



40 Years of Gillick: Legal and Clinical Reflections on Children as Decision-Makers

**Institute of Child Health & Wellbeing,
Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Liverpool**

**A collaboration between Alder Hey's Institute of
Child Health & Wellbeing and the School of Law & Social Justice**

About the Event

The landmark decision in *Gillick v West Norfolk and Wisbech Area Health Authority* transformed how young people participate in decisions about their own healthcare. Four decades on, *Gillick* remains central to clinical practice, legal argument, and broader debates about children's rights, autonomy, agency and privacy. Yet new challenges, from emerging clinical fields to evolving understandings of capacity and inequality, expose tensions in how the principle works on the ground. This one-day interdisciplinary event brings together legal scholars and clinicians from all career stages, practitioners, and young people to reflect on the legacy, limits and future direction of *Gillick* in contemporary clinical and legal practice. Through discussion-based sessions and collaborative exploration, the day aims to bridge socio-legal research with real-world practice, highlighting the barriers young people face in exercising meaningful autonomy over their health.

**Thursday 17
September
2026
10:30–17:00**

**Scan the QR
Code to
Register**



Key Themes

- The evolution of *Gillick* since 1985 and its role in contemporary healthcare
- How competence is understood by clinicians, legal professionals and young people
- A critical exploration of young people and refusal of treatment
- Challenges arising in areas such as vaccination, gender-affirming care, mental health, and treatment refusal
- Inequalities affecting children and young people's ability to exercise meaningful agency
- Integrating socio-legal research into clinical practice
- Identifying new directions for collaborative research and policy impact

Programme Overview

09.30– 10.00 Registration and Refreshments

10.00 – 10.15 Welcome and Introduction

Dr Ed Horowicz, Professor Helen Stalford, Professor Marie Fox

10.15– 10.45 What does Gillick Mean to Young People?

Reflections from Investing with Children

10.45 – 12.15

The Legacy of Gillick– Past, Present and Future – Chaired by Sir Mark Hedley

Keynotes with Q&A: 20 minute talk per speaker and 30 mins for Q&A

Lord Ian Burnett of Maldon– Former Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales

Professor John Tobin, Francine V McNiff Professor in Human Rights Law, University of Melbourne

Dr Liz Anderson Consultant in Sexual Health and Liverpool Lead for CSRH and Senior Nurse Colleague, Axess Sexual Health – Where it began, Gillick in Sexual Health

12.15 – 13.15 Lunch

Sessions 1–3 take the format of speakers addressing the topic in 10 min and then generating audience discussion. During each session we will develop a summary of issues and ideas of how we can situate socio legal research to benefit CYP and practitioners.

13.15 – 14.15 – Session 1: Dr Nico Brando (Chair)

Embedding Gillick in Practice: Perspectives from clinicians and legal professionals

- **Does Gillick facilitate a clear assessment for decision-making?**
- **Does Gillick just reflect clinical best interest assessments?**
- **What does a Children's Right's approach to analysing Gillick tell us?**

Dr Louisa Draper, Consultant in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Clinical Ethics Forum member, Alder Hey Hospital.

Ben Troke, Partner, Weightman's Solicitors

Professor Jo Bridgeman, University of Sussex

Professor Stephen Gilmore, University of Cambridge

14.15 – 14.30 Break and Refreshments

14.30 – 15.30 – Session 2: Dr Ed Horowicz (Chair)

- **How Should We Approach Young People's Refusal of Treatment?**
- **Can we reconcile Gillick with refusal with greater fairness?**
- **Do parental and court powers undermine Gillick when the decision is refusal?**
- **Can understanding Gillick through a relational assessment and decision-making lens better our approach to refusal?**

Helen Ingleson and Chloe Moran, Partners, Irwin Mitchell

Dr Kirsty Moreton, Associate Professor of Law, University of Birmingham

Dr Kiloran Metcalfe, Speciality Trainee in Paediatric Surgery and PhD candidate University of Manchester

15.30 – 15.45 Break and Refreshments

15.45 – 16.45 Session 3: David Taylor-Robinson (Chair)

Intersectionality and Vulnerabilities

- **How does Gillick intersect with religion, disability, gender, sexuality and socio-economic status?**
- **What are the challenges for Gillick in public health policy and practice?**
- **What are the challenges for Gillick and Neurodiverse CYP?**

Sue Daws- Organisational Immunisation Lead for Intra Health

Professor Aoife Daly

Lynsey Boggan - Clinical Lead for Neurodevelopmental Services Alder Hey Hospital and Jacqui Poynton - Associate Chief Nurse (Community and Mental Health)

16.45 – 17.00 Closing Remarks: Professor Helen Stalford

Closing the day and in particular thinking about co-produced and collaborative research going forward.

For more information, contact Dr Ed Horowicz—E.Horowicz@liverpool.ac.uk

Places are limited and allocated to ensure that the event encompasses legal, clinical and academic

A small number of bursaries are available to Postgraduate students, please register via the PG ticket type using your student email address.

This event has been generously funded and supported by the Socio Legal Studies Association Seminar Series 2026

