

Evening Heralds Thursday March 04 2010

## **HSE want to stop report on tragic Tracey:**

By Cormac Byrne

THE HSE tried to gag the report into the death of tragic Tracey Fay, who died from a drug overdose while under their "dysfunctional and chaotic" care.

The HSE wrote to Fine Gael TD Alan Shatter asking him to withdraw from the public record a report on the death of the troubled Dublin teenager on the basis that his publication breached the constitutional rights of her family.

The document was released by Mr Shatter at a news conference called yesterday in a Dublin hotel where he referred to Ms Fay by her initials "TF".

He was severely criticised later by both Minister of State for Children Barry Andrews and the HSE for failing to consult the young woman's family.

### **Addicts**

It has emerged that the HSE had written to Mr Shatter prior to yesterday's press conference arguing that the family had a right to be consulted in advance of publication.

Tracey was just 14 when she was taken into the care of the then Eastern Health Board where she became involved with drug addicts. She died on the streets of Dublin in January 2002 of a drugs overdose.

The family criticised the actions of both sides in the debacle, claiming they were being used as a "political football".

They said that they would have liked the opportunity to read the report and respond to it before it was made public.

Tracey's uncle, Damien Fay, said that the first he heard of the leak was when he was contacted by the media.

"We were never contacted and I think it's very important that we would have been," he said. "We would have hoped that the HSE would have contacted the family so that we could have some input as to the outcome of the report. We've been excommunicated from what's going on."

He added that he hoped the care system in the HSE had changed since 2002.

"She would go to the Health Board clinic and hang around there. And then she would be sent to the garda station and made hang around there looking for a bed," he said.

"We know what kind of people are in garda stations and she was a vulnerable young girl."

Mr Shatter confirmed he had received a letter from Philip Garland, HSE assistant national director for children and families, and was "considering its content."

- Cormac Byrne