

## Four peaks Challenge 2017





















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## Gardaí take on Four Peaks Challenge to help Aware charity

Ryan Nugent

SOME 100 gardaí are set to climb the four highest peaks in Ireland in aid of charity next month – and have raised €30,000 already.

The group is attempting the Four Peaks Mountain Challenge across Ireland's four provinces from May 19-21.

The three-day challenge will see the gardaí – both serving and retired – tackling the heights of Carrauntoohil in Co Kerry, Mweelrea in Co Mayo, Slieve Donard in Co Down and Co Wicklow's Lugnaquilla, covering the highest peak in each of the provinces.

Climbers want to raise more than €50,000 for mental health charity Aware.

Speaking ahead of the hike, Detective Chief Superintendent at Harcourt Street Pat Lordan said it is hugely significant.

"When I heard about this challenge, I said 'yeah, this one is for me'," he said.

"I did Kilimanjaro last year on a separate adventure, so this is a big challenge. I think it's bigger than Kilimanjaro, to be honest with you.

"It's the awareness of mental health and mental well-being and our mindfulness of what we're doing in our jobs.

"But it's not just for the guards, it's a challenge for everyone in life and we want

to highlight what's going on in people's minds at any time and that there is help out there."

Chief Superintendent in Blanchardstown Lorraine Wheatley said: "This year we

decided to go for broke, we've been training since October," she said.

"In our job, we deal with people on a daily basis who have issues.

"It tells the public we

understand, we're human as well."

*Irish Independent* photographer Mark Condren will join the team on the challenge, and will document the challenge.

Our picture by Mark (inset right) shows Garda Commissioner Nóirín O'Sullivan, who was presented with a stick from Det Chief Supt Pat Lordan at the launch of the challenge.





Gardaí Laura Ryan, Rathfarnham, and Patrice Ryan, Tipperary, with a shillelagh at the launch of the Garda Four Peaks Challenge in the Phoenix Park, Dublin. Photo: Mark Condren





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## Are gardaí in peak condition? Officers enter mountain quest

Four Peak Mountain Challenge sees 100 gardaí raise funds for Aware charity

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Sarah Burns



Some of the participating gardaí at Garda Headquarters in the Phoenix Park. Photograph: Colin Keegan/Collins Dublin



A group of 100 serving and retired gardaí from across the country will climb the highest mountain peak in each of the four provinces of Ireland next month.



The Four Peak Mountain Challenge, which is raising funds for Aware, spans over three days (May 19th-21st) with participants climbing Carrantoohill in Co Kerry, Mweelrea in Co Mayo, Slieve Donard in Co Down and Lugnaquilla in Co Wicklow.

Members of the gardaí have raised €30,000 to date and are hoping to get to €50,000 by next month. Participants will be accompanied by serving officers from the New York Police Department (NYPD), the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), and Australian and Spanish police who are taking part in and supporting the challenge. Along with raising funds for the charity, the challenge is aiming to raise awareness for Aware's support services.

Chief superintendent Lorraine Wheatley, who is based at Blanchardstown Garda station, said: "We're doing this for a number of reasons. We're very conscious of the tough old job we have, the benefits of being out in nature, the benefits of getting the exercise.

"But also I think, more importantly we're raising awareness within our own organisation that people do suffer from depression and it can affect people at any stage and we can all get a bit stuck."

### **Better place**

"We deal with people on a daily basis that have issues and I think the more aware and better understanding we have of depression and mental illness, I think it puts us in a better place when dealing with people.

"It's about raising awareness internally and externally in our organisation that there is support there."

Detective chief superintendent Pat Lordan, from the Garda National Economic Crime Bureau said: "There's a lot of training going on at the moment, we were out training last night until 10.30pm on Lugnaquilla in the dark so there's a lot of work being done."