

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **GRANDPARENT SLAMS BLACKMAIL AT CHRISTMAS**

A County Louth Grandfather slammed the emotional abuse of fathers, grandparents and grandchildren when he spoke today of the pain of watching how his 36 year old son has had to suffer by being cut off from his daughter and his new born son. Paul Carragher talked about how some mothers are being influenced and encouraged to deny fathers and grandparents contact with children by obstructing any meaningful relationship with their father and grandparents, especially over the Christmas period. He further spoke of his son's anguish of being kept in the dark about the birth of his second child last week. He only heard of the birth from his sister who overheard the gossip in the local shop.

These heart-breaking stories are just the tip of the iceberg said Alan Beirne, Project Director for Parental Equality the Shared Parenting Organisation promoting joint custody. This type of emotional and psychological child abuse is all too regular an occurrence, especially around the Christmas period and is particularly harrowing and distressful for children, fathers and grandparents said Mr. Beirne. It also badly impacts on members of the extended family such as aunts, uncles and cousins and in particular the paternal grandparents who don't get to see their grand children during what is a very important family occasion.

Mr. Carragher was particularly strong in his condemnation of the legal system and its failure to enforce access orders, and of the health services for failing to engage with the families to seek resolution. "My son is now being blackmailed by being offered access only if my wife and I, the grandparents give up the court appointed access to our grandchild". He called for all grandparents, brothers and sisters of separated fathers to actively support fathers in this extremely low time around Christmas.

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Source [www.parentalequality.ie](http://www.parentalequality.ie)