

Accessibility Forum Airport Tour Report – 20 May 2026

Overview

The Accessibility Forum undertook a tour of the airport to provide members with an opportunity to review the passenger journey, discuss accessibility-related matters, and share experiences and feedback. The event generated positive engagement, with attendees contributing valuable insights based on their personal travel experiences.

Attendance

A total of **nine forum members attended** the tour. Apologies were received from **eight members**.

In addition, three colleagues from NHS Orkney and Shetland were unable to attend. One regular forum member who is an Electric Mobility Aid (EMA) user and lives in Orkney was also unable to attend. However, she has contributed feedback and input at previous main forum meetings.

Representation

The attendees represented a broad range of organisations and disabilities, including:

- Young Onset Parkinson's
- Deaf Action
- Two visually impaired members, including one guide dog user
- One wheelchair user
- One blind attendee
- NHS Discharge Nurse
- NESTRANS (Regional Transport Partnership for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire)
- Representative from the local travel trade
- Independent traveller with previous experience working with guide dog users
- ABM Accessibility Service Provider Manager and Director

The following organisations were unable to attend on this occasion but are regular contributors to the main forum:

- Breakthrough T1D
- Spinal Injuries Scotland
- Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations (ACVO)
- Aberdeen Action on Disability

Given the range of disabilities represented, attendees were supported throughout the tour by the Accessibility Manager and four colleagues. This enabled valuable one-to-one conversations and provided opportunities to answer individual questions relating to specific needs and travel experiences.

Tour Discussions and Key Topics

Assisted Travel Reception

The tour began at the Assisted Travel Reception where discussions focused on:

- The equipment used by the Assisted Travel Team.
- The number of wheelchairs available.
- The location and use of help points within the airport car parks.
- The continued effectiveness and use of Sunflower Lanyards, including whether they may be subject to misuse.

Check-in Facilities

At the check-in area, attendees discussed:

- The operation of self-service bag drop facilities.
- Availability of staffed check-in desks for passengers requiring assisted travel services.
- Assistance available from the Assisted Travel Team with check-in formalities.
- The importance of pre-booking assistance with the airline to ensure support throughout the entire journey.

Security Screening

At the security search area, attendees were informed that Assisted Travel passengers use the Priority (Fast Track) route. A dedicated question-and-answer session was held with a Security Supervisor, covering:

- Travelling with medication.
- Security screening requirements and the need to achieve an appropriate search outcome.
- The importance of two-way communication between passengers and security officers.
- Availability and process for private searches.
- Procedures for screening wheelchair users.
- Reasons why liquid restrictions may vary between airports.

A suggestion was also made that tactile footprints within the body scanner could assist passengers with visual impairments.

Departure Lounge Facilities

While progressing through the departure lounge, several accessibility features were highlighted, including:

- Accessible toilets.
- The Changing Places facility.
- Water dispensers.
- Lifts and ramps.

The NHS Discharge Nurse commented that this section of the tour was particularly informative and useful.

John Muir Lounge

The group visited the John Muir Lounge, which serves as the airport's Assisted Travel Lounge.

Ambulift Demonstration

Attendees were given the opportunity to board an Ambulift vehicle, where ABM representatives provided a demonstration and detailed explanation of the service provided to passengers requiring assistance when boarding or disembarking aircraft.

Airside Coach Tour

A short coach tour of the aircraft parking stands was conducted, allowing attendees to better understand:

- Aircraft parking locations.
- Distances between aircraft stands and the terminal.
- The scale and gradients of aircraft steps, particularly on larger aircraft.

International Arrivals

The tour concluded in International Arrivals, where attendees were shown the expedited border process available for passengers using Assisted Travel services.

Feedback

Following the tour, further discussions took place and feedback noted from attendees. Participants welcomed the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of airport processes and facilities, while the event facilitated valuable discussions around accessibility and the practical challenges that some passengers encounter when travelling. The sharing of personal

experiences throughout the tour provided useful insight and generated suggestions for future improvements.