

# **ABZ Accessibility Forum**

**Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025, 10am**

## **Present**

Andrea Barclay-Scarry	Co-Chair, Aberdeen Access Forum & AIACC Representative
Hussein Patwa	Co-Chair, Aberdeen Access Forum & Disability Equity Partnership
Kevin Douglas	AIAL, Terminal Operations Manager
Gemma Mason	AIAL, Airport Support Coordinator
Michelle Baxter	ABM, Operations Director North
Manoj Chellingi	ABM, Manager
Stan Flett	Aberdeen Action on Disability
Carolynne Fishburn	Aberdeenshire Council
Amanda Foster	Airport User
Carolyn Wilson-Smith	Airport User
Pamela Munro	Airport User
Vic Baxter	Airport User
Mags Corbett	AlzScot
Emily Kilby	CAA
Sam Reid	Deaf Action
Carol Kennedy	Breakthrough1d
Maureen Morrison	Spinal Injuries Scotland
Katrina Michie	Shopmobility Aberdeen
Gary Laing	Young Onset Parkinson's

## **Apologies**

Samantha Saunders	ABM, Head of Assisted Services
Jacqui Sibbald	IA (Ileostomy and Internal Pouch Association)
Judith Forbes	NHS Grampian, Orkney & Shetland discharge nurse.
Joanna Martin	Spinal Injuries Scotland
Phionna McInnes	Wee Too

## **Agenda**

- Co-chair – Welcome, introductions – Andrea
- Apologies – Gemma
- Approval of Previous Minutes – Andrea
- Standing Items from previous meetings – Andrea
- NHS Forum Update – Andrea / Kevin
- Airport Update – Kevin
  - Passenger Growth 2024
  - How Assistance Service Performance is measured – Results 2024
  - Avtech
  - Salesforce
  - Survey
  - Considerations for the Accessibility Forum
  - Sunflower Extra
  - Customer Identification Tags
  - Service Provider ABM Update – Michelle/Manoj
- Member Travels / Feedback - All
- Member and Organisation Updates – All
- Questions and Any Other Business – All
- Closing Remarks – Andrea

### **Co-chair – Welcome, introductions – Andrea**

A Barclay Scarry welcomed all to the ABZ Accessibility Forum and asked everyone, whether online or in the room to introduce themselves.

### **Apologies – Gemma**

G Mason provided a summary of the apologies list.

### **Approval of Previous Minutes – Andrea**

A Barclay Scarry asked the group for feedback from the previous ABZ Accessibility Forum minutes. There were no queries raised, or corrections required, and the minutes were approved.

It was agreed that for future meetings participants would benefit from receiving the presentation in advance.

### **Standing Items from previous meetings – Andrea**

The following outstanding actions from the previous the ABZ Accessibility Forum were discussed.

#### Sighted Guiding Training and Guide Dog Training

A Barclay Scarry confirmed that this will take place on 23<sup>rd</sup> May.

#### ABZ Accessibility Forum Recruitment Drive / CLAN

K Douglas stated that there has been a positive response to request for new members to join the ABZ Access Forum.

A Barclay Scarry has reached out to CLAN and at their next meeting will invite a member to join either the ABZ Accessibility Forum or NHS Forum.

#### White Line Steps

In Progress – The painting of white lines along top of the steps at the main entrance is expected to take place in summer 2025 and the works will be consolidated as part of other ground works taking place around AIAL.

#### Wheelchair accessible kerbing

Complete - K Douglas to request feedback from V Baxter.

### Image Description / Alternative Text to AIAL Social Media Posts.

In progress – K Douglas to provide update.

H Patwa offered beta testing assistance and can provide feedback once the image description is in place.

### CAA Airport Accessibility Chairperson's Forum

The Co-chairs recently attended the first meeting for airport accessibility forum chairpersons with the CAA. H Patwa briefed the forum of meeting and advised it is helpful to have a platform to share knowledge with others and is keen to see how the group develops.

E Kilby commented, a few of the same topics were raised by several of the access chairs. The minutes/notes are being finalised and will be issued shortly to the Co-chairs in due course.

### **NHS Forum Update – Andrea / Kevin**

K Douglas provided an update on the NHS Forum, which is scheduled to take place twice a year and provided an overview of attendees both NHS Orkney and Shetland, Loganair, ABM and Skytanking. Currently canvassing the members regarding the next meeting date which is hoped to be late April or early May.

### **Airport Update – Kevin**

An update on passenger growth showed that in 2024, Special Assistance passengers increased 26% compared to 2023. In 2025 YTD, increase has been 48% in January, 25% in February and 40% in March compared to 2024.

It's a common trend that many airports experiencing and the growth could possibly be due to the increased confidence to travel.

H Patwa asked if support is provided by the airlines related to special assistance notifications? K Douglas advised that airlines are obliged to pre-notify 36hrs hours in advance where possible, with passengers notifying airlines 48hrs prior.

It was queried how the airlines finance aiding passenger assistance at each airport? K Douglas advised this isn't a chargeable service however the costs are recovered by a small charge being applied to the airlines for all departing passengers.

K Douglas provided the forum with a brief overview of how the service performance is measured at Aberdeen International Airport (and at other UK airports) and provided an overview of the 2024 results.

#### AvTech system.

This system is used for managing PRM operations and through a handheld device carried by the Agent it schedules and allocates tasks to the Assistance Team for meeting arriving and departing passengers requiring special assistance.

#### Salesforce

An overview on the feedback summary for 2024 stated there were 7 complaints and 4 compliments relating to special assistance. It was highlighted that there were no trends recorded, and the complaints were specific to the person or the situation.

K Douglas thanked C Wilson-Smith for sharing feedback on personal experiences while travelling with an electric mobility aid (EMA) which can be very challenging at times.

K Michie, advised that temporary wheelchairs for both manual and powered wheelchairs can be provided by Shopmobility Aberdeen.

M Corbett queried if verbal compliments were being recorded? K Douglas advised it would be beneficial and will be discussed further with M Chellingi.

#### Survey

AIAL use the Survey Monkey Tool to send out surveys to request feedback from passengers who have used the special Assistance service at Aberdeen Airport. Permission is given by the passenger to contact them prior to sending out the survey.

Feedback can be provided by completing the CAA (Civil Aviation Authority) passenger survey on quality of assistance provided to disabled and less mobile passengers.

The forum then proceeded to discuss survey questions and were informed of the response figures.

K Douglas to review questionnaire and look at re-issuing with fewer questions if possible.

A Barclay Scarry asked how the survey results are comparable with other airports?  
E Kilby to advise.

An update on pre-booked assistance confirmed AIAL continues to meet all targets on both arriving and departing waiting times for PRM passengers throughout 2025.

The pre-booking of assistance is extremely beneficial as it allows the PRM team to plan and ensure sufficient resource is in place.

A question was raised as to whether assistance is provided from the bus stop located outside the main terminal building. K Douglas answered that assistance is available and it can be arranged by either phoning PRM in advance or using the yellow phones located at the designated help points located at the short stay carpark and the drop off forecourt. Seating is provided beside the forecourt telephones while waiting for assistance to arrive.

H Patwa asked if there was a plan to re-introduce the bus link from Dyce railway station to the airport? K Douglas remarked that there are discussions and updates will be provided at a future forum meeting.

### **Considerations for the Accessibility Forum**

K Douglas provided an overview and update on the considerations for the accessibility Forum

- Reviewing Quality Standards.
- Providing advice on the accessibility of planned new terminals or refurbishment of old terminal buildings and advice on the accessibility of facilities, equipment and service.
- Awarding contracts to service providers.
- Training programmes.
- Designating points of arrival and departure.
- Practical inspections of airport services.
- Survey of Accessibility Forum Members

### **Training programmes**

The forum was presented with a brief overview of the Aviation Accessibility Taskforce, which was led by Baroness Tanni Grey Thompson. The taskforce aims to eliminate barriers to air travel for disabled people and aims to establish industry-wide practices. The final report is to be submitted to the government by June 2025. K Douglas will provide updates once available.

