

The Boyce Family's Statement

The Boyce family, from Cratloe, Co. Clare, allege that from June 2019 onwards, GAA Officers—from Club level up to National level—inflicted terrible treatment on them and made up a horrific story about their family in order to cover up a June 2019 violent attack on their son. That nothing has been addressed because no external oversight exists for how GAA child welfare procedures are applied and no one will do anything about it

The Boyces ask the public for support on the following 4 items:

1. For the GAA to be placed under the remit of the Children's Ombudsman to ensure independent oversight for how its child welfare procedures are applied.
2. To clear their (Siobhan and Laurence) and their son's name, with no one letting them do so for over 6 years, on:
 - a. A false statement they were verbally told was submitted by a conflicted adult that wrongly implicated their son on the violent attack he was subjected to
 - b. A horrific story made up about their family from 2020, by conflicted people, using the Boyce's Club's good name for personnel gain, that they first learnt of through Data Access Requests and a 2023 AGM broadcast
3. For the terrible treatment that was inflicted on their family to be investigated
4. For the people who have not been investigated regarding child welfare, that includes making up and withholding information that obstructs a child welfare investigation—but who currently have indirect or direct access to their children—to have that access removed immediately. This must happen even if nothing else has been addressed, so their family, in particular their children can participate in a community that is uninhibited and unconflicted insofar as one would reasonably expect.

The Boyces state that a misrepresenting Tusla report, they discovered placed on their records in November 2024, provided the understanding that the false statement, horrific story and terrible treatment was needed in order to cover up:

- GAA Officers', from Club up to National levels, failure to report the attack to the statutory authorities and investigate it professionally. It involved making up and withholding of information, and intimidation, to protect the children the Boyces were told were responsible.
- From January 2020, cover up public knowledge and an email trail that had been left behind, that showed wrongdoing by those the Boyces were told were responsible, their identity and Officers' mismanagement.

The Boyces also allege that Tusla (the child and family agency), along with other external bodies and national politicians, continue to help the cover-up. The Boyces state that the cover up can be for someone else to pursue. Their priority is the 4 asks for their family.

Timeline of Events

June 2019

The Boyces were told the violent attack was witnessed by many and the actions within it reported by coaches and parents, with a request for child welfare involvement. There is CCTV at the pitch. The unprovoked attack involved their son, with no ball in his hands, been restrained face down on the ground by one child while a second choked him. Their son was only able to escape after the first child released and got off him, allowing him to free his arms and defend himself. He then had to defend off another choking attempt before escaping to adults, who helped him as he struggled to breathe.

To give context: the Boyces highlight that their Club Executive, made up of Club 'Volunteers' were (still are) not independent of each other and or with County Board 'Volunteers'. And significantly, the Club Executive were not independent on the incident. That no Club or County 'Volunteer' should have been next or near the management of the attack (or be the Club's voice on what has transpired since).

They also make the point that the addressing of actions of other people's children was the business of Officers who Others reported to and the business of other families (FYI, how the Boyces observed it being managed will be released separately).

The Boyces' concern in June 2019 arose after a Club Executive Officer sought their son's account and witnesses they had become aware of. The Boyces allege this knowledge was then used to manufacture a statement that wrongly implicated their son, which the Officer, on the next call, told them had being submitted by an adult, who was not independent of the Club Executive and not independent on the incident. The Boyces checked with coaches, parents, many witnesses and their son, who remain available to confirm. All replies were consistent: their son had done nothing untold.

Since 2019, the Boyces have repeatedly sought written confirmation as to whether the false statement they were verbally told of was or was not reported and documented about their son. Over 6 years later, no one will allow the Boyces to clear their son's name.

December 2019

Their overcome son, who had experienced a difficult time, wanted his father, Laurence, to be a coach with him again at his age level for welfare support. Laurence made himself available for his son's age group. The Club Officer texted back: "No problem." The Boyces understood that they were in a position to help rebuild their son's confidence to give him his voice back, and in a way that would impact no one

January - July 2020

Laurence was stopped from coaching at any age level at which their son would participate in both codes of the GAA. The Club Executive (including its Welfare Officer) ignored Siobhan's emails, which clearly explained their welfare efforts. As a result, she could not discuss the issue or arrange any alternative support.

