
Minutes of the Leeds Bradford Airport[®] Accessibility Group Forum (Hybrid Format)**Microsoft Teams Remotely & In-Person at Britannia Hotel, Leeds Road, Bramhope, Leeds LS16 9JJ.****Wednesday 22nd October 2025, 10:00-13:00 hours.**

Attendees

Kay Atkin	Chairperson
Salli Warr	Ehler-Danlos UK
Bairbre McKendrick	Leeds City Council
Linsay Medica	Little hiccups
Andrew Simister	Trustee, Disability Action Yorkshire
Robert Kernighan	Trustee, Disability Action Yorkshire
Nigel Thompson	Disability Action, Yorkshire
Tanya Stimpson	Vision Support, Harrogate District
Liesje Dusauzay	Sparkles, Sheffield
Chris Bright	Breakthrough T1D
Emily Kilby	Civil Aviation Authority
Sue Trainor	Otley Action for Older People
Rachel Athorn	Customer Experience Operations Manager, LