



Statement

Dec. 20, 2019

For Immediate Release

My Office has fielded a number of media requests this week, following sentencing for an Oak Bay father convicted of murdering his two daughters, Chloe and Aubrey Berry, in December 2017.

Media have asked for comment on the statement released by the girls' mother, Sarah Cotton, and about what specific action my Office might take with regard to this case.

Let me begin by expressing my deepest sympathies to Ms. Cotton and the girls' family, who have been through the most difficult experience imaginable during the past two years.

Ms. Cotton's heartfelt statement is a powerful expression of her experience and critique of the family law and Ministry of Children and Family Development systems. We respect her perspective and also her request for privacy for her family. We do not want to make a comment on her statement without further reaching out to her and creating another opportunity for dialogue.

RCY has been closely monitoring this case since the tragedy occurred. As the verdict and sentence are now under appeal, our Office is unable to undertake an investigation until such time as the legal process is complete. However, we are considering alternative actions to support systemic improvements in child-serving systems. Possibilities include this case being part of an aggregate review or a special report on issues such as harm to children as a result of high-conflict custody disputes, parental mental health concerns or domestic violence. A number of factors will influence our decision, and any decision will be made in consultation with Ms. Cotton and others.

Most importantly, at this time our hearts go out to this family as they continue to grapple with their profound loss.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Charlesworth
Representative for Children and Youth