



## **AccessABZ**

**Thursday 21st March 2019**

### **Attendees**

Fraser Bain (FB), AIA  
Kevin Douglas, AIA  
Stan Flett, Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance  
Sam Reid, Deaf Action  
Rosemary Mitchell, Deaf Action  
Phionna McInnes, Me Too Magazine!  
Katrina Michie, Shopmobility  
Joan Allan, G4S  
Pamela Munro, Guide Dogs for the Blind  
Andrea Barclay, Service User and member of Airport Consultative Committee  
Shona Owen, Service User

### **Apologies**

Andy Hyde, Upstream Scotland  
Sarah Howe, Alzheimer Scotland  
Vic Baxter, Service User  
Glyn Morris, Friendly Access  
Judith Forbes, NHS

### **Notes from Meeting**

### **Introductions**

All members had attended a previous forum but took the opportunity to provide an introduction.

To open the meeting the 4 assistance videos that have been produced by a local charity (<http://www.shmu.org.uk/>) were displayed. Very positive feedback received from the group who felt the videos managed to get across the main points of accessibility and receiving assistance at the airport. The point was raised by Deaf Action and supported by fellow members that it would be beneficial for the videos to be communicated in BSL in addition. It was suggested that this should be straight forward to organise. The airport has taken the action to look further into this.

## Airport Operational Update

An overview of total passenger numbers for 2018 was provided with a comparison against 2016 and 2017 totals.

	2016	2017	2018
Domestic	1,712,081	1,784,227	1,772,558
International	941,925	971,910	925,077
Total Fixed	2,654,006	2,756,137	2,697,605
Helicopters	424,843	379,108	391,111
Total Pax	3,078,849	3,135,245	3,088,196

Overall a very slight decline in passenger numbers but we are hopeful that this is a baseline figure for further growth over the next few years.

The number of passengers with reduced mobility (PRM's) in fact increased slightly on the 2017 figure;

2017 – 22,100

2018 – 22,976

The increase in PRM's also needs to be considered against the backdrop of a decline in overall passenger numbers.

The busiest months for assistance were from May through to October. We saw a decline in demand during November before it peaked again in December with people travelling ahead of and during the Christmas period. In August, September and December the number of assistance passengers represented over 1% of the overall passenger number.

When we consider a breakdown of the types of assistance requested, we notice that there is very little change between 2017 and 2018. In fact, when we look back further the type of assistance requested remains largely static. As has been highlighted at previous forums the number of DPNA (Disabled Passenger with intellectual or developmental disability needing assistance) is rising each year.

Category	2017	2018
WCHR	58.83%	60.20%
WCHS	29.45%	29.92%
WCHC	5.64%	4.20%
BLND	1.57%	1.27%
DEAF	0.81%	0.60%
DEAF/BLND	0.00%	0.00%
DPNA	1.78%	1.98%
Others	1.91%	1.83%

## **PRM Complaints/Compliments in 2018**

FB advised the group of the final totals of PRM related Complaints and Compliments in 2018;

- 18 complaints
- 12 compliments

The details of these cases (September YTD) can be found in the minutes of the previous forum.

### **CAA Survey results**

FB wanted to take the opportunity at this meeting instead to review the scores and comments provided by passengers who had undertaken the CAA survey between April and September in 2018.

The CAA, as part of their role, collect performance data on the quality of the assistance given to disabled people and people with mobility issues at UK airports. Passengers are provided with details of the survey by the assistance team at the airport and there are further details available on the airport's website. We currently request an email address from the passenger so we can send them a link to the survey or provide them with a card with the survey details.

Forum members suggested that the survey could be sent out automatically and independently of the service provider. It was accepted that the number of respondents could potentially be increased, and any subjectivity removed, if the link to the survey was automatically sent to passengers but neither the airport nor the service provider have the email address.

Between April and September, 32 respondents from ABZ completed the survey. 26 out of the 32 had pre-notified assistance.

In terms of how they rated their experience, 26 passengers scored the service as excellent, 1 acceptable, 1 poor, 3 extremely poor and 1 skipped this section.

Members questioned if we knew any more details about these passengers and whether we had an opportunity to investigate any concerns. FB explained that the results are sent out a few months after the passengers were surveyed and that the results did not contain any contact information.

The following comments (regarding service that fell below expectations) were reviewed;

*"Apparently my name was not booked for assistance but I requested the service at the time of booking. However, I was accommodated by staff at Aberdeen airport"*

*"The assistance staff were not helpful, they were 3 men who were very put out by being interrupted to help a disabled person. They were rude and not very polite"*

*"Because of my medical condition, I travel frequently to hospital via the Aberdeen airport. When the assistance take me to the departure gate, I have been left in the main thoroughfare"*

*"Assistance on arrival back at Aberdeen on 29 April was so poor because they were so understaffed that 2 men were supposed to deal with dozens of wheelchair passengers for 4 flights in 55 minutes"*

In addition, comments regarding the service that exceeded expectations were reviewed;

*"The friendliness and helpfulness of the staff towards my mother (who was actually travelling rather than me). It is so important, because as an elderly traveler she was feeling nervous and vulnerable when I left her. An open, friendly approach from your representatives makes all the difference"*

*All staff were attentive, kind and efficient. Excellent customer services, clear and concise communication, between passenger and own colleagues. Effective listening and relaying of information when flight delay highlighted. Faultless and a great example of great teamwork. Well done Special assistance*

*"The staff were friendly and helpful. I was given first class service and this made my journey more comfortable. I have only had disabilities since a bad fall last September. Until then I was very fit. Being helped to the aircraft by your staff was amazing"*

*"Staff are pleasant, friendly, and helpful, and do not make you feel embarrassed or a nuisance for asking for assistance."*

*The group had a follow up discussion about some of these comments. "*

## Accessibility/Assistance Updates

### Training

- Deaf Awareness Training – 3 sessions delivered by Lesley Crerar in January
- Visual Impairment & Sighted Guiding Training – 2 sessions delivered by NESS earlier this month.
- Equality & Disability Awareness training – refresher to be completed with Security and Terminal teams and extended to third parties.

### Keep Safe



We are now listed as a 'Keep Safe' premise.

People who are vulnerable because of learning disabilities, physical disabilities, sensory impairment or mental health problems have the right to feel safe when they are out in the community.

The Keep Safe initiative works with a network of businesses who have agreed to make their premises a 'Keep Safe' place for people to go if they feel frightened, distressed or are the victim of crime when out in the community.

An Adult Protection Co-ordinator from Police Scotland, a representative from ARC Scotland and three self advocates provided awareness training last week to various members of our team so we can now be listed as a Keep Safe venue.

## Awareness visit and training



The ileostomy & internal pouch  
Support Group

We hosted a visit of 15 members from the ileostomy and internal pouch support group. The focus was on Security central search and it was an opportunity for members to interact with the Security team on duty. The main anxieties were discussed and a walk through of the screening process took place with a question and answer session with security officers and supervisors. The feedback received was that it was very useful for both representatives and Security officers to alleviate any concerns.

## Making Connections event



The airport attended an event in March that took place onboard the Northlink ferry docked in Aberdeen Harbour. The event hosted by Go Upstream in partnership with Transport Scotland and Northlink was focusing specifically on the connections between Aberdeen train/bus station and the ferry terminal but had relevance to other transport providers. The event was the first in a series of workshops which also included a walk through of the process to understand the issues and challenges;

(<https://www.upstream.scot/blog/making-connections>)

*Many journeys rely on us changing from one mode of transport to another, navigating the spaces between services, where one 'stops' and another 'starts'. But even short transfers have potential barriers – crossing a busy street, poor lighting, difficulty finding a place to sit down and rest. Who is responsible for the quality of the connection? And what's the best way for everyone concerned to work together to improve it?*

## **NHS Patient Lounge**



We are happy to confirm that Loganair LSI and KOI hospital transfer patients will be able to use the Eastern Airways lounge from 5th April when departing from ABZ. Several parties have worked together over the past year to set this facility up and the news was welcomed by all attendees. Shona Owen wanted to stress how important this facility will be for hospital patients who can feel very vulnerable at a particularly difficult time in their lives.

