



A Parent Carers Story

Another Difficult Decision (Part 2) – An update on Life at College during a Pandemic

I visited Owen at his residential college in Wales on the 21st October, after a difficult few weeks which has included both his support staff and him testing positive for Covid 19. We had heard 11 days previously that Owen had tested positive, which not unsurprisingly scared us to death. Luckily, he has been asymptomatic, no temperature or cough, but that didn't stop us ringing to check his temperature every day! Coleg Elydir were great however, they kept us up to date on what was happening and never once sounded fed-up with our regular calls. The hardest part has been Owen and the other young people he lives with, having to cope with spending most of each day isolating in their rooms. Owen was bored and occasionally frustrated, so we chatted regularly over 'WhatsApp' and did lots of video calls. In fact, the positive from this experience has been seeing just how well he can communicate with us when he hasn't got better things to do!!

He finished his isolation period on the 20th October, and we started to feel that we could breathe again, when the Welsh Government announced a lock down starting on Friday 23rd October. I had been promising Owen that I would visit him as soon as I could, so I spoke to the Coleg Head, who agreed that I could visit before the lock down started, because he recognised that it was important for Owen's wellbeing (not to mention mine). The Coleg site was still in lockdown to protect residents, so I picked him up at lunch time and we had lunch together off site.

It was such a relief to see him in person and to see how happy and well he was. We are so grateful for how well he was looked after by the support staff at Coleg Elydir and the care and understanding they showed towards us. Inevitably we have questioned our decision about Owen returning to Coleg, but as they say hindsight is a great thing. It has however been valuable for us to see that we can trust others to care for Owen, even when things don't quite go to plan.

Sarah

