

Judge tells family of ill boy to respect doctor who urged an end to treatment

◆ A judge has rebuked the family and friends of a seriously ill 20-month-old boy, saying they must respect the views of a doctor who told the court the child should be allowed to die.

Alfie Evans is in a "semi-vegetative state" and has a degenerative neurological condition doctors have not definitively diagnosed.

Lawyers acting for Alder Hey Children's Hospital in Liverpool argue that further treatment for Alfie is unkind and inhumane. His parents, Tom Evans and Kate James, want him to undergo further treatment and operations for his condition.

Dr Martin Samuels, an expert in the ventilation of children, told Liverpool High Court: "I think the provision of continuing intensive care to sustain life when they may be suffering is not one that, as medical professionals, most would consider appropriate."

Around a dozen friends and members of Alfie's family, some wearing T-shirts bearing his picture and the words "Release Alfie Evans", shook their heads and muttered.

Mr Justice Hayden responded: "He [Dr Samuels] has saved more children's lives than you can imagine. In this court, he will be given respect." The hearing will continue today.

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