

George Best Belfast City Airport

Accessibility Forum Minutes

Date	22 nd February 2024
Location	George Best Belfast City Airport

Attendees	
Name	Company
Bill Doole	George Best Belfast City Airport
Judith Davis	George Best Belfast City Airport
John Smyth	George Best Belfast City Airport
Nikki Farmbrough	CCS
Michelle Kelly	Consumer Council
Darren Mawhinney	MITIE
Karen Smith	Disability Action
Paula McLarnon	Guide Dogs NI
Hannah Lyons	Guide Dogs NI
Nichola Booth	Queens University (Autism)
Olive Rodgers	RNIB
Donna Watson	Urostomy Association
Steve Davis	RNID
There was a total of 5 apologies	

To start it was advised that the CCNI had agreed to co host the Forum meetings with GBBCA – the airport are therefore very grateful to Michelle Kelly (CCNI) for chairing this meeting

Michelle advised the group that the CAA recommend that the chairperson should be someone independent – as the CCNI are the regulatory body in N Ireland it was appropriate that they would share this role with GBBCA

CCS presentation – Nikki Farmbrough

The presentation started with a short Bio of Nikki's career to date that showed the vast amount of experience she has that has contributed to the skill set needed to manage the PRM contract at Belfast City Airport

Nikki then shared the PRM data with the meeting for the year 2023

The total number of PRMs = 28721

Other information showed the breakdown of the different categories of assistance required, different types of equipment in use , total number of staff employed

One question asked was whether or not we recognized the JAM card system (JAM stands for 'Just A Minute') and is used by persons with a hidden disability

The meeting was advised that we do recognize the JAM cards and they were also told that we have now adopted the Sunflower lanyard as our other chosen method to identify hidden disabilities and that these are available for collection at the assistance desk

A reminder was raised with the Forum members of the importance for customers who require assistance to pre notify their airline

This means that each airport a passenger travels through will be aware of their requirements

It is also an important aid to PRM teams to prepare the appropriate resources

CCNI audit report for visit held in April 2023 – Bill Doole

This was a summary of recommendations identified by members of the Forum who attended the walk-through event

The full list along with responses are as per below

	Special Assistance Desk
1	Prioritise relocation of special assistance desk to more prominent location. The desk has now been moved closer to check in
	Signage
2	Additional signage to make seating area immediately after security more visible. Work will be taking place in this area to install 3 new x ray machines so this and point 3 have been referred to the project team
3	Provide colour contrasting at the desk/shelving areas after security where people gather their belongings. As per point 2
4	Consider larger signage indicating alternative route to departure lounge. PRM staff can provide access to All PRM staff able to provide alternate route on request – the door used needs to be opened by an airport pass holder
5	Add braille to accessible toilet signage.
6	Consider placing a sign on the wall beside call point / marking floor within assisted travel waiting area in departure lounge to keep clear and make staff aware. Signage now in place beside the call point and there is also signage at the waiting area / staff do challenge other customers but very difficult due to the fact that some customers could have a hidden disability
7	Insert yellow strips at the top and bottom of all steps in the airport. This has been logged with our Capital projects team who are looking at the best method
8	Give consideration to repositioning information posters at Border Control Have referred to UKBF but don't expect any change with this signage
9	Amend signage to toilets in the arrivals area by redirecting the arrow. Job has been logged to move the sign closer to the toilets
	Toilets
10	Ensure cleaning staff are trained with regards to bin placement in toilets and carry out routine inspections to ensure these are not a barrier. The contract manager for our new cleaning company has been reminded to ensure the placement of bins do not cause any potential hazard
11	Consider relocating the hand drier in the accessible toilets (in arrivals area) beside the basin. Job logged to move the hand drier

