

The Esplanade Hotel, Llandudno

On Thursday 26th of February 2015, Chairman Ian Coulter drove Matt, Rona and me the 218 miles from Dunstable to Llandudno in order to view a hotel which is capable of accommodating disabled people with care needs. The hotel had just been opened to which the smell of paint and the newly laid carpets testified.

The first thing that struck me as we drove along the esplanade was how long the front was and, more importantly, how flat it was and how easy it would be to manoeuvre a wheelchair without having to worry about humps and bumps. It is difficult to explain to people how small a hump or a bump can make a big difference as you travel along in your wheelchair. The nearest example I could give is to ask you to select a small pebble and put it in your shoe and keep it there for a week. As you walk along it is going to make you aware of its presence and cause you to say Golly Gosh or words to that effect!

The Esplanade is situated in a quiet location devoid of bright lights and the sound of the funfair. There is an array of shops not too far from the hotel. The hotel consists of three Victorian houses joined together providing 40 rooms which can cater for various sizes of groups. The shower rooms are able to cater for the needs of people with varying degrees of disability by providing ceiling tracking which enables people to be transferred from their wheelchairs on to the bed or into the shower with relative ease. The comfortable electric profile beds put the icing on the cake. These beds can be adjusted by remote control ensuring that people are made as comfortable as possible.

The hotel Manager, Teresa, and the Care manager, Lorna, faced a grilling from the four of us in order to assess as to whether

the hotel could meet the needs of our members. Among the topics discussed over a cup of tea, were the qualification and training of staff, storage of medication, dietary requirements and access to medical care (if needed), and entertainment. I am please to say that the answers we received put our minds at rest. I was struck by the commitment of these two ladies to provide a valued and memorable experience to all the guests.

We stayed at the hotel having dinner, bed and breakfast. The menu was varied and the food was of a high and enjoyable standard. It was interesting to hear Ian and Matt discussing how difficult they found shaving using mirrors set at wheelchair height. When I have stayed in some hotels I have had to stand on my toes in order to reach the mirror and, not being of steady hands, the name Sweeney Todd often came to mind!

We spoke to some guests about their experience of the service provided at the hotel. One couple, both in wheelchairs, spoke highly of the service they received and another couple, from Scotland, were planning on a return visit.

For the guests who require personal care, the care manager will discuss all the requirements with the guests before their arrival to ensure that care plans are in place to provide a seamless service. We can bring our own carers with us or the hotel can provide personal care which will cost £10 per half hour or £18 per hour. Two members of staff are on call during the night, not to provide personal care, but to deal with any emergency should it arise.

The company which runs the hotel is called Safehands Holidays. It has another hotel in Blackpool which is where the initial contact is made. In my contact with them I found them helpful and cooperative. The contact details are as follows:

Email: sales@safehandsholidays.com

Website: www.safehandsholidays.com

Booking Hotline: 0333 999 8888.

We will be taking a small party to The Esplanade Hotel in July and, if this visit is a success, we will consider taking all our members there in 2016. To undertake such a project would involve some serious fund raising. However, it will be well worth the effort if we can provide a once in a lifetime holiday, tailored to the specific needs of our members.