

## Judge rules that boy can die against parents' wishes

A High Court judge gave the go-ahead yesterday for doctors to take a one-year-old boy with brain damage off his life-support machine despite strong opposition from his parents (Frances Gibb writes).

Mrs Justice Russell, sitting in the family division of the High Court in London, made her decision after she concluded that the boy had suffered "profound, irreversible brain damage".

His parents, who are Christians, wept as the judge said that it was in his best interests for "life-sustaining intensive care" to be withdrawn. The parents had opposed the move, which the judge acknowledged would lead "inevitably" to the boy's death.

The ruling came after an application on Monday by the NHS

foundation trust that runs the hospital where the boy is being cared for. The judge said that she had reached her decision with "great reluctance" after gauging what was in the boy's best interests. Neither the boy, his parents or the trust could be identified.

Claire Watson, representing the trust, told the judge at the earlier hearing that the boy had been delivered in "poor condition" by emergency caesarean section and had immediately required resuscitation and ventilation.

He had "catastrophic and irreversible brain injury" and "chronic lung disease" and doctors had concluded that there was no prospect of recovery, she added.

Frances 1.10.94