	Aspire Lounge
12	<p>The carpet in the current lounge was difficult for wheelchairs to navigate over - carpeting that is too thick or plush is not an ideal choice for a wheelchair and should be avoided.</p> <p>The new Aspire lounge is now in operation – the floor surface is mainly hard type with some shallow carpeting</p>
13	<p>Better signage is needed to the toilets in the Aspire lounge.</p> <p>New signage in place</p>
14	<p>An automatic door would be beneficial to access toilets.</p> <p>This has been referred to the Aspire lounge management</p>
15	<p>A handrail on the entrance door to toilets would help someone in a wheelchair to push the door open.</p>
16	<p>It would be beneficial to have seating which allow someone in a wheelchair to move easily from their wheelchair to a seat as it can be uncomfortable sitting in wheelchair for prolonged periods.</p> <p>There is now a range of seating in the lounge with 8 different types available.</p>
17	<p>Provide easily accessible power points at these chairs/tables</p> <p>These are available at both high and low level</p>
18	Third Party Providers
	<p>Liaise with third party service providers in the airport regarding accessibility issues. The Consumer Council will be happy to assist with this.</p> <p>Induction courses have been restarted and delivered by Duty Managers PRM staff also assist in refresher training for all staff</p>

Security update – John Smyth

The presentation started with a video showing how central search will look following the installation of the 3 new x ray machines

The target date for the machines to be installed and operational is the beginning of June 2024 in line with the requirements set out by the government

When installed and operational it will mean that passengers will no longer have to remove liquids , laptops or I pads from their hand luggage
The volume of liquids will also increase to 2 litres per person

It will also mean that 100% of passengers will be required to use the new body scanners that will be in place

CCNI advised that they could issue notifications with tips on about the new machines – JD stated that the government were already in the process of issuing information

Donna Watson (Urostomy) enquired as to the type of imagery that shows on the screens used by the staff at the body scanners

Was given assurance that nothing intrusive is displayed and this was later demonstrated as we already have 1 of the new body scanners installed

JS also advised that additional staffing will be need to operate the 3 new machines

Airport update – Judith Davis

International routes – Easyjet will be starting scheduled services to Palma and Alicante in the Summer schedule

In addition there will be charter flights operated by BA CityFlyer :

Royal Caribbean to Barcelona and Bologna
Travel Solutions to Mahon , Palma and Venice

And we will continue to have Lufthansa operating to Frankfurt and KLM operating to Amsterdam

There will therefore be a greater leisure passenger profile using the airport

Layout of car parks – we now have extra blue badge spaces available and have also provided extra width for passengers with their own transport
A new shelter will be installed with a designated waiting facility for PRM passengers that will include a call point

Departures – a new PRM waiting area will be created in the departure lounge – this will be ‘wrapped’ and branded so that , hopefully , only our PRM customers will use it

There will be designated wheelchair spaces and a new brand of seating
A FIDS screen will be installed so that PRM customers can keep up to date with flight information

In addition it has been discussed with Café nero about the possibility of installing a ‘bell’ or a means for PRM customers to be able to arrange for coffee etc to be brought to the new seating area

Aircraft stands – the meeting was advised that , currently , we only have 4 parking stands that can accommodate Airbus aircraft – a stand widening project will start shortly to make a 5th stand compatible with an aircraft of the size of an Airbus

Other items

SD (RNID) enquired regarding what the airport provided to assist customers with hearing loss

NF (CCS) advised that we have pagers and also an induction loop

SD advised that there are different types of loop but will put a suggestion into RNID after this meeting to visit the airport to carry out an inspection

DW (Urostomy) has advised there is currently a campaign running to put in place 'bins for boys' in gents toilets

JD (GBBCA) has tasked BD (GBBCA) to make enquiries and place orders for this type of bin

BD (GBBCA) reflected on the 'Autism in the Air' visits in 2023

NB (Autism) reported that over 300 e mail enquiries were received in just over a 24 hour period – in total we were able to run 4 events for a total of 40 people – similar events are planned for this year

Also , through HL (Guide Dogs NI) we are planning a similar type of visit for some young people on the 27 April with possibility of other dates

Next meeting

The next meeting for the Forum will be a 'walkround tour'

The exact date will be advised when the majority of our current projects have been completed