



JENNI THOMAS, CHARITY FOUNDER

Jenni Thomas OBE (left) founded the Child Bereavement Trust (now CBUK) in 1994, the

culmination of 20 years' work in the NHS. The charity supports families and educates professionals when a baby or child of any age dies or is dying, or when a child is facing bereavement.

The inspiration for the charity came from Jenni's decades working as a nurse listening to and learning from grieving families. Jenni was the NHS's first ever baby and child bereavement counsellor in the 1980s and became one of the UK's leading authorities on grief support and education. Her pioneering work in training health professionals, police and others involved in dealing with death remains the bedrock of CBUK's work.

In addition to being the charity's chief executive and president, Jenni has produced a number of books and films on loss and grief to support families and teach other professionals.

Her achievement at CBUK led to her being joint winner of the Nye Bevan lifetime achievement award for her services to the NHS in 2000. Julia Samuel attended Jenni's training courses and learned a lot from her. In 2001 Jenni served on the Retained Organs Commission, set up after the scandal of children's organs retained without parental permission. In 2002 she was awarded the OBE.

Throughout her time at the helm of CBUK, Jenni continued to work as an NHS bereavement counsellor. 'Without the NHS, there would be no CBUK,' she says.

Since leaving CBUK in 2009, Jenni has worked for bereavement charities the Angus Lawson Memorial Trust and Rosie's Rainbow Fund. Her website is jennithomas.com

■ *For more organisations that can help with bereavement, visit mailonline.co.uk/you*