

Accessibility Forum Minutes

Date	Wednesday 8 May 2024
Location	via Microsoft Teams

Attendees	
Name	Company
Dermot Devlin	IMTAC (Chair)
Susan Croy	Cedar Foundation
Pauline O’Neill	Derry and Strabane District Council
Michelle Kelly	Consumer Council
Emily Kilby	Civil Aviation Authority
Gerard McCloskey	City of Derry Airport
Tracy Duffy	City of Derry Airport
Apologies	
Representative	RNID
Representative	North West Forum for People with Disabilities
Representative	Guide Dogs NI
Representative	RNIB
Representative	Deafblind UK
Representative	Alzheimer’s Society

1-Introductions

The Chair invited the group to introduce themselves and the organisation they represented. The group also welcomed Emily Kilby from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). Emily co-ordinates the CAA’s work on accessibility forums and is attending all UK airport forums.

2- Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2023 were approved.

3 – Terms of Reference

Members agreed that the position of Chair can be alternated by the Forum on a bi-annual basis (every two years), with the current Chair able to put themselves forward again.

The Terms of Reference will be updated accordingly.

Members also noted that two additional organisations had been added as members of the Forum – Deafblind UK and the Derry and Strabane District Council’s Over 50s reference panel.

4 – Airport Operational Update

The airport noted that updated x-ray machines required to meet the new rules on screening liquids were expected to be in place mid-July 2024. The group noted the challenges of ensuring that these rules were clearly communicated, particularly as different rules may be in place for passengers flying out of one airport and back from another.

The Forum noted that CODA would not be deploying new body scanners.

The importance of good customer service was also noted as passing through airports can be a stressful experience.

ACTION: Airport to ensure that updated information is available in a variety of different formats. Chair/Forum members to forward suggestions through Consumer Council.

ACTION: CAA to look at providing additional guidance to clarify rules on medical devices.

5-Special Assistance Update

CODA continues to meet response times for PRM passengers with no issues. The airport noted a slight fall in PRM passenger numbers but it was unclear what the reasons for this were.

New Disability Awareness Training issued by the Department for Transport has been incorporated into the airport's training programme.

The airport's relationship with the local organisation ASpace2, which supports people with learning disabilities and physical and sensory disabilities, was flagged. The space provides a local safe space for passengers and their families or carers seeking relaxation before departing on a flight or after arriving at the airport. The Forum agreed that it would be useful to incorporate a visit to the space into the next visit to the airport, in order to fully understand the range of services offered.

ACTION: Forum members to provide further suggestions for staff training.

ACTION: Consumer Council to liaise with airport to incorporate visit to ASpace2 into the next accessibility audit in November 2024.

6-Recommendations from last site visit

Parking	
1	<p>Ensure that the opportunity to avail of free parking is clearly highlighted on the website and consider how to emphasise this at the airport.</p> <p>ACTION: Website states that customers presenting their Blue Badge at the designated assistance point can avail of 2 hours complimentary parking. There is a separate “drop down” for special assistance with additional information.</p>
2	<p>Consider introducing a small number of “age friendly” parking spaces at the airport.</p> <p>ACTION: This is a work in progress. Paint markings are planned to set out a small number of separate spaces.</p>
Bus drop off point	
3	<p>Ensure kerbs at the bus drop off point are painted in bright, contrasting colours to highlight presence to consumers with visual impairments.</p> <p>ACTION: Completed. Kerbs have been painted yellow.</p>
4	<p>Staff to liaise with Translink to ensure that buses serving the airport are all fully accessible vehicles.</p> <p>ACTION: Translink have confirmed their whole fleet bar one tour coach have wheelchair accessible ramps. That coach is only used on private hire and certain school runs and the service will not be operated from the airport. Note that certain large, motorised wheelchairs may not fit but Translink will get each chair assessed if the person contacts them. There is one wheelchair space per bus and it operates on a first come, first served basis.</p>

