



Solicitor Scarlett Griffin O'Sullivan, of Callan Tansey Solicitors, speaking after the inquest in Limerick yesterday into the death of Laura Liston, who died after a homebirth in June 2022. Ms O'Sullivan is joined by the heartbroken sisters of the deceased, Jennifer and Sarah Liston. Picture: Larry Cummins

HSE ‘truly sorry’ for failings

Niamh Griffin
Health Correspondent

The HSE has issued a “sincere and unreserved apology” after an inquest found there was medical misadventure in the death of a Limerick mother after a homebirth.

In the apology to Laura Liston’s family, the HSE admitted there were “failings in the care provided to Laura during the delivery of her baby”.

“We are truly sorry for the part these failings played in such a devastating outcome,” it said.

“You trusted that Laura would be safe and cared for at one of the most important moments of your lives, and that trust was broken.”

Ms Liston, 36, died on June 5, 2022, after giving birth to a health baby boy at her home near Croom in Limerick

Woman’s death after homebirth recorded as medical misadventure



Laura Liston died in the early hours of June 5, 2022, at UHL.

under the HSE homebirth service.

The baby was born at 10.58pm on June 4, but Ms Liston experienced complications when trying to deliver the placenta. She suffered a fainting episode, blood loss, and low blood

pressure among other concerns. An ambulance was called at 12.09am, and she arrived in hospital at 1.16am. She had a heart attack in the ambulance and again on arrival.

The cause of death was haemorrhage and shock due to uterine inversion following the attempted delivery of the placenta.

Ms Liston’s husband, Fergal Mannion, and other relatives including her parents gave an emotional statement after the inquest.

“Laura dreamed of becoming a mother and raising a family with Fergal in her native Croom,” solicitor Scarlett Griffin O’Sullivan said on their behalf as they stood silently behind her.

“To become a mother was all she ever wanted, maternal by nature, she was a beautiful woman inside and out.”

“She did her research and opted for a homebirth via the HSE service, and trusted that she would be afforded basic antenatal care. Unfortunately, there were deficits in that care — in particular following her son’s delivery. But for those failings, Laura would still be alive today.”

“This tragedy was avoidable and should never have happened.”

The family also insisted the case was not about being pro- or anti-homebirth.

“This case has been about finding out the truth about what happened to Laura on that fateful night.”

The couple had opted for a homebirth, having used IVF treatment abroad to conceive.

They called for “basic clinical standards and guidelines in maternity care” to be followed, saying this was lacking.

They also welcomed the coroner’s recommendations and the HSE apology, but said the apology came “three and a half years since Laura died, and it is bittersweet as no words can ever replace a mother”.

The HSE apology was read by its barrister, Oonah McCrane SC, on behalf of Ian Carter, the integrated healthcare area manager, acute and older person services with HSE Mid-West.

He expressed “profound sadness” at the tragedy.

He also said learnings and improvement have been put in place.

Coroner John McNamara noted the dignity shown by the family.

He said he was satisfied

her death occurred during medical treatment, describing it as “a tragic and rare event”.

He said: “In these circumstances, the appropriate verdict is medical misadventure.”

He attached recommendations made by the HSE internally to his verdict. Mr McNamara told the family: “She will not be forgotten.”

The inquest heard from Mr Mannion. The midwives, Sandra Healy and Sinead Murphy, also gave evidence, as did emergency services staff who did their best to save her.

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McEntee: Musk’s Grok chatbot should be banned

Tadhg McNally and
Cianan Brennan

Grok should be banned due to its ability to create sexually explicit images of women and children, Helen McEntee has said.

The foreign affairs minister is the first senior Cabinet member to call for the banning of X’s AI chatbot.

Her comments came as gardai confirmed they are currently investigating 200 alleged child sexual abuse images generated by Grok. In recent weeks, Grok has been used to generate explicit images of women and children through what has been described as a nudification function.

It has been used to remove clothing from pictures published on the site.

“This is one of the single biggest challenges that we are facing, and it’s something we don’t talk about enough,” said Ms McEntee.

She added that the Government and EU need to “explore every option” to rein in social media firms such as X. “I think we need, collectively, to be stronger in pushing back against social media companies and not letting this type of technology take hold and cause the damage that it can,” said Ms McEntee.

The foreign affairs minister said she mainly uses X as a communication tool, but does not engage with the site beyond that.

“I don’t comment, I don’t respond on it... I mean, social media is a really great way of being able to communicate, to get your message across.”

“But I think in particular X, it is just toxic, in my own view of it.”

Speaking at the Oireachtas media committee, Detective Chief Superintendent Barry Walsh of the Garda National Cyber Crime Bureau said that there have been 200 reports received by gardai to date which “are being investigated involving content of child sexual abuse material [CSAM] or indicative of CSAM”.

He said it now has to be shown that the images in question are criminal in nature before further investigation can take place.

“That may lead to the execution of warrants,” he said, adding that any investigation may not be into X itself, but into the images which have been shared on the platform.

Meanwhile, Mr Musk said in an X post: “I not aware of any naked underage images generated by Grok. Literally zero.”

