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Easter Kincaple

Bed and breakfast, St. Andrews, Fife

Easter Kincaple is set in a 750 acre estate just two miles from the centre of St. Andrews. The bed and breakfast is a working farm and has been in the Cuthill family for 120 years. Following renovation and restoration, it now contains a number of features to cater for guests with access requirements.

“We like to think that there is a bit of luxury in what we do although it is a basic type of hospitality,” says Lucy Cuthill, co-proprietor. “What we provide is an extension of who we are as a family – so the warmth and welcome is something that doesn’t require effort from us.”

The house consists mainly of three kingsize en-suite rooms, one of which is on the ground floor with accessibility facilities. “Our ground floor room has a wet room and it encompasses some simple adaptations – appropriately placed light sockets, large mirrors, rails in the wet room and a memory foam topped mattress – and these things were all easy and reasonably inexpensive to do,” says Lucy. “For me it’s nice to have something as obvious as a mirror where someone can see themselves; it’s simple but respectful.”

Facilities

For guests with access requirements, there are a range of features that would make Easter

Kincaple an excellent accommodation choice. The garden is on one level, so easy to manoeuvre around and the main hallway and the two public rooms are on one level too, with fairly wide doorways. The en-suite bedroom has a wet room, with rails in the shower area and around the WC. TVs and DVDs are at a suitable level and dining room tables allow plenty of clearance space underneath them if required.



“People with access requirements shouldn’t necessarily feel that they’re any different to anyone else, and this is something that is important to us,” comments Lucy. “We try to stay away from anything that would make an accessible room feel clinical; we like it to feel like a luxury break, not a care facility.”

In addition to the service she provides to her human guests, Lucy makes sure that any assistance dogs are catered for too. “It’s really important that assistance dogs feel as welcome as everyone else,” comments Lucy. “In the dining room and public rooms there is space for dogs to lie down and rest and outside they can be off the lead.”

Attitude

Lucy’s motivation to make sure that her accommodation is fit for those with access requirements grew out of personal experiences with people who had difficulties with mobility. “I’ve found it hard to source rooms near hospitals in situations where friends or family have had failing health; not just somewhere to stop off for a hospital appointment, but also to get away from it all,” she explains. “The cost involved in providing the accessible room was minimal and no different to the cost of any of our other rooms – it was just a different thought behind it. Now that it’s done, we will always have it to share.”

Easter Kincaple is a Category 1 in VisitScotland’s Accessible scheme, and Lucy values that more than any other awards her business has received. “Achieving five stars in VisitScotland’s Quality Assurance scheme was important to me, but the Category 1 Accessibility award was really what I was looking for. It wasn’t to compete with other businesses but rather to say ‘we can do this for you’. Quite often we’ll get business referrals from VisitScotland so I feel we really benefit from having that award.”

So would Lucy recommend engaging with the accessible market to other tourism providers? “Yes – all too often, the needs of the accessibility market are ignored,” she says. “I don’t think it’s intentional, I think people just need to be educated and made aware that it’s quite easy for them to provide a facility and not to be afraid of that; to embrace it and realise how easy it is for them to offer what we offer.” ●



Lucy’s top tips for making your business more accessible:

- “Contact VisitScotland to ask about the Accessibility Scheme.”
- “Look at what you can do to make improvements to your business. You may not be able to do everything but the small things can make a huge difference. Make minor changes that bring happiness to customers and business to you.”
- “Take advice that doesn’t cost anything. You can ask advice from people with different access requirements, they are the ones who can give the most constructive feedback.”
- “Research facilities that provide for those with accessibility requirements – take photos, go into bathrooms and then go home and think ‘I could do better than that and it wouldn’t cost me anything’.”
- “Be open and warm – sometimes guests with access requirements feel they are stepping into the unknown. For you it’s easier because you are in your own environment where you can simply be yourself. Offer the same warmth that you’d offer to any guest and show that you’re not intimidated or afraid.”

Find out more about Easter Kincaple on their website:
www.easterkincaple.com