

Claire Sharpe

Lecturer in Care of the Individual with a Spinal Injury

Quality PA training is not only essential for the wellbeing of Origin clients it is also essential in attracting and retaining the best PAs – for trainer Claire it's actually more than that: 'Seeing the development of PAs, their growth in confidence, those lightbulb moments when everything they have learnt just slots into place and they become at one with their role, those are the very human, golden moments of Origin training'.

Does your new involvement with both induction and refresher training have any impact on the bigger picture of Origin training?

“ I'm very enthusiastic about the opportunity to see how PAs develop throughout their career at Origin and how we can develop the PA role.

Previously, once induction was complete I rarely saw PAs once they commenced their role and was often left wondering how some of the more nervous or self-doubting trainees had progressed. Now I'm greeted at refresher training by confident, knowledgeable and polished PAs, enthusiastic about how well their initial training had prepared them. 😊 ”

How do you manage to make the training suit such a wide range of PA backgrounds, experience levels and abilities?

“ Our intensive training course is developed to meet our client's needs and whilst we have to cover topics based on the standards of the Care Certificate and CQC demands, we welcome and listen to clients' feedback and try to adapt where we can. We have long days and a lot to get through (interspersed with a very pleasant lunch and we are never far from treats and goodies to nibble to keep energy levels high!). Annual refresher training is mandatory and highly structured with a different focus each year – perhaps food safety, handling medications, first aid etc. as well as the opportunity to discuss topical issues or areas that may be causing concern for individual PAs or topical issues. Sharing solutions on the refresher courses is a highlight for PAs who can learn so much from the experiences of others. As can I! It also means that I can also add this 'coal face' practicality into the Origin training, making our training even more real. ”

Are you Origin's only trainer?

“ Origin training is a team effort, with Senior PA, Michael Carr, Senior Care Manager and Head of Training, Jill Jackson, Origin directors, myself and a myriad of Origin care service users working together to deliver 1st class training for all PAs.

Induction training is undertaken at L&M college in Lancaster, with refresher training taking place at Origin HQ, so I now work more from the Origin office, in Lancaster, which I love as I feel even more part of a team. ”



NEWS

ORIGIN

DISCOVERING

VALENCIA

Teacher, Linda Liebenberg and husband Jacques had such a great holiday in Valencia, Spain, in June, they wanted to share its highlights with others seeking accessible Mediterranean adventures. With some planning and being prepared to react quickly to the situations that inevitably arise when travelling, the couple found Valencia a fabulous holiday destination.



'Let's deal with the only negative, first! The flight with Easy Jet was fine but as we arrived on Sunday evening it was difficult to find a wheelchair accessible taxi. We thought we may end up having to transfer from our wheelchairs and use two separate taxis. With help from my PA, who speaks some Spanish we managed to resolve the problem – arriving in a taxi (as planned) able to carry me in my chair and Jacques transferred to a seat. To avoid any repeat problems we pre-booked our return journey with the same taxi! You may want to organise your transport from the airport in advance though!!!

Within pushing distance of the hotel was the Ciutat de les Arts i les Ciències, an impressive collection of futuristic buildings which was definitely one of the highlights of the trip.

We spent a day there and only went into the oceanarium but it also includes a science museum, IMAX, opera house, events centre and landscaped promenade. It was all accessible and great fun.

The lovely beach, just a 20 minute bus ride away from the bus stop near the hotel had fabulous restaurants by a long, wide promenade running alongside the beach. With wooden ramps down from the promenade it was possible to get onto the sand but not to the water's edge, without assistance. We had more than one meal here of amazing fresh local seafood and tried traditional Valencian paella.

The reliable and cheap bus service in Valencia is great for getting around and with 2 wheelchair spaces per bus (which is more than we get on buses in London) and friendly drivers to



help with the ramps, we used them a few times to get around.

Other days we spend in Valencia's old town (a 20 minute bus ride away) where we followed a route through the town looking at all the beautiful old buildings, squares, markets and cathedral. If you visit the cathedral do not be put off by the steps leading up to the main entrance of the building – there is a side entrance with a ramp. A beautiful building and well worth the effort.

We adopted the Spanish tradition of a long, leisurely, late lunch and then after all our sightseeing bought food from local supermarkets to enjoy with a glass of wine back at the hotel in the evening. We made the unexpected discovery of a great American diner that served local beers, mouth-watering ribs (a favourite of Jacques') and made fabulous, fresh guacamole at the table. A delicious culinary journey.

