

# **Access Aberdeen Forum**

**8<sup>th</sup> October 2024, 10am**

## **Present**

Hussein Patwa	Co-Chair, Aberdeen Access Forum & Disability Equity Partnership
Andrea Barclay-Scarry	Co-Chair, Aberdeen Access Forum & AIACC Representative
Kevin Douglas	AIAL, Terminal Operations Manager
Gemma Mason	AIAL, Airport Support Coordinator
Fraser Bain	AIAL, Project Manager
Ian Mitchell	ABM, Operations Director
Manoj Chellingi	ABM, Manager
Pamela Munro	Airport User
Amanda Foster	Independent Traveller
Gary Laing	Young Onset Parkinson's
Joanna Martin	Spinal Injuries Scotland
Carol Kennedy	JDRF
Carolynne Fishburn	Aberdeenshire Council
Sam Reid	Deaf Action
Phionna McInnes	Wee Too

## **Apologies**

Judith Forbes	NHS Grampian, Orkney & Shetland discharge nurse.
Stan Flett	Aberdeen Action on Disability
Shona Owen	Airport User
Jacqui Sibbald	IA (Ileostomy and Internal Pouch Association)
Maureen Morrison	Spinal Injuries Scotland

## **Agenda**

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies (Hussein)
2. Minutes of Last Meeting (Hussein)
3. Performance Update (Kevin)
4. Tender Presentation Update (Hussein/Andrea)
5. CAA Annual Special Assistance Report (Kevin)
6. CAA Industry Update (Kevin)
7. Security Update (Kevin)
8. Customer Feedback (Kevin/All)
9. Member Travels and Feedback (All)
10. Member Discussion (All)
11. AOB (All)

### **1. Welcome, Introductions and apologies. – Attendees in person and online to introduce themselves (name and organisation represented)**

H Patwa welcomed all present and went around the boardroom table and screens for introductions.

G Mason noted apologies.

### **2. Approval of Minutes of previous meeting 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024 – Members to advise of any changes to minutes previously circulated and agree.**

H Patwa asked the group for feedback from the previous Access ABZ forum minutes. There were no queries raised, or corrections required.

The outstanding action from the previous ABZ Access Forum relating to the addition of volunteers at Aberdeen International Airport was discussed. With K Douglas advising he has been unable to contact Liverpool Airport for guidance on their volunteering process, due to constraints with competition rules around contacting airports out with the AGS Group.

C Kennedy offered to pick up on this outstanding action and will contact the JDRF counter parts located at other airports for advice.

A Foster queried what is the reasoning for the volunteers? A Barclay Scarry confirmed, the volunteers would provide an additional layer of support and someone to speak too/companion while passengers wait in departures.

K Douglas had pursued CLAN reference volunteering however no response to date. Action with A Barclay Scarry to follow up with CLAN.

K Douglas highlighted the AIA NHS Forum which is held twice a year. The well-established group includes both NHS Orkney and Shetland, Loganair, ABM, Skytanking and AIAL.

H Patwa, thanked the NHS Forum for the work they do.

### 3. Performance Update

K Douglas provided an overview on the latest PRM special assistance figures for 2024 which has increased by 22% compared to the same period in 2023.

An update on pre-booked assistance confirmed AIAL continues to meet all targets on both arriving and departing waiting times for PRM passengers throughout 2024.

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

An update on service information for 2024 year to date, by classification was discussed. The table showed WCHR\* equated to 54.5%, followed by WCHS\*\* at 31.31% continues being the highest assistance type.

*\*WCHR – Passengers who can ascend and descend steps and move in the aircraft cabin but who require a wheelchair for distance to/from the aircraft*

*\*\* WCHS – Passengers who cannot ascend and descend steps, where the wheelchair is required to/from the aircraft and the passenger must be carried up/down the steps but is able to make their own way to/from cabin seat*

British Airways is ranked the number one airline for PRM volumes ranking due to aircraft sizing and frequency of flights.

K Douglas highlighted; pre-notification of assistance required has increased to 78.08%. Pointing out that BH Air had a 100% pre-booking result due to only flying for a short period during the summer.

A Barclay Scarry queried the process for hospital patients which may be unable to request assistance in the required timeframe due to being released from hospital on the day. K Douglas advised, there is a process in place where

the NHS travel administration team will contact ABM directly on the day to make the arrangements.

The forum discussed the importance of sunflower lanyards and K Douglas confirmed the awareness was more prominent around the terminal including the install of additional signage at UKBF.

P McInnes commented that WeeToo! have seen a significant increase with requests for the sunflower lanyards within the last couple of weeks which may be due to families planning to travel during the October school holidays.

C Kennedy suggested a visual poster providing an explanation what criteria the sunflower can be used for would be beneficial? K Douglas agreed and will inquire about incorporating this information into an additional slide at the assistance desk.

Action H Patwa to review the dissemination of the sunflower lanyard and information provision on the website and social media.

#### **4. Tender Presentation Update**

Co- Chairs H Patwa and A Barclay Scarry recently attended the presentation of the companies shortlisted to provide special assistance service which is currently out for tender and provided the forum a brief overview.

K Douglas commented it's a positive step forward as it's the first-time access forums have been involved with the tender process.

H Patwa and A Barclay Scarry to update the forum with any progress prior to the next planned Access Aberdeen Forum.

#### **5. CAA Annual Special Assistance Report**

K Douglas provided an overview on the CAA annual report 2023-24 advising that Aberdeen International Airport were awarded a "good" rating for PRM services in 2023.

K Douglas to provide a list of the criteria at the next forum meeting.

C Fishburn commented that by the survey only being distributed via email to meet the CAP 1228 requirements set by the CAA, it provides a barrier for some. K Douglas to investigate option for feedback forms to be completed using an iPad located in the terminal.

H Patwa queried if the feedback form could be printed and completed by hand. However, this isn't a valid option as the accuracy of the data provided can be challenged.

## **6. CAA Industry Update**

K Douglas provided the forum with an overview on the CAP 2990 Airline Accessibility Guidance document. A copy of the guidance will be circulated with the minutes. Should there be any questions relating to the document, please email [abzaccess@aiaairport.com](mailto:abzaccess@aiaairport.com)

H Patwa commented the document is of a lot of interest and requested a separate session for all interested members to discuss further.

The forum was made aware of a recently aired documentary "Sophie Morgan's Fight to Flight", link to the TV programme below.

<https://www.channel4.com/programmes/sophie-morgans-fight-to-fly>

Along with BBC reporter Frank Gardiner's journey with LOT Polish Airlines.



## 7. Security Update

An provided an update on Next Gen, advising AIAL were fully compliant ahead of the June 2024 deadline. From January 2024, departing passengers were able to leave large volumes of liquids and electrical items in cabin passenger. However, on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2024, the DfT reverted to the 100ml regulation. A new date has not been given to when the temporary restrictions will be lifted.

A Foster welcomed the new layout at central search.

P Munro queried, if there are tactile foot plates in the body scanners? K Douglas advised there are not, and visually impaired passengers are currently verbally guided to the foot position however the addition of tactile foot plates will be investigated.

A Barclay Scarry commented on the outstanding item reference the sighted guiding training at security central search and will contact K Douglas to arrange a suitable date/time for a walk through with an assistance dog. Once the evaluation is complete, A Barclay Scarry will provide feedback and recommendations including staff training.

## 8. Customer Feedback

K Douglas provided an overview on the feedback summary 2024 year to date advising there were 3 complaints and 3 compliments relating to special assistance.

I Mitchell commented that ABM are trialling a new piece of stair climbing equipment which is currently going through approvals. An update to follow once available.

K Douglas thanked the ABM team for the support and consistently great service.

An update on the customer feedback survey was provided to the forum. The below graph provides an overview on the survey participation year to date. The results for July to September will follow once published by the CAA.

Month	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Totals
Survey Sent	89	87	88	121	108	110	85	204	203	1095
Arr Answered	4	4	12	19	12					51
Dep Answered	7	5	26	43	17					98
Total Response	11	9	38	62	29					149
% Response	12.36	10.34	43.18	27.07	26.36					
Target 1/200 = 0.5%	1.14	0.99	3.48	4.24	0.00	1.52	0.00	0.00	0.00	

A Barclay Scarry queried if the phone number for assistance is still being distributed. M Chellingi confirmed the business cards with the special assistance coordinator's phone number 07471 99 64 56 is provided to the passenger.

## ABM Special Assistance Coordinator



07471 99 64 56

### 9. Member Travels and Feedback

Unfortunately, due to time constraints there wasn't time for members to discuss their recent travel experiences and provide feedback. H Patwa advised there will be additional time allocated for this at the next forum.

### 10. Member Discussion

There was a group discussion relating to The Access ABZ Forum members and everyone agreed they were keen for a diverse representation from a wide number of organisations.

K Douglas commented that there hadn't been a response from CLAN however A Barclay Scarry will follow this up with the organisation.

P McInnes suggested a familiarisation day at Aberdeen International Airport would be beneficial for passengers with additional needs so that they will know what to expect while travelling through the airport.

K Douglas confirmed familiarisation tours are available and for any questions please contact K Douglas or M Chellingi.

G Laing representing Young Onset Parkinson's provided an overview on the importance of taking medication on time which can be limiting while traveling and will provide leaflets on freezing at the next ABZ Access Forum. H Patwa concurred and detailed some of the challenges around taking frequent medication where water etc may be needed, e.g. for chronic pain.

C Kennedy was interested to hear about the NHS Lounge and requested additional information. K Douglas confirmed anyone using special assistance or requiring a quiet space is welcome to use the JM Lounge. The lounge is unmanned but there is a phone available which connects directly to the ABM team.

K Douglas to check the scope to offer a sterile room within the JM Lounge. Any organisations interested in joining the Access ABZ Forum, can apply via [ABZAccess@aiairport.com](mailto:ABZAccess@aiairport.com)

## **11.AOB**

F Bain recommended a representative from ACVO would be a suitable candidate to join the Access ABZ Forum. K Douglas to contact and will provide an update once available.

A Barclay Scarry requested an update on the outstanding action regarding the Car Park Office Access. K Douglas advised works will take place shortly to lower the kerb and install a slope to allow access to the customer services office. Once complete, the access information on the AIAL website will be updated. The installation of a slope will not remove the option for a car park agent to attend a passenger's car.

A Barclay Scarry queried, if anyone that would use the revised layout had been consulted during the design/layout process to verify its suitability? K Douglas advised that an architect processed the plans, but he will contact V Baxter and ask if he is able to review them.

K Douglas thanked all new and returning members to the forum.

H Patwa commented, there will be a couple of points to follow and will be circulated along with the minutes.

H Patwa extended thanks for all that attended the forum.

H Patwa to discuss arranging a meeting with K Douglas for all interested members to discuss the Airline Accessibility guidance (CAP 2990) document in detail.

K Douglas noted, the request to add white lines on the steps will be included in the car park works.

Proposed date for next Access Aberdeen Forum to be confirmed.

H Patwa brought the meeting to a close.