

Wife's plea to let coma husband die is opposed by doctors

By Lydia Willgress

THE wife of a policeman who was left in a coma after a road accident has pleaded with a court to let her husband die as doctors have refused to stop life-sustaining treatment.

Paul Briggs, a soldier in the Gulf War who joined the police in 2004, was left with a severe brain injury after his motor-cycle was hit in a head-on collision while he was serving with Merseyside Police in July 2015.

His wife, Lindsey Briggs, has argued that her husband's treatment should stop, but doctors disagree as they believe the 43-year-old is in a "minimally conscious state". The case was outlined in front of Mr Justice Charles at a preliminary hearing at the Court of Protection in London yesterday.

Victoria Butler-Cole, the barrister representing Mrs Briggs, outlined the background to the case in a written statement given to the judge.

She said Mr Briggs was being cared for by staff at The Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust, which is based in Liverpool. "Doctors treating Mr Briggs and an independent doctor have diagnosed him as being in a minimally conscious state," she said. "A different independent doctor ... has diagnosed Mr Briggs as being in a permanent vegetative state."

She explained that Mrs Briggs is "certain" that her husband would not have wanted the life-sustaining treatment to continue, but admitted Mr Briggs had not made any advance decision in writing about what should happen in such circumstances.

Speaking after the hearing, Mathieu Culverhouse, a solicitor who is also representing Mrs Briggs, said the time since the motorcyclist's crash had been "extremely difficult" and the family "just wants what is best for him".