh bá acu leis an bpobal sin. Níor chlis ar an gceangal ar leith sin riamh, cé gur cuireadh faoi bhrú é le blianta beaga anuas.

Deir sé gurbh iad na ról éagsúla a raibh baint aige leo an ghné ba thaitneamhaí a bhain lena ghairm agus dar leis bhí sé ábalta cúig nó sé ghairm ar leith a bheith aige in aon ghairm amháin, ó réimse oibríochta, oirbheartaíochta agus straitéiseach na heagraíochta.