County and National Welfare Officers concealed their efforts as "primarily non-Welfare," blocking their son's ask. He had to learn he had no voice, even through his parents.

July 2020 onwards

County and National Welfare Officers chose to accept the Club Officers' word over the Boyces' word on a 2018 verbal bullying incident, as they concealed/withheld information.

Important context:

- In 2018, their son was verbally bullied by one child at school and on the GAA pitch
- In June 2019, their son was physically assaulted by different children (not the same child) on the GAA pitch
- A coach, connected with the child that was responsible for the 2018 bullying, had become compromised by it in 2018
- There was a 2018 verbal agreement with the Club Officers that this coach would not be put in a position to address issues between the other child involved in the verbal bullying and the Boyces' son.
- In August 2019, a parent had told Siobhan that the child who bullied their son in 2018 was doing it again in the pitch. Another parent intervened between the two families about it outside the club. The Boyces' son had said nothing, but he had withdrawn from the pitch during that week. His confidence in having a voice was shattered.

From July 2020, County and National Welfare accepted the Club's claim that the 2018 verbal bullying had not been previously reported, even though the Boyces emailed it had been reported and to who, and that their son was available to confirm. (To note: The Officers it was reported to in 2018 were not independent of the 2019 attack. The Boyces have contacted them directly, but they continue to withhold the information).

Consequences:

- Their son was re-exposed to the child who had verbally bullied him in 2018
- The 2018 verbal agreement about the coach was disregarded as the Boyces were to realise he had been appointed to a role since January 2020 that would see him in charge of managing issues between both children
- Their son became so inhibited that he had to withdraw from the pitch
- The Boyces were wrongly portrayed as people who had made child safeguarding complaints against the coach

The truth: The Boyces say the email trail evidences they were considerate throughout and mindful of the sensitive circumstances affecting the coach's family. Despite this, their name was blackened across the Club as complainants against the coach.

August 2020 - January 2021

Through a data access request, the Boyces discovered that GAA Officers from Club level up to the National level had acted in a conflicted manner and made up information for personal gain.

What they found:

The Club had imposed a severe disciplinary measure, called "Restriction of Members' Rights on the Grounds of having made False Allegations on child welfare". It was

- Based on "we Cratloe GAA", in January 2021, having disengaged from them
- On the grounds that the Club supposedly, in August 2020, found Siobhan guilty of making untrue statements about child welfare.

What this restriction meant:

The GAA National body confirmed this would restrict their rights to access all GAA platforms—meaning they could not use GAA channels, to:

- Get their terrible treatment addressed
- Clear their son's name regarding the assault

Problems with these Club decisions (revealed by the data access request):

- The decisions were invalid
- They were processed by the Club Secretary and approved by her immediate family

member, the County Chairman, appointed 4 weeks earlier and on the Club Executive

- There had been no AGM since January 2020 or Club meetings in between
- Neither the Boyces nor their Club were ever made aware of these decisions
- Neither was told they had done anything wrong

The effect of these made-up decisions:

They destroyed the Boyces' characters and credibility, serving to:

- Undermine the email trail about the 2019 assault
 - Undermine the Boyces' word that the 2018 verbal bullying was previously reported
-

January 2021

The Boyces say that the January 2021 Club disengaging email—sent as if on behalf of the Club—desperately misled the issues that had been applied to the Boyces' son as their "son's issues." The Boyces point out: he had no issues—he encountered issues.