### Awarding contracts to service providers.

In future the forum will be updated on any service provider tenders or changes.

### Change of designated arrival or departure points

There are currently no plans to change the Designated points of arrival and departure however the Forum would be made aware and consulted

### Practical inspections of airport services

A terminal tour for the ABZ Accessibility Forum members is planned for late 2025. More information to follow.

### **Sunflower Extra**

The forum was notified about the “Sunflower Extra” scheme, which is a digital version of the sunflower card, which aims to make it even easier for people with non-visible disabilities to communicate the support they need.

Follow the link to find out more information - [Introducing Sunflower Extra](#)

### **Customer Identification Tags**

It was brought to the forums attention that there is a purple ReUnite identification tag which is attached to the person’s clothing or belongings. These tags indicate that the person may be vulnerable with non-visible conditions and may require assistance reuniting with friends or family.

K Douglas noted this identification tag isn’t issued by ABZ however supported by some organisations.

M Baxter commented that ABM hasn’t experienced passengers wearing the identification tags but is aware of the tags through social media. Reunite are not travel specific and designed to worn while at the supermarket etc.

### **Service Provider ABM Update – Michelle/Manoj**

M Baxter provided with an update on ABM operations and is working with K Douglas regarding the summer 2025 schedule to ensure that ABM continue to meet the passenger’s needs.

ABM have relaunched initiative “Positive Pathways” which encourages teams to go the extra mile and collect all 6 of the company values symbols - Respect, Integrity, Collaboration, Innovation, Excellence, and Trust.

M Baxter gave thanks to Manoj and the team reference the flexibility shown to ensure that performance and standards are achieved.

A Barclay Scarry queried if there is currently a full complement of PRM staff. M Chellingi, confirmed yes and there are daily meetings to discuss to ensure appropriate resource is available.

### **Member Travels / Feedback – All**

A Barclay-Scarry opened the forum to members to discuss their recent travel experiences and provide any feedback.

### **Member and Organisation Updates – All**

C Kennedy thanked K Douglas for the overview of Av-Tech and advised that feedback has been received from type 1 diabetics that there have been instances of their equipment being damaged while going through the body scanners. It was requested if additional training could be provided to security staff which will provide more understanding on how to handle devices used by diabetics. K Douglas to investigate and contact Carol.

M Chellingi stated there is an option to add additional information to Av-Tech and passengers can email in advance to advise of equipment.

In addition, M Baxter advised there is an App which is currently in early development which can provide a “travel passport” and the passenger can add little or as much information as required. The focus area being nonvisible disabilities and asking the right questions without assumptions or awkward questions in public situations.

C Kennedy offered for a member from the community engagement team to contact M Baxter to provide support as required.

K Douglas advised he will join the next disability awareness training course provided to security staff at Aberdeen Airport to establish if the content requires a review and updating.

M Baxter advised there is an accredited training course used at ABM and will share the training package with K Douglas.

The forum agreed it would be beneficial for a representative from ICTS to attend the next Accessibility Forum. K Douglas to send out invite.



G Laing highlighted that National Parkinsons day is on 11<sup>th</sup> April and provided leaflets to be on passed to airport staff with the aim to increase awareness.

P Munro commented that it was a struggle to locate disabled parking in the multi-storey carpark. K Douglas to review and check signage.

### **Questions and Any Other Business – All**

C Wilson-Smith thanked the forum for the invite and looks forward to attending future meetings. Additionally, explaining the importance of identifying pressure points on a passenger's journey and how they are treated as there is big inconsistencies at each airport.

K Michie thanked everyone for an interesting meeting.

This was the first meeting for M Morrison and thanked the co-chairs for the invite.

### **Closing Remarks – Andrea**

Proposed date for next Access Aberdeen Forum is October 2025, invites to follow.

K Douglas extended thanks to all attendees and sharing their travel experiences.

No further comments, meeting was closed by A Barclay Scarry.