

Brain-damaged baby 'must be left to die'

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The parents of a severely brain-damaged baby may take their case to the UK Supreme Court after failing in their appeal against a ruling that his life support be removed.

Chris Gard and Connie Yates wish to take their nine-month-old son Charlie, who suffers from a rare genetic condition, to the United States for a therapy trial. They said that the trial would not cause significant harm and that it was their only remaining hope.

However, doctors at Great Ormond Street Hospital in London, where Charlie is being cared for, argued that it was experimental and could cause him pain.

Last month a High Court judge ruled against the parents. Mr Justice Francis said that the hospital could "lawfully withdraw all treatment save for palliative care to permit Charlie to die with dignity". He said that he had made the judgment with the "heaviest of hearts" but with the "complete conviction" that it was in Charlie's best interest.

Mr Gard and Ms Yates, both in their 30s, from Bedford, west London, asked the Court of Appeal to overturn the ruling. Yesterday Mr Gard shook his head as Lord Justice McFarlane, Lady Justice King and Lord Justice Sales upheld the judgment. Lord Justice McFarlane praised the parents' composure and dignity and said: "My heart goes out to them." Lawyers represent-

ing the couple said that they would like the Supreme Court to consider the case.

Richard Gordon, QC, who led their legal team, told judges that the case raised "very serious legal issues" and that the parents wished to exhaust all options. In a written outline of the parents' case, he said: "This court should not stand in the way of their only remaining hope." He suggested Charlie might be being unlawfully detained.

A spokeswoman for Great Ormond



Charlie Gard's parents want him to undergo a therapy trial in the US

Street Hospital said: "The medical and legal consensus, confirmed by today's ruling, is that it is in Charlie's best interests to be allowed to die with dignity. Our priority is now to work with the parents as we continue to care for Charlie and progress towards the next steps."

The court ordered the hospital not to remove life support until midnight on Wednesday to give the couple time to decide whether to take the case to the Supreme Court.