

Group of adults with learning disabilities banned from Butlins UK, 'for intimidating families with young children'

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A group of people with learning disabilities were left shocked after being turned away from their summer holiday and told their presence was 'intimidating' to families with young children'.

The party of 26 along with ten carers were planning a summer stay at Butlins Holiday Camp in Skegness as they have for the last 19 years.

But the group from Firth Park, Sheffield, have had their trip cancelled by camp bosses.

Dream over: The Butlins Holiday Camp in Skegness, where holiday-makers are seen enjoying the pool.

Butlins say the group of 26 people looked after by 10 carers has simply grown too large - and they would still be happy to take them in two batches.

But the mother of one of the club members says the issue has never been raised before and that for many of them it is their only chance of a holiday.

Christina Staniland, 86, said her 59-year-old son Gary, who has Down's Syndrome, has been on the trip for the last five years.

She said at her home in Longley, Sheffield : It is the highlight of his year. They all have a lovely time and he can't wait to go. He wishes he could go every week.

This year everyone has paid their money and booked the coaches. When the club members were told they couldn't go this year they became very upset and some were crying.

Some of them never go on any other holiday and all they talk about from one week to the next is Butlins.

The managers told us they hadn't got enough staff and that people find the group intimidating, but I think it is a case of discrimination.

Accommodation: This is where the group would have been staying at Butlins in Skegness if they embarked on their holiday.

Mrs Staniland said the claim was that children were intimidated, but last September when the group, organised by Sheffield Futures, went there were very few families with children on holiday.

She said: The holiday is also important for the club members families - as a carer the week gives me a welcome break too.

A spokeswoman for Butlins said the Skegness resort had welcomed groups of adults from the Milan Centre for many years.

She added: The group size has been growing in recent years and has hit 36 this year. Our resorts are very family-focused and our terms and conditions specify that large adult-only groups are accepted at the resort director's discretion.

During term time we have large numbers of tots and toddlers on our family breaks and feedback from our guests shows that the children on these breaks often find large all-adult groups very intimidating.

This information combined with a growing group size from the Milan Centre means that we are unable to accept this group unless they come in two smaller groups on different breaks.

Mencap , a charity based in the UK that works with people with learning disabilities, has said that Butlins' actions are 'completely unacceptable'.

Mencap's head of campaigns and policy, David Congdon, said: 'It is completely unacceptable for Butlins to suddenly turn away a group of adults with a learning disability who had booked to stay at their Skegness holiday camp, especially as they had been holidaying there for the last 19 years.'

'They were obviously really looking forward to their annual holiday and for many this would be their only holiday this year.

'We believe that Butlins refusal to accommodate them on the grounds that large groups of adults intimidate young children is discrimination.

'We sincerely doubt that Butlins would have treated any other groups of adults in the same way, such as a group of older people or a hen party.

LISA Comment: In Australia, those who are frequently denied a holiday for years, are those with high support needs living in supported accommodation group homes or similar. Especially, those group homes where government is the direct service provider. This is despite government department care policies, standards and values which state all residents of such homes should have a regular holiday.

Extra 1: Check-out some interesting aspects of questionable service provision on the "[LISA Forum](#)". Feel free to post to the forum page by registering, under a covert user name, on the left side of the forum page, under "Create an account". There will then be a short delay whilst we approve your registration.

Extra 2: LISA Inc AGM: All welcome, but space limited. So please RSVP by 1 August. AGM details on www.lisainc.com.au

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NOTE: We are always interested in feedback and information; general, specific, good or bad. If you wish anonymously: Our mail address is, 73 Nepean Street, Watsonia, 3087