



Hospitality with a heart



Emma Rathbone only recently assumed the role of general manager at **Battersea Place Retirement Village** but already she has been struck by the sense of community spirit there.

“The staff and residents make my job so worthwhile”, she says. “Prior to coming here, I worked in tourism and hospitality and I have to say that at Battersea Place we’re offering hospitality with a heart. In our retirement village we have a swimming pool, gym, hairdressing salon and all of the facilities you’d associate with a five-star hotel.

“We also run a variety of social events, there is a cinema on site and we have a live stream with the Royal Opera House. Essentially, our aim is to help people over the age of 65 to enjoy an independent lifestyle and ensure they have a great quality of life.”

Battersea Place is one of three UK-based retirement villages within the LifeCare Residences group, an internationally renowned operator with more than 30 years’ experience of running high-quality retirement communities, first in New Zealand and then in the UK.

Battersea offers one, two and three-bedroom apartments in a secure, social setting with an array of five-star facilities including a chef-led restaurant, concierge, chauffeur service, pool and cinema. It’s conveniently located opposite Battersea Park’s 200 acres of tranquil parkland, with Chelsea a short stroll over the bridge and the cultural landmarks

of South Kensington just minutes away by car. Domiciliary care is offered for people in their own homes, as well as emergency, round-the-clock care for those who need it.

Emma oversees the work of 100 staff at Battersea Place, a challenge that she relishes.

“I have a good management team that works with me – and a great head chef,” she says. “Every day is different, which is why I enjoy working here. Some of the residents have some fantastic stories to tell about their lives, which I really enjoy listening to.”

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“We try to help our residents in different ways. They benefit from a fixed service charge that never goes up during the duration of their stay. This gives them security and peace of mind that they won’t face unexpected price increases”

Originally from Cheshire, Emma, grew up there and studied tourism and hospitality at college before completing a tourism management degree in Edinburgh. After graduating she soon landed a job as a hotel manager in Edinburgh and “loved it”.

In 2005 she got the chance to move to London and worked in several hotels, including a stint as assistant food and beverage manager at Marriott International in Melbourne, Australia. That trip down under gave her the travelling bug so she took time out from her career to “fulfil a lifelong dream”, sampling the cultures of New Zealand, India, China, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam.

In 2011 she returned to London to resume her career in tourism and hospitality and was eventually handpicked for a top-level role at the prestigious Grosvenor Hotel in Victoria.

“I enjoyed my time there but I live in Wandsworth and wanted to find something closer to home,” she says.

“The job at Battersea Place came up so it was ideal for me, both on a personal and professional front.”

Emma’s primary aim is to keep residents happy and continue offering the five-star service for which Battersea Place is now renowned.

“We want to keep things fresh and up-to-date,” she says. “For example, we may introduce new food menus and activities, and bring in experts who can chat to residents on a range of interesting subjects. We’re constantly seeking feedback from residents to find out what they want.

“We’re also keen to forge more connections with businesses in Wandsworth. We already use local suppliers and we’re happy to support the local community wherever possible.

“There’s a big demand for communities like ours; we’re nearly at full capacity at the moment. This demand is likely to increase as the population gets older and people live longer. It’s important that they enjoy their later years and I’d like to think we can play a part in helping them to achieve this.”

For further details visit
www.batterseaplace.co.uk

Emma Rathbone the inside story:

Favourite food? Blue cheese!

Favourite tipple? Gin and slimline tonic with fresh lime.

Favourite holiday? A walking holiday in the mountains of New Zealand.

Describe your family life? I have lots of nieces and nephews, a puppy that’s yet to be named, two sisters (I am a twin) and a brother.

How do you spend your downtime? Enjoying the food scene in London, walking the rolling hills of Cheshire and exploring all of the hidden gems that Wandsworth has to offer.

What are your key strengths as a manager? I’m a good communicator and lead from the front. I’m also very hands on and good under pressure.

And your limitations? I find that there’s never enough time in a day.

Best thing about doing business in the borough? Supporting the local community. We use local suppliers for facilities support, newspapers, food and much more.

Famous person you’d most like to spend dinner with? Sean Connery – I mean, who wouldn’t!

Most interesting fact about yourself? I held a joint world record for the longest netball match ever played with my former netball team.