Ex-Cork City FC player charged with €23k theft

Liam Heylin

One of Cork City FC’s most famous players, George O’Callaghan, was yesterday formally arrested and charged with the theft of over €23,000 from a fitness centre where he worked about five years ago.

Detective Garda Robert McCarthy arrested Mr O’Callaghan, with an address at Lisduff, Whitechurch, Co Cork, for the purpose of charging him at Cork District Court.

Solicitor Frank Buttimer said a book of evidence would not be required in the case, and that Mr O’Callaghan would enter a signed guilty plea immediately.

“He admits the offence,” Mr Buttimer said.

The single charge against the 46-year-old was brought under the Criminal Justice (Theft and Fraud Offences)



George O’Callaghan admits the offence, his solicitor said.

Act 2001 and states that: “On dates between August 1, 2020, and December 23, 2021, at Anytime Fitness, Eastgate, Ballincollig, Cork... he did steal property, to wit, €23,645, the property of Holo-

han Fitness Ltd, trading as Anytime Fitness.”

Mr Buttimer applied for free legal aid, saying: “He is not in receipt of income, he lost his situation arising out of these difficulties.”

Judge John King granted free legal aid.

The case was sent forward from Cork District Court for sentencing at Cork Circuit Criminal Court on February 9.

Sgt John Dineen said there was no objection to bail, and no conditions were required.

Background details on how the matters that gave rise to the charge were not outlined in court, but it is anticipated that such details will be given at the sentencing hearing.

Mr O’Callaghan’s football career included a five-year period with Cork City FC from 2002 and a spell in England at Ipswich Town.

O’Brien sentenced to 25 months in jail

Caroline Spencer

Convicted fraudster Catherine O’Brien has been sentenced to 25 months for dishonestly inducing an elderly man out of €22,000.

O’Brien, of An Grianan, Ballinroad, Dungarvan, Co Waterford, dishonestly induced John Blake into paying her €20,000 for a horse named Lingreville, €1,100 for

insurance, and €984 to transport the horse from France to Ireland.

A jury in July took less than 40 minutes to find her guilty at Waterford Circuit Court after a three-week trial. Evidence showed the horse had never been purchased or entered Ireland.

O’Brien first met Mr Blake in late 2017 through a dating website and presented her-

self as a horse expert. There began a series of lies that left Mr Blake without his life savings.

Judge Eugene O’Kelly described O’Brien taking advantage of an elderly man and leaving him “vulnerable, embarrassed, and ashamed”. He sentenced her to 25 months, backdated to July 2025.

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JCD acquires Cork office site for €30m

Catherine Shanahan
Property Editor

Cork City’s evolving property landscape has seen two significant shifts with the purchase of Half Moon Street by John Cleary Developments (JCD), alongside revised plans for BAM’s former tax office site on Sullivan’s Quay.

Cork-headquartered JCD acquired the Half Moon Street development from global property investment firm Kennedy Wilson in an off-market deal for a sum in the region of €30m and has already commenced a €5m upgrade of its office space.

“The upgrade works will make the building best in class and enhance the occupier experience. Our existing portfolio of offices is currently fully occupied, and we see limited supply of grade A office space available in the city centre,” a spokesperson for JCD said.

Meanwhile, BAM is due to lodge a planning application for student accommodation at Sullivan’s Quay, having allowed consent for a hotel and offices to lapse.

While BAM declined to comment on its revised plans, JCD said they were “delighted to confirm the acquisition of the Half Moon building, which is located on a prime riverside site in the heart of the city centre”.

The building — previously occupied in part by tech giant Apple — includes an unused 20,000sq ft basement, with JCD currently in discussions with a number of interested parties regarding its potential use. JCD said it was suitable for a “variety of retail, leisure, or art uses”.

JCD has already agreed to the letting of one floor of the building’s 54,000sq ft of office space, while “detailed discussions” are ongoing with prospective occupiers for the remaining floors. The first

tenants are expected to take up occupation by mid-April. To date, JCD has completed 1.25m sq ft of office space in Cork.

The Half Moon Street building, originally developed by O’Callaghan Properties, extends to over 115,000sq ft and comprises a mix of retail and office space.

Tenants, unaffected by the sale, include Boots’s Cork flagship store, Matthews outdoor wear specialists, Koppers hair salon, and MDM Solicitors. Vendors Kennedy Wilson acquired it from OCP in 2019 for €36.3m.

The property shares a street with the Crawford Art Gallery where work on a €93m redevelopment — treble the original cost — has just got under way.

Meanwhile, over on Sullivan’s Quay, the approximately one-acre BAM site has lain unused for several years, attracting criticism from local councillors and the public.

Aside from the removal of rubble following the demolition of the former tax office in 2018, no development has taken place on the site since BAM acquired it in 2006.

The developer was twice granted permission for a mixed-use scheme in 2008 and again in 2018. Both included plans for a hotel, as well as offices. The first foul of the financial crash, the second lapsed, and a subsequent request for an extension was refused by Cork City Council.

BAM also owns the site on South Main St where a sod was turned 10 years ago for an event centre, next to the former Beamish & Crawford brewery. The project has had to be retendered, and the Government is considering a preliminary business case, ahead of the retendering process. The event centre is not tied to a specific site.

Commercial Property