

# CHERNOBYL CHILDREN'S PROJECT (UK)

## ПОДДЕРЖКА ДЕТЯМ БЕЛАРУСИ

### Gomel Children's Home Hospice Team



The founder of the Belarusian Children's Hospice, Anna Gorchakova, is a charismatic figure who introduced palliative care to Belarus. In 2000 she told us about a teenage girl living in a village who had been sent home after her hospital treatment for cancer failed. After a few days she was in such pain that her father put her on his horse and cart to take her to hospital. But after the long and bumpy journey, she died before she could receive the morphine she needed.

CCP realised that Hospice Care needed to be spread throughout Belarus, so we set up a team in Gomel. Our first doctor was haematologist Igor Isrov, followed by Olga Semeniako.

Since 2010 Irina Kalmanovich has been our doctor, working with a wonderful team of nurses and a psychologist, and supporting around 30 families.



Irina has worked in intensive care for more than 20 years and all the nurses also work in this department.

Sometimes the children are in the last stages of cancer. But more often they have a genetic



disorder which affects their breathing, their ability to swallow and they often suffer from frequent seizures. Life is very stressful for the parents, and regular visits from the doctor, nurse or psychologist from our team provide reassurance about the care of their child and a

much needed boost to their morale.

The team also organise occasional social activities for the mothers who have little chance to relax or socialise.

We funded the Medical Director of the Minsk Hospice to study Post Graduate Paediatric Palliative Medicine in Cardiff in Wales, and this enabled her to develop a programme of support which is now being rolled out across Belarus.

From 2017 the Health Department in Gomel has been paying part of the salaries of the nurses. And the wonderful 'Godel Technologies' has been paying for the rest of them.