5	<p>Consider adding armrests and backs to the benches by the bus drop off point to help people with mobility impairments to sit down, balance and manoeuvre on and off the seating.</p> <p>ACTION: A new bench has been procured with back and arm rests. This is positioned adjacent to the bus drop off area and can facilitate bus waiting.</p>	
Entrance / check-in area		
6	<p>Consider adding the Entrance sign on the side door to above it to assist signposting.</p> <p>ACTION: Signage on order.</p>	
7	<p>Add safety markings to the entrance doors.</p> <p>ACTION: Signage on order.</p>	
8	<p>Carry out a review of glass doors throughout the airport to ensure the glazing is marked sufficiently to let people know it is there and prevent them from walking into it.</p> <p>ACTION: Signage on order.</p>	
9	<p>Review placement of flight information screens and consider an additional screen with an increased size similar to current advertising screens. This also applies to the flight information screens in the departures area (after security).</p> <p>ACTION: The central search area has been reconfigured to house new equipment, expected delivery June 2024. TV display lowered as part of this process.</p>	
10	<p>Consider lowering the main group of signage by the check-in area.</p> <p>ACTION: Signage on order.</p>	

11	<p>Ensure that the new Changing Places toilet is highlighted on the website and on signage at prominent points throughout the airport.</p> <p>ACTION: Signage on order.</p>	
12	<p>The airport should consider guidelines on stoma-friendly toilets and investigate how it can update toilet facilities accordingly.</p> <p>ACTION: Stoma symbol to be included on signage alongside Changing Places symbol.</p>	
13	<p>Liaise with RNID to check loop system.</p> <p>ACTION: The system has been checked and this has been added to the regular maintenance schedule.</p>	
Security area		
14	<p>Consider refresher training for security staff on customer service skills. Organisations involved in this visit would also be happy to arrange additional training.</p> <p>ACTION: This is being taken forward for example sighted guide training.</p>	
15	<p>Consider signage outside the security zone, or have a member of staff available during busy periods, to advise passengers on the current rules surrounding liquids so that they can better prepare before entering the area.</p> <p>ACTION: Will be reviewed in line with new screening rules which airports are in the process of implementing.</p>	
16	<p>Increase the number of chairs available for passengers to avail of as they wait to pass through security.</p> <p>ACTION: Completed. Additional chairs available.</p>	

17	<p>Consideration should also be given to the number of chairs available for passengers after they pass through security and as they get their bags together.</p> <p>ACTION: Completed. Additional chairs available.</p>	
	<p>Quiet area</p>	
18	<p>Set out the arrangement with the “ASpace2” centre on the airport website – there is a link to their Facebook page but it would be useful to provide additional information on the benefits for passengers using the airport.</p> <p>ACTION: Additional information provided on CODA website. The group agreed that it would be useful to visit the facility as part of its next visit to the airport in November 2024.</p>	
	<p>Departures area</p>	
19	<p>Consider removing a small number of seats within the departures area – this will create space to accommodate wheelchair users.</p> <p>ACTION: 2 floor stickers have been ordered, these will indicate the area has been assigned for wheelchair use.</p>	
	<p>Café (operated by Mount Charles)</p>	
20	<p>Place a sign by the main bar area to indicate an accessible service area is available to the left hand side.</p> <p>ACTION: Large sign has been ordered.</p>	
21	<p>In addition, provide a notice to state that table service is available in this area.</p> <p>ACTION: As above, see point 21.</p>	
22	<p>Flag with Mount Charles that, particularly for some older people and people with sight loss, cash is a preferable payment option.</p>	

	ACTION: A recent meeting with representatives from a pilgrimage company highlighter the same concern. CODA will try to accommodate a work around but this will be based on larger group numbers.
	Feedback arrangements
23	Consider generating a QR code to directly link to a feedback form. This could be automatically scanned by passengers at the airport. ACTION: Poster created with QR code. Expected to be on display shortly.
24	The Consumer Council will forward current feedback arrangements to all participants.
7- Next steps	
<p>The airport explained that the action plan to implement responses to the recommendations is a work in progress and that further feedback from the Forum is welcome.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed the airport’s proactivity in taking the Forum’s suggestions on board and the positive steps taken.</p>	
8-Any other business	
<p>The Consumer Council outlined a PR campaign it was undertaking in advance of the summer season, to raise awareness of aviation special assistance services and how to request these.</p>	
9-Date of next meeting	
<p>The next meeting will be in November 2024 which will take the form of a visit to the airport. Date to be confirmed.</p>	