

The target market for MindforYou is people living with dementia and their families who are currently living in the community who are/have been regular holiday goers. Our market constitutes of a combination of self funders , funding from benevolent funds such as Police Mutual Fund, in the future through local authority funding as an alternative to traditional respite and social prescribing.

People aged between 65 and 74 years spend almost one-fifth of their disposable income on recreation and culture. We note that people over 50 years of age account for well over half of UK spending on travel and tourism and this is projected to grow as a result of increased longevity. ABTA reports a growth in domestic holiday trends and that 40% of people over 50 spend more than £3,000 a year on holidays. This is now likely to increase further following the pandemic and the popularity of the “Staycation”

In October 2019, in reference to “Dementia Friendly Tourism” The Head of Business Support for Visit England, Ross Calladine, stated that “The value of this sector is expected to rise to £23 billion by 2020 presenting a great opportunity for tourism businesses to offer the warmest of welcomes to people with dementia” in reference to ‘Dementia-friendly’ tourism.

MindforYou believe the real potential of this market is yet to be fully realised and capitalised upon for personal, social, and economic returns. MindforYou’s focus is on addressing the existing gaps in service provision within mainstream travel, tourism, hospitality and leisure sectors perfectly positions us to enable people living with dementia to readily access and enjoy the same joy of holiday experiences as that of the general population, with dignity, confidence, and choice.

The key factor limiting our growth and the quality of the experience we can offer is the constant need to place deposits on suitable properties and take our chances on the open market to secure them. Even when we get them, we have to cross our fingers that properties are still in the suitable condition that we need them to be, to meet the varying needs of our holidaymakers and remove a source of anxiety about what they will find when they get there.

Many of the rental holiday properties we use cannot cater for all our potential guests. This is because they have not been designed to meet the needs of older adults or people with physical or mental disabilities. This is not the case with the Shires, we are able to accommodate all potential guests as it has been designed to accommodate people with physical and mental disabilities. Sadly, we have been unable to book The Shires in 2020 and 2021 because it has been fully booked. The development of an additional property which will accommodate more guests and incorporate the learnings for the development and use of The Shires will be something MindforYou will prebook in advance of its completion, as we did with the Shires.

I only wish more people were as forward thinking and inclusive as Gary in developing holiday properties to accommodate people with physical and mental disabilities and older adults. These properties provide organisations like ours and families the opportunity to provide that all important break for family carers and their loved ones they care for. These aren’t just holidays, these improve the health and wellbeing of everybody involved and also take the pressure off our health and social care system (published at the Dementia UK Congress 2019). Too often people reach crisis point because they haven’t had the correct support. More properties like the one proposed will stop this happening and give people the continued independence we all want and allow our health and social care to focus on the areas where only their help can make a difference.