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Exploring Accessible and Inclusive Practices in Hospitality and Tourism through Experiential Learning

Accessibility in tourism and hospitality encompasses offering barrier-free and inclusive services and facilities for everyone (Buhalis & Darcy, 2011; Lo Bianco, 2021). Against this backdrop, this proposal explores the integration of accessibility and inclusivity into hospitality and tourism through experiential learning, featuring a visit to The Milner York. Under the Work-Related Experiential Learning (WREL) framework at York St John University, this field trip served as a springboard for broader critical inquiry into inclusive service design, enabling students to connect theoretical concepts with real-world practices to deepen their awareness and understanding of accessibility and inclusivity as a core dimension of social impact.

The Milner York, a heritage hotel located next to the York Railway Station, has demonstrated a strong commitment to accessible and inclusive hospitality practices by offering services that meet the needs of guests with physical, sensory and/or hidden disabilities (The Milner York, n.d.). According to their Accessibility Statement, The Milner York offers accessible ensuite rooms and facilities with adjoining rooms for carers and installs assistive tools such as pullcord style alarms, dropdown rails and visual alarms in public areas as well as adopts assistive technology such as vibrating pillows for guests with hearing impairments (The Milner York, n.d.).

Building on this case study, the presentation will explore a wider range of assistive technologies being adopted across the tourism and hospitality industry. Through reflective student engagement and real-world examples, this session illustrates how experiential learning can cultivate socially conscious hospitality and tourism professionals who are prepared to innovate for accessibility and inclusivity.

References

- Buhalis, D., & Darcy, S. (Eds.). (2011). *Accessible tourism: Concepts and issues*. Channel View Publications, Bristol.
- Lo Bianco, B. (2021). For a Responsible, Sustainable and Inclusive Tourism. In *Tourism in the Mediterranean Sea: An Italian Perspective* (pp. 185-197). Emerald Publishing Limited.

The Milner York. (n.d.). Accessibility Statement. Retrieved April 23, 2025, from <https://www.themilneryork.com/accessibility-statement>.