2022

The Boyces discovered how to lift redactions on emails, which revealed:

- There was not an appropriate quorum (minimum number) of Officers on the disengaging email—further evidence that the Club decisions were invalid
- National Welfare emailed Officers beneath, that he had "to use many paracetamols" in his discussions with the Boyces, as he proceeded to pretend he had told the Boyces about the made-up Club decisions (Siobhan's emails show he did not)

Officers at each level ignored the Boyces' January 2023 statutory rectification requests

as they now withheld the information that evidenced the 'Club' decisions were false

Their son went to a Club committee meeting with his parents to "establish the facts", as was on the agenda. However, he was prevented from speaking and then ignored

GAA Director General ignored the welfare matters raised through their "speak up" facility. Instead, he directed the National Welfare Officer to write an email about their family.

February 2023 - Orchestrated AGM

At an AGM, the Club Chairman read out that National Welfare email to ~ 95 people to try to justify that the Boyces deserved the made-up Club decisions, withholding the information that proved such decisions were false. It seriously misrepresented what had transpired and the Boyces, and contained many items never previously put to the Boyces.

A sample of the disturbing contents of the email included:

- It identified the Boyces' efforts from March 2020—which Siobhan's emails show were parents' efforts to support a child—as "borderline harassment of Officers"
- It opened up details about the actions within the uninvestigated assault
- It broadcast that the Boyces had "a right to fight their son's corner"—as if their son had done something wrong

What happened at the AGM:

- The Boyces were stopped from replying and reading out their official record of the 2022 AGM minutes to be ratified, as Officers withheld that information too
- AGM minutes portray a call for a show of hands to 'move on the meeting' that was carried out by conflicted Officers, as evidence that members agreed all matters were dealt with in relation to the Boyces (re-validated the made-up Club decisions)
- This action leaves on record that National Welfare's decision remains intact—meaning all GAA platforms are inaccessible to the Boyces to have the terrible child welfare treatment addressed. As a result, they still do not have a voice.
- Responsibles outside the Club identify that their complaint is against their Club, which

is not the case – the complaint is against conflicted Officers at Club, County and National level, who are using their Club's good name for personnel gain).

What the Club concealed:

- Club Executive withhold the fact that they read out the National Welfare email in full
 - They claim they only read out 2 lines of it and destroyed the AGM recording
 - As a result, the public assassination of their family continues
-

Responses from Authorities

Tusla, Gardaí, National Politicians, Legal

All identify "no remit" –they say they have no power or responsibility to act. Legally, the Boyces are advised no route exists, which they really struggle with.

Children's Ombudsman

Has no remit because the GAA is not on their list of bodies they can investigate.

Protected Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Commissioners

Identify the GAA Director General as the "suitable person" to investigate himself and his colleagues. The Commissioner sent him all the Boyces' information, including the identity of people the Boyces rely on to speak up. The Boyces observe since, how some of those people now find themselves relying on Club and County Officers to remain in the Club.

Tusla CEO

- Continues to obstruct the Boyces' appeal to a Tusla whistleblowing-type process
- Instead, directed the lodging of two seriously misrepresenting and finalised Tusla reports on the Boyces' records, all without the Boyces knowledge of
- Refuses to rectify these reports

What the Boyces learned from these Tusla reports:

The reports explain why the 2018 verbal bullying case was reopened:

- Tusla mixed up the serious assault (June 2019) with the less serious verbal bullying (2018)
- Tusla misrepresent the two-on-one assault as a one-on-one assault. This aligns with the false statement submitted in June 2019 that wrongly implicated their son
- The assault is misrepresented as a less serious, one-on-one bullying-type incident
- This misinformation tries to justify why National Welfare failed to:
 - Address it as an incident with a serious risk of serious harm
 - Deal with it professionally and report it externally
- By mixing up the verbal bullying with the assault, Tusla's report portrays that the child responsible for the verbal bullying was also responsible for the assault.
- It distances the assault away from those the Boyces were told were responsible.

Data Protection Commissioner

- Sent the Boyces "around the house back to the start"
 - They lost all confidence in this body
 - They cannot trust them with anything
 - They walked away, realising they had to go public to get rectification
-

Current Situation

Feel utterly let down by the GAA, Tusla, Guards and other institutions. With no external oversight available, the Boyce family is now seeking public support to clear their name.