



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on April 26, 2017

U.K. Denies Treatment to Baby, Won't Let Parents Take Him to U.S.

"I can't get my head round why we're not allowed [to] take our boy to get the treatment he so desperately needs," Londoner Chris Gard, father of a terminally ill eight-month-old, [told a morning news program](#). 

Gard need not be puzzled. The denial of treatment to those deemed not worthy of it is a natural outcome of socialized medicine, under which the United Kingdom has suffered since the end of World War II. What makes this case particularly infuriating, besides the fact that the victim is a baby, is that the government is actually prohibiting the parents from taking the child to the United States for treatment at no cost to taxpayers — and bluntly ordering the baby's death.

The infant, Charlie Gard, has an extremely rare genetic disorder called mitochondrial depletion syndrome. The condition causes muscle deterioration, brain damage, and seizures. Doctors claim it has also caused Charlie to go blind and deaf, though his parents dispute that. The life expectancy for children with the disease ranges from 3 months to 12 years after the onset of the disease, according to the National Institutes of Health.

Charlie's parents, Chris Gard and Connie Yates, located a doctor in the United States willing to try an experimental treatment called nucleoside bypass therapy on their son. If successful, the treatment would buy Charlie some time, not cure him, but it might allow him "to interact with others — to smile, to look at objects, to get to use his hands in a meaningful way to grab objects," the doctor [said](#). On the other hand, without the treatment Charlie will never improve and will surely die soon.

The treatment plus an air ambulance to fly Charlie to the United States will cost \$1.5 million. The Great Ormond Street Hospital, which is run by the National Health Service (NHS), refused to pay for it. Although the NHS would never admit it, it isn't hard to imagine that the steep price tag was the primary reason for that decision.

Undaunted, Gard and Yates set up a GoFundMe account to raise the necessary funds. In less than a month, they had more than they needed in donations from over 80,000 people, including celebrities. Then the real trouble began.

When Gard and Yates tried to remove Charlie — their own son, mind you — from the hospital so they could take him across the Atlantic, the hospital not only refused to release him but sought a court order making it official. On April 11, the British High Court acceded to the hospital's demands, issuing an order that both barred Charlie's parents from withdrawing him from the hospital and mandated that the hospital remove him from life support and allow him to die.

"Some people may ask why the court has any function in this process; why can the parents not make this decision on their own?" [wrote](#) Justice Nicholas Francis. "The answer is that, although the parents have parental responsibility, overriding control is vested in the court exercising its independent and objective judgment in the child's best interests."

In other words, in the U.K., parents have no say over life-and-death decisions regarding their children.



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As the sole supplier of healthcare, the state will make those decisions for them.

Indeed, a professor who had been involved in Charlie's care at the hospital admitted as much in court testimony. According to the [Telegraph](#), the American doctor willing to treat Charlie testified that if the boy had been in any American hospital, he would surely have been given the experimental treatment. The professor, however, said there were "cultural differences" between the United States and the U.K.

She said "if we don't consider something is in the child's best interest" then they would not do it, but "in America, provided parents have the money, the financial means to access care, doctors will do anything parents would like to be done regardless of what is happening to the child."

... When pushed on why the parents should not be given the chance to try and save him, no matter how slim his chances, the pediatric specialist said: "This is a treatment that could have theoretically been given here, but we don't think that it is the right thing for this child because of the suffering and extent of his neurological damage."

Of course, there is always the possibility that the treatment could succeed and greatly lessen Charlie's suffering. "One can wonder, cynically, if the court system ordered his death to avoid risking embarrassing the NHS should the treatment they denied actually work," observed [Justin Murray](#) in a piece for the Ludwig von Mises Institute.

The U.K. [Sun](#) reports that Gard, "who had tucked his dying son's toy monkey into the top pocket of his grey suit, cried 'no' and covered his face with his hands as he heard the judge's decision." Both parents, who insist Charlie is not in pain and suffering, told ITV's *This Morning* on April 18 that they could "barely eat or sleep" from worry over their son.

The parents have vowed to appeal the decision, and Charlie is being kept alive until all appeals have been exhausted.

In an April 9 Facebook post, Yates wrote:

Charlie we are so immensely proud of you and we hope that we have done you proud by standing by your side and never giving up despite everything we've had to face! We've never been so stressed in our lives but we'd do it all again in a heartbeat because YOU are worth every ounce of pain and every single tear! You're our baby and we are your parents and we will do ANYTHING for you! We've got the money, we've got our passports, we've got the Dr who's got the medication.... All you need is the chance. We won't give up on you because you have a rare disease, it's not your fault, you shouldn't have to die, I'm sorry this has happened to you, I wish I could take your place!! We love you! We will fight for you until the very end and we'll pray that we'll get to hold your warm hand forever.

Gard and Yates can't expect much help from the government, though. According to the [BBC](#), when their Member of Parliament asked the justice secretary on Tuesday to intervene to save Charlie's life, she was told that the hospital's "judgment ... should be respected."

Charlie's case also serves as a rebuke to those who insist that socialized medicine does not inevitably lead to death panels. "What we are now seeing in the UK," remarked Murray, is that "not only does the British Government have death panels, they display those death panels as a public court spectacle for all to see and are also in the business of child abduction and forced euthanasia to enforce the panel's decisions. No private hospital could ever hope to do the same thing that Great Ormond Street and the British High Court just did."



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For the sake of Charlie and the rest of humanity, the plug needs to be pulled on socialized medicine, not on an innocent baby.

Image of Gard family: YouTube video screenshot



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