

BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT PRM CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 12th FEBRUARY 2019

PRESENT

Andy Wright – Chairman
Deane Arnold – Terminal Operations Manager, Birmingham Airport
Ed Kibblewhite – Accessibility Manager, Birmingham Airport
Helen Taylor – Service Delivery Facilitator, Birmingham Airport
Stuart Haseley-Nejrup – Head of Customer Experience, Birmingham Airport
James Boddington – Security Trainer, Birmingham Airport
Lee White – Airport Services Manager, OCS
Libby Herbert – Colostomy UK
Eleanor Stevens – Guide Dogs for the Blind
Sarah Lilley – CP Midlands
Gary Watson – CP Midlands
Bradley Beaumont – Whizz Kidz
Abi Clarke – JDRF
Dan Farrow – JDRF
Henry Skinner – Action on Hearing Loss
Paul Rhodes – Spinal Injuries Association
Joe Carroll – Spinal Injuries Association
Sam Perry – Spinal Injuries Association
Vidar Hjordeng MBE – Inclusion and Diversity Consultant, ITV News

Opening of meeting, welcome of new attendees.

Completed Actions since last meeting

Support at car park barriers – NCP have affixed signs to all barriers and pay machines with a telephone number to either call or text for assistance.

Departure Lounge seating area induction loop – Portable unit now available at the desk. Permanent solution to be included as part of relocation/refurbishment project.

Express route at Security too narrow for electric wheelchairs – Wall corner has been trimmed back/angled to ease entry

Website – All content reviewed and updated following feedback in downloadable document. Now includes: Fire Safety, car park accessibility, greater detail about security including guidance about diabetes medical equipment and more detail about travelling with electric wheelchairs/scooters. The airport confirmed that a new project for the website was expected to start in winter 2019.

Feedback and Actions in Progress

Quiet Area – Suitable location now assigned, project to commence shortly.

The group debated if Quiet Room was the correct name for this area - The group were asked to feedback through the Chairman if they had any ideas about the room and what it should be called.

Fully dedicated security lane – External company to begin reviewing the process and journey through security shortly and provide detailed analysis. The initial review will take 6 months to complete.

New Interactive Map Units – Installed the digital screens lower than the original design to improve accessibility. Next stage is to add other feedback items for wayfinding such as vending machines, changing places toilet, help points.

Innovations

The group was shown some new innovations being considered by the airport.

Ramble Tags – These tags are used by visually impaired people and the tag is worn by the Customer Care Agent and the visually impaired person holds a handle. One forum member felt the tag was a very good idea following use of one on the day of the meeting and would be very natural for a visually impaired person who had a guide dog as it was similar to holding a lead.

Assisted Travel Help Points – The Assisted Travel Help Points have been made more visible and a location indicator and a telephone number and SMS/Whatsapp number has also been added following previous forum feedback.

The airport confirmed to the group that a project to replace the current help points was being looked at. The group suggested some more modern types of call points such as video served devices at Paris Charles de Gaulle airport.

The groups suggested other new technologies to aid accessibility including Soundscape, Aira and speech to text apps.

Core Service – ECAC Standard Performance

The airport gave an overview of the ECAC standard performance for the previous year and discussed the various reasons for varying results.

The group were very surprised by the number of passengers that do not pre-advise, currently around 35% at Birmingham Airport.

The airport explained the CAA 'Needs Improvement' rating and how the quality of data has been improved within the current limitations of the existing operational system. The airport is working with OCS to deliver a new real time allocation system

which will use beacon technology to track movements, this will give us much more accurate data.

Passenger Feedback

The airport told the group that the CAA were also looking at the Airport's survey returns from passengers and they felt that the number of surveys being completed was too low. It was generally felt by the group that people do not like to fill in surveys and would rather give instant feedback using happy/sad faces. The new real time allocation system has the ability for passengers to give instant feedback at the end of their journey.

The airport advised that complaints were down 19% versus the same period the previous year.

CP Midlands advised a majority of their complaints from clients was around handling onboard the aircraft.

Disability Awareness Training

Following an Accessibility Audit in October 2018 the CAA found that Birmingham Airport staff were not compliant regarding disability awareness training. OCS who are the provider for assisted travel at the Airport are all complaint and fully trained.

The airport shared with the group the current plan for airport wide disability awareness training which will be online and mandatory for all airport ID holders. A group discussion was held about the suitability of e-learning. In general, the group agreed that this platform would suit the purpose, however security and PRM service staff should have additional, enhanced classroom-based training.

The group also suggested that the training should be supplemented as not everyone will remember the initial training – the Airport stated that this something that they are currently looking at for Crew Rooms.

An Airport security trainer attended this section to talk through the recurrence period for training, and length of training for disability awareness.

Any Other Business

The Chairman explained to the group that the CAA are now much more involved in disabled assistance at airports and in general they are supportive of the challenges faced by airport operators, including the pressure from airlines to keep costs to a minimum. The Airport advised that many airlines at Birmingham were supportive of improvements and associated costs but there was still a commercial implication to any changes.

The CAA are revising the CAP1228 framework and consulting with airports and disability groups.

The group needs a new unique name – any suggestions should be sent to the Chairman. Post meeting, it was decided best to send the group a selection of options to vote on.

The Airport's Head of Customer Experience gave the group a presentation regarding the customer experience strategy in general at the airport, and how accessibility is at the very forefront in decisions being made for infrastructure and innovations.

Terminal Expansion project – more information will be given to the group at the next meeting. The group was advised of a general strategy to try and remove level changes in the new building wherever possible.

It was suggested that it would be good for the group to meet at other locations – CP Midlands said they would be happy to host a meeting.

Colostomy UK told the group that other airports offer Experience Engagement Days – OCS currently offer tours for passengers who are anxious about travelling for the first time. The Airport has committed to review how it offers experience tours / visits to improve awareness to the public and set up a more structured system.

The group was asked about accrediting training for disability awareness. One suggestion was to look at the CPD programme.

It was agreed that smaller, breakout advisory groups from forum members could be used in the future on accessibility improvement projects specific to the areas of disability they represent.

Actions / recommendations

- Add more information on website as to exact location of disabled bays in airport car parks
- Add map of help point locations to website
- Add OCS Whatsapp / SMS contact number to website
- Review ALT text behind maps on website
- Review subtitles on website videos
- Forum members to be asked to complete the Airport's new general disability awareness training and provide any feedback before launch
- Include quick reference documents on disability awareness through internal portals, staff -rest area screens and through the new airport staff community app
- Review tour / experience day offerings to the public
- Review accreditation of training
- Invite an airline to next meeting to talk through onboard assistance and techniques

Forum Feedback

Forum attendees were invited to complete a short feedback questionnaire after the meeting. Six responses were received with the average scores and comments below.

1. The venue and facilities are appropriate.

(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Strongly agree)

2. The information presented was easy to understand.

(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Strongly agree)

3. The detail of information provided by the airport was appropriate.

(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Strongly agree)

4. The forum is helping the airport improve accessibility.

(Strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Strongly agree)

5. How could we further improve this forum e.g structure, delivery of information, engagement with you, airline talk?

Airline engagement, CAA representation, pathway for learnings nationwide, opportunity to share case studies, inclusion open days, invite charities in for training, create open day / afternoon in accessible venue regarding flying issues and feedback, start the meeting later from 11am, give more time on the agenda for items or add more meetings.

Next meeting – 6th August 2019