

Toddler can receive blood treatment, High Court rules

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A two year-old boy with failing health can receive **blood treatment** despite the reluctance of his parents, the High Court has ruled.

In *An NHS Foundation Trust v T*, the youngster, referred to as 'Child T', had an abnormally low blood platelet (cell) count which doctors believed was related to problems with his bone marrow. As a result he had fallen ill and regularly required [hospital](#) treatment.

A haematologist (doctor specialising in blood disorders) concluded that T would require medical treatment for the foreseeable future "in order to prevent a **very serious deterioration** in his health".

But the likely use of "blood products" in this treatment had caused a dilemma for T's parents because they were practicing [Jehovah's Witnesses](#), a high profile Christian sect based in the United States which objects to blood transfusions and similar procedures on religious grounds.

High Court Judge Mr Justice Peter Jackson described the parents as:

"...**fully committed** to their son and to achieving the best outcome for him."

The clash between their religious beliefs and their desire to do their best for their son meant they could **neither consent to the treatment nor oppose it**, a position they explained in letters to the court. They asked for alternative forms of treatment to be considered.

The NHS Trust looking after the boy applied for a legal declaration that treatment with blood products would be lawful **despite** the parents' reluctance to consent.

Mr Justice Peter Jackson concluded that:

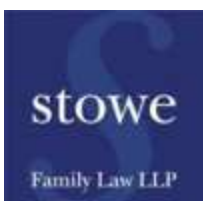
"I am in **no doubt at all**, having read the medical evidence and having considered the views of T's parents, that it is overwhelmingly in T's best interests for him to be able to receive this treatment in order for his health to be supported."

If the hospital were unable to administer the necessary treatment, there could be "**very serious** and possibly even fatal consequences as time went on", he explained.

In the circumstances it was necessary, the Judge said, for the court to make this decision rather than the parents. The resulting legal order would, however, specify that blood products would only be used "if there is **no clinically appropriate** alternative."

Read the full judgement [here](#).

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