It has been confirmed that a passenger will be permitted to have one additional person with them e.g. carer or family member and the lounge will be managed by Loganair's handling agent, Dalcross.

## **Assistance Desk**

FB explained that work is underway in relocating the assistance area to its permanent location at the front of the terminal (where Swissport are currently located as well as the site of the former Eastern Airways ticket desk).

Andrea Barclay took the opportunity to share her experience of travelling through the airport last September. She encountered problems when there was no one situated at the assistance desk. After waiting 10/15 minutes she had to proceed to check-in without assistance and it was a very poor start to her journey. Andrea did explain that the rest of her journey through the airport was a positive experience.

FB advised that during operational hours a member of G4S staff would normally be based at the desk but that there have been times during an early morning when all staff are away from the desk. An action has been taken by the airport in conjunction with G4S to improve the service that is provided during these times.

Shona Owen enquired whether the new assistance area would be sheltered from draughts and whether any thought had been given to making it feel less sterile with the inclusion of more relaxed seating. Kevin Douglas explained that some of the seating from the current assistance area would be used and two high back chairs (same as those used in health practice environments) would be purchased. There will unlikely be space in the seating area to incorporate sofas as had been suggested. Shona Owen also raised the issue of the distance of the UK arrival reclaim belt and wondered whether a sign should let passengers know how far away the reclaim belt is. The airport will look further into this.

A question was also raised by Andrea about the height of the new desk. FB/KD confirmed that the desk will be DDA compliant and it is thought that as passengers will approach the desk from the front as opposed from the side (how the desk was set up previously) that the member of staff will be more visible to all passengers. Members commented that they would expect the assistance staff member to engage with the passenger and thought it would be appropriate for them to stand up and welcome the passenger on most occasions. The airport took the action to include this in a review of the service provided at the desk.

## **Volunteers**

A brief discussion was held by the group regarding volunteers; discussing the merits as well as the challenges of running a volunteer programme. A suggestion was made that a group such as the WRVS might be provide an appropriate solution. The airport has taken the action to review the business case it had previously completed regarding volunteers.

## **New software management system in use**

G4S are now using a new software management system called 'Able to Fly' to manage the assistance service. The system allows the assistance agents to record the times at which they assist a passenger by using hand held devices. The times automatically update on the system which frees up the co-ordinator to focus on allocating the resources he/she has. The software will also make it easier for the airport to report the performance of G4S against the agreed quality standards.

## **New Ambulift in operation**

In January we took delivery of a new ambulift vehicle as a replacement for an ageing asset. Although there have been a few teething issues the new lift provides a more comfortable environment for passengers. In addition, on certain aircraft a handling agent will be able to use an 'Aviramp' (<https://aviramp.com/>) which replaces the need for the ambulift to attend when it is in position. Dalcross, the handling agent for Loganair, own the Aviramp Lite model and this is suitable to use on smaller aircraft. G4S are in the process of acquiring suitable chairs that can be used with the ramp.

## **Terminal Transformation**

Phase 3 is the final phase of the Terminal Transformation and is due to be fully completed by September. In April we will open the first new section within the departure lounge which will comprise of a new Boots and Dixons shops and help to create more space in the lounge. The work that will follow this will focus on creating a new coffee shop airside and an extension/refurbishment of the current bar/restaurant.

## **CAP 1228 – Guidance on quality standards under regulation EC 1107/2006**

FB wanted to provide the group with a brief summary of the latest CAA draft guidance that is out for consultation. CAP 1228 is specifically in relation to the setting, monitoring and publication of service quality standards to ensure that the objectives of EC 1107/2006 (the main piece of regulation which details the assistance that airports are required to provide passengers with reduced mobility) are met.

