

Accessibility Forum Minutes

Date	Wednesday, 09 September 2026 at 1030
Location	Belfast City Airport

Attendees	
Name	Company
Jackson Minford (Chair)	IMTAC
Allison Minford	IMTAC
Angela George	IMTAC
Brendan Corr	Guide Dogs NI
Hannah Lyons	Guide Dogs NI
Julie Guilar	Shop Mobility
Kaitlin Roddy	Queen's University Belfast
Nichola Booth	Queen's University Belfast
Karen Smith	Disability Action
Sally Halliday	Alzheimer's Society
Paula Meenan	Deafblind UK
Michelle Penney	Urostomy Association
Michelle Kelly	Consumer Council NI
Hannah Brown	Consumer Council NI (secretariat)
Jason Whiteside	Belfast City Airport
Philip Boyle	Belfast City Airport
Nikki Stewart	CCS
Anna Barnes	CCS
Bill Doole	Belfast City Airport
1. Welcome and Introductions	
The Chair opened the meeting and forum members introduced themselves and the organisation they were representing.	
2. PRM Services Overview	

Members were provided with statistics for the number of passengers requesting assistance (PRM) for 2026 to date compared with 2025. It was noted that passenger numbers are increasing with a particularly significant increase in passengers requiring assistance currently a 9% increase 2026 to date compared to the previous year. July and August 2026 are most notable with a 25% and 18% increase in PRM respectively compared to 2025. The PRM penetration rate (the percentage of total passengers who request assistance) has risen from 1.36% in 2023 to 1.66% in 2026 (YTD).

All categories of PRM have noted large increases including those needing assistance through the airport.

The increase in PRM is reflected in all airlines which service the airport.

The airport has invested in improvement to equipment to meet demand and ensure PRM receive a quality service.

3. PRM Provider Update (CCS)

CCS updated members that one Medilift has been refurbished and is operational. This has been well received by users and staff. Seating is along each side allowing a more generous space for wheelchairs. Refurbishment of another Medilift is underway.

A new Medilift has been ordered for 2027.

The focus this year has been to ensure all equipment is in place and functioning to meet demand.

CCS are also planning to get more Staxi chairs – these are wheelchairs with a shelf beneath for baggage.

CCS have a new system in place for the assisted travel services internal booking procedures which is performing well as staff develop familiarity and experience

using it. CCS continue to deliver a strong performance in PRM services provided as evidenced in the available statistics for the year to date. Staff noted that the 45 minutes target for PRM who have not pre-booked assistance has been met although this is not reflected in the reported statistics due to an issue with the new system.

There have been a number of 'no shows' where assistance has been booked but has not been used (6.5% for July & August 2026). This may be because some passengers are flying in from a larger airport such as London Heathrow and landing in Belfast City Airport which they find easier to navigate without assistance. The practice of travel agents may also be a reason for increase in bookings. 'No shows' and abuse of the sunflower lanyard scheme was also raised. Northern Ireland also has an aging population and residents are more reliant on air travel to connect to the rest of the United Kingdom and beyond.

CCS also noted they have around 18% ad hoc requests on a monthly basis.

There are also increasing instances where elderly people have been left at the airport without being assisted into the building. Staff do their best in these cases to meet requirements.

Staff training has been scheduled with RNIB (train the trainer), and two staff members are now trained in British Sign Language.

There are seven new CCS staff, with five starting in October and an additional two in preparation for the increased demand in December.

Members welcomed the improvements made, ongoing and planned in assistance services.

4. Airport Update

The airport is progressing with the 2040 Airport Masterplan project. The airport has submitted PANs (Proposal of Application Notice) to Belfast City Council and Ards & North Down Council. This will be a long process as plans develop.

The plans include to increase open hours, passenger numbers and routes. A new terminal will be an opportunity to improve accessibility and the airport will engage with the forum as plans develop.

A signed memorandum of understanding is in place with Translink as the airport seeks to have a sustainable, accessible public transport offering. This should improve accessibility for all passengers.

The Masterplan includes plans for a new train station which will service the airport. Members discussed the opportunity for and importance of integrated transport services within the project.

Members raised the importance of accessible buses servicing the airport including using buses with two wheelchair spaces.

The airport will continue to work with Translink and other stakeholders in developing public transport servicing the airport.

Forum members emphasised the importance of inclusive design in taking forward the Masterplan and look forward to working with the airport as it develops.

5. QUB Research

Kaitlin Roddy is conducting PhD research with Queen's University Belfast.

Autism in the Air is a successful initiative in place at Belfast City Airport for over a decade. Kaitlin's research will build on this and consider how the airport environment and experience can be improved for an autistic person. This will include looking globally at initiatives designed to improve the journey through the airport from different perspectives. The research will develop the evidence base and inform potential interventions to improve the airport experience for autistic passengers.

6. CAA

The CAA were due to attend this meeting but were unable to due to air travel disruption caused by air traffic control issues.

The CAA conduct assessments of assistance services at a few airports each year.

Belfast City Airport has been selected for a CAA Accessibility Assessment to be completed within this reporting year. The CAA report will be made public.

Belfast City Airport retained 'very good' rating (the highest rating) in the CAA's most recent Airport Accessibility Report 2025/26.

7. Terminal walkaround

The group took part in a tour of the airport.

The Consumer Council will compile a report based on members feedback and circulate to members for comment.

8. Any Other Business

The chair thanked the airport for their efforts in improving accessibility and closed the meeting.

The next meeting will take place in early 2027, date to be agreed.

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