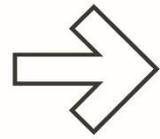


travel counsellors



Hi, my name is Nick Markham and I work as an independent travel agent with the company Travel Counsellors. I offer a bespoke free service to my customers who choose to book any travel packages with me.

Travel has always been a passion for me, having travelled worldwide from a young age. After my accident, which left me reliant on a wheelchair from the age of 21 years, I continued to travel the world independently.

However, though I was confident enough to continue to travel, I found that one of my biggest problems was trying to get travel agents to understand that my set of problems are unique to me.

They would still treat me as a 'disabled traveller' rather than Nick Markham a traveller with unique problems. This has led to me missing out on travel experiences as it limited the locations that were judged by the travel agent to be available to me. Instead of asking me my specific requirements, I would be advised when I had chosen certain hotels that they were not suitable for the disabled, when in fact when I contacted the hotels abroad myself, they were able to accommodate my needs.

Through my own personal experiences, I have knowledge of the problems that can face the disabled traveller and awareness that every disability is personal to the person affected. Due to this I decided to train to become a travel agent and offer a fully inclusive and personal service to all my clients. By joining the company Travel Counsellors, I have been able to realise this dream.

Having over 250 people in our (Travel Counsellor) head office in Manchester and over 1800 Travel counsellors throughout the world and International offices in 7 countries, this is the team I have who look after me so I can look after the client. The client also has access to our 24/7 Duty office who are there to help should the client require where ever they are in the World.

Since being part of Travel Counsellors I have undertaken further specialist training that allows me to open so many doors for people to explore the world, no matter what their disabilities maybe. Whether it by via land, sea or air, adventure or relaxation, it's your holiday so have it the way you want it.

When you have medical and/or emotional needs travel can seem impossible but I can help you. A crucial start point is to create a check-list to ensure you are being asked all the right questions by your travel organiser. And you should be armed with a list of important questions that you should be asking them.

QUESTIONS AS YOUR TRAVEL COUNSELLOR I NEED TO KNOW:

- Where would you like to go?
- When would you like to go and for how long?
- Best UK departure airport or cruise port for you?
- Who will be travelling (adults/children and their ages)
- Details of party member/s with additional requirements to include:
 - Sensory problems
 - Mental/Emotional needs
 - Nature of condition (e.g. amputee)
 - Details of any mobility aids to include
 - Prosthetics and how they may be carried if not worn during journey
 - Wheelchair make and model/height/length/width/weight
 - For powered wheelchairs – battery type and if Lithium-ion, its wattage per hour
 - Type of assistance you may require at the airport/cruise port/station. E.g. wheelchair, airport buggy, use of ambulift to aircraft door (to avoid steps), carry-on to seat using special chair designed to access aircraft aisle
 - Boarding and in-flight requirements – aisle chair/cabin class
 - Accommodation requirements – villa/hotel/apartment/cruise cabin
 - Bathroom requirements – wet-room/grab rails/bath with seat etc.
 - Mobility aids? Hoist/profiling bed/shower chair?
 - Any additional requirements that I should know about?

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM ME:

- You will always be able to speak with just me during the planning and booking process
- All your money will be 100% financially protected
- I will provide you with 24/7 support whilst away

YOUR OWN RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Inoculations - Check with your GP
- Acquiring relevant visas and travel authorisations - but I will support and advise you with this
- Ensuring your passport is valid for chosen destination

Lots to do, but with a world of exciting travel opportunities just waiting to be explored, your planning and preparations will ensure you have the wonderful holiday you deserve. And as a travel professional ready and waiting to provide you with the perfect holiday that meets your travel dreams and ambitions and of course, your specific access and mobility requirements, please do not hesitate to contact me on

Here are a few weblinks and support services that are available to you:-

1. Tryb4uFly is a service that QEF Mobility Services provide helping those with hidden & physical disabilities access air travel. They offer services for the potential traveller such as:-

- A realistic cabin assessments to trial equipment and discuss your flight
- Practical advice for flying with a disability
- Equipment hire
- Public events at UK airports

The charity has 3 sites to experience Tryb4uFly within England; Carshalton in Surrey, The William Merritt Disabled Living Centre in Leeds and RDAC in Birmingham.

Check out their extremely informative webpage that gives advice on the assessment, hiring of equipment and general guidance and information to make your travel planning easier

www.qef.org.uk/accessibleaviation

2. www.seatguru.com - this website features aircraft seat maps, seat reviews, and a colour-coded system to identify superior and substandard airline seats as reported by the public users.

3. AIRLINES & AIRPORTS WEBSITES - There is a wealth of information on airlines and the airports own websites to help in finding information in ensuring that your client's needs are catered for. Airlines have the aircraft seat information and their own specialist disability contact details to discuss your client's needs. Also, the airport websites have good information for the disabled traveller. Such as, maps of the airport and their own policies and helpful guides on hidden disabilities. Check out Gatwick's Hidden Disabilities website for an example of what can be found on the UK's airports own sites;
<https://www.gatwickairport.com/at-the-airport/passenger-services/special-assistance/hidden-disabilities/>
4. <https://www.autism.org.uk/about/family-life/holidays-trips/preparation.aspx> - This site gives travel advice

Tel No:- 01754 867980 or 07475 745999

Email - nick.markham@travelcounsellors.com

My webpage is www.travelcounsellors.com/nick.markham

And I post daily on my business facebook page about all things travel -
<https://www.facebook.com/NickMarkhamTC/>

