

# Alfie's Christian supporters reject 'bile' claims by judge

Frances Gibb Legal Editor

A Christian group representing the parents of Alfie Evans has hit back at "unfair" and "detrimental" judicial and media criticism.

The Christian Legal Centre has been acting for Tom Evans and Kate James since the beginning of April as they brought legal challenges to prevent their child's life support treatment being withdrawn at Alder Hey Children's Hospital in Liverpool.

Since Alfie's ventilator was switched off on Monday evening, Mr Evans, 21, and Ms James, 20, have had their attempts to take him to Italy rejected by the High Court and the Court of Appeal. They have since agreed to work with doctors in the hope of taking Alfie, aged 23 months, home.

Mr Justice Hayden, who ruled on Tuesday that it was not in the child's interests to take him to Italy, criticised the "malign hand" of Pavel Stroilov, a law student whom he described as a case worker for the Christian Legal Centre, after the court was told that he had "encouraged" Mr Evans to lodge a

private prosecution of hospital doctors, alleging murder. A witness statement from the father that the court was told had been prepared by Mr Stroilov was "littered with vituperation and bile, critical of those who have done so much to help Alfie", Mr Justice Hayden said.

The judge added that the witness statement included an expression of the father's belief that Alfie's condition was now "significantly better" than the courts had thought and that all court orders had been based on a false premise. However, the judge said: "The sad truth is that there has been no significant change, indeed no change at all."

Yesterday Andrea Williams, chief executive of the Christian Law Centre, said: "We reject the prejudicial and inflammatory comments made by Mr Justice Hayden. In recent days, in addition to significant support we have endured some media and judicial criticism. We consider this unfair and detrimental."

On Thursday Mr Evans pledged to work with Alder Hey on a plan to provide Alfie with the "dignity and comfort he needs".

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