A summary of some of the main points included in this guidance were discussed;

All customers should be satisfied with the assistance provided. Subject to pre-notification, 100% of departing customers should reach their aircraft in time to enable timely pre-boarding and departure.

**Training** – all employees, including the management, who deal directly with the travelling public at airports, should receive training that meets the minimum standards as defined in ECAC Doc 30.

**Passenger Surveys** - The Code recommends that airports conduct regular passenger surveys of disabled persons to provide a more complete assessment of the quality of the assistance service, particularly in areas such as staff attitudes, behaviours and customer service skills.

**Consultation** - As a minimum, accessibility forums should meet twice a year. The majority of the group thought this was appropriate but perhaps an update could be sent between forum meetings to keep everybody informed of progress. (suggestion made by Andrea Barclay) The forum should also be independently chaired. The group held a brief discussion on this point and wondered whether the chair would have to be a regular traveller through the airport or have specific knowledge of the workings of the airport. FB explained that the idea is for the agenda to be driven by third parties as opposed to the airport to ensure that the appropriate questions are being asked and action is prioritised accordingly. The airport will look into this requirement further as details are confirmed by the CAA.

**Monitoring performance against quality standards** - Airports should collect data that measures performance in relation to the quality standards document. Airports should submit to the CAA and publish on its website information on its performance against its quality standards twice yearly.

**Definition of rankings** – detail provided on what constitutes a ‘good’, ‘very good’ rating etc.

## **Focus on...Travelling with an Insulin Pump.**

Although there was limited time to discuss in full FB presented slides on Travelling with a medical device. The slides outlined that passengers with insulin pumps can opt for a hand search or other screening options at Security. It highlighted that there is a requirement for a letter from a doctor confirming the situation which should be handed to the security officer.

The advice is for passengers to contact the manufacturer of their specific insulin pump regarding their advice on the possible effects of airport screening equipment as it can vary between manufacturers.

FB advised the group that the CAA and Airport Operators Association have produced a medical device awareness card for passengers with an insulin pump or continuous glucose monitoring system (CGM) that can act as a reminder to passengers to prepare for their journey and a reminder for the security officer that alternative screening processes may be requested.



The image shows two versions of a Medical Device Awareness Card. The top card is for Passengers and the bottom card is for Security Officers. Both cards feature the AOA logo (The Voice of UK Airports) and the Civil Aviation Authority logo. The text on the cards provides instructions for passengers and information for security officers regarding medical devices like insulin pumps and CGMs.

**Medical Device Awareness Card: Passenger**

- **Don't forget to bring your medical evidence** (e.g. letter from a medical practitioner) to confirm your medical device such as an insulin pump or Continuous Glucose Monitoring system (CGMs). Have this ready to show the Security Officer, along with this card.
- **Make the airport Security Officer aware of the device**, and exactly what it is and where it is located.
- If you are carrying a spare medical device, **remove it from your cabin bag** before the x-ray and let the Security Officer know.
- And do **contact the airport if you have any concerns** or queries before you travel: note that screening equipment and processes may differ from airport to airport.
- Please **check with your return airport** (if outside the UK) on their arrangements for screening medical devices.

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**Medical Device Awareness Card: Security Officer**

- Passengers with a medical device such as an insulin pump or Continuous Glucose Monitoring system (CGMs) should not be screened by a security scanner; if they opt out of this they must be offered an alternative screening method.
- Passengers must never be asked to remove a medical device from their body for screening.
- Medical devices (including spare devices) should not go through x-ray machines. Alternative screening processes can be undertaken such as hand search, supported by ETD.

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Forum members had an opportunity at the end of the meeting to raise any questions or provide any additional comments. Members mentioned that they thought the forum meetings were productive and that significant progress has been made by the group over the past few years.

End of Meeting.