

Statement

Thank you to everyone who has supported our families over the past year and more. We will never be able to thank you all enough. Thanks to the Office of the DPP, Anne Marie Lawlor, Grainne Whelan and Edel Gilligan. Also to Jonathan Dunphy and Michael Bowman for the Defence. Thanks to the Gardai and finally to the jury for the task they faced with this trial.

Today's verdict is probably the right verdict. Everyone who knows Deirdre, knows how much she loved our children and how devoted she was to them.

Whatever the outcome of this trial, it remains that our beloved children Conor, Darragh and Carla have died. As I write this, I'm no closer to understanding why.

As outlined in the medical expert reports, Deirdre's diagnosis prior to the children's deaths is different to her diagnosis now. With the cooperation of the HSE Mental Health Services I hope we will be able to understand why as the HSE Mental Health Services were responsible for Deirdre's diagnosis, treatment and medication and she was in their professional care. If Deirdre's diagnosis was questionable prior to January 24th 2020 then surely so too was her treatment and medication.

We are now also aware of a number of occasions within Deirdre's professional care when her initial diagnosis should have been queried but none of these seem to have been fully addressed.

This trial was never going to explore those issues so we ask the HSE Mental Health Services for an inclusive investigation into Deirdre's diagnosis, treatment and medication prior to this tragedy. We ask for this to be conducted as a matter of urgency. This will help us understand the insanity that took the lives of our beloved Conor, Darragh and Carla. We as a family need to be included in any investigation as our exclusion during her treatment has left us with many unanswered questions. We believe that an inclusive investigation can only serve to inform clinicians in their practice and therefore avoid tragedies like ours happening again. We do not want any other family to suffer as we have.

In the past 20 years over 50 children have died at the hands of one of their parents. Over 60% of the those people were known to have had previous contact with psychiatric services. However the Mental Health Act 2001 does not go far enough in ensuring that the family support structures for the patient are fully engaged and included by the mental health professionals treating our loved ones. This was raised by Una Butler back in 2010 following the deaths of her beautiful daughters Ella and Zoe. She campaigned tirelessly to many within the Oireachtas to seek a more inclusive and collaborative approach with families. Alas nothing much changed. The lessons which should have been learned from the sad loss of Ella and Zoe should have led to improvements in the Mental Health Act. This in turn would have prevented the deaths of Conor, Darragh and Carla in our opinion.

It is too late for us but I do not want to see another grieving parent speaking in the future about the same exclusion after a similar catastrophic loss. My message here and now to any one who has a loved one in psychiatric care is to get in there as soon as you can to be added as an advocate for their treatment plan.

I will continue to celebrate the all too short lives of Conor, Darragh and Carla to ensure that they are never forgotten. Conor had asked me to help him with a YouTube channel and I promised I would. You will find Conor's Clips on YouTube now and given his interest in the internet this is supported on Twitter and Instagram. I hope to continue to do that with the same great sense of humour which Conor had.

I promised to build a snowman for Carla. As we don't get snow every year I'm planning a colouring competition called Snowman for Carla in her name.

For Darragh I promised to get involved with Rathcoole Boys. However Darragh had been involved in everything in the community – Rathcoole Boys, Commercial Hurling, St Marys GAA, The Athletics Club, the Drama Club to name but a few. In Darragh's name I am starting a charity to encourage everyone to get involved more in their own communities and to participate ... As Darragh Did.

Personally, I will be taking some of the unique characters that Conor and Darragh created in their own comics, plays and books and I will attempt to do them proud by bringing these characters further along in books which I hope to write in their honour.

Thank you

www.conorsclips.ie

www.asdarraghdid.ie

www.snowmanforcarla.ie

