

CHERNOBYL CHILDREN'S PROJECT (UK)

ПОДДЕРЖКА ДЕТЯМ БЕЛАРУСИ

'The Mayflower' Respite Care Centre



FOR 50 children and young people with disabilities living in and around the town of Gomel in Belarus the Mayflower Centre has become their second home. And it holds a special place in the hearts of their parents, many of whom had never had a day's rest from caring for their profoundly disabled child before the Centre was established

After a request from Social Protection in Gomel, Chernobyl Children's Project (UK) worked during 2003/4 to create a spacious, attractive and well equipped Centre. And Natasha, the manager, and her staff put in all the finishing touches which have made the Mayflower Centre such a friendly and welcoming environment. It is wonderful to see the gentle and confident attitude of the staff,

and the affection they clearly feel for the children in their care

In September 2004 the Mayflower Centre was officially opened by the British Ambassador, Brian Bennett.

The Mayflower Centre was a joint project of CCP(UK) and the Social Protection Department of one of the districts of Gomel. The senior officials were so impressed with what they saw and heard at the Opening, that they urged other districts and regions to seek foreign partners who might help them create similar facilities. There still isn't another centre quite like Mayflower but there are many excellent day centres, and we have been told that our Centre was part of the inspiration for these.



The centre has six bedrooms, large play rooms, a sensory room, soft play area, dining room and well equipped kitchen. In the early years it was just children who stayed at Mayflower. But schools and educational centres for children have improved so much that since 2009 many of those who stay at Mayflower are young adults.

They are looked after by a team of nine carers, and a nurse. Natasha's staff also includes a cook, a secretary/receptionist, and a consultant doctor who comes twice a week to check on the children's health.

During the first few years CCP paid nearly all the costs of running the Centre. In 2008 the Local Authority took on the responsibility and started to provide the majority of the funding. CCP(UK) continued to provide the transport to take children and young people between their homes and Mayflower for several more years and then gave the Centre a minibus.



We also fund a get together at Mayflower twice a month for a group of young adults in wheelchairs, who live at home with their families. They have very little opportunity to get out so the weekly 'Search Club' meetings at Mayflower or outings to the park which we organise make a great difference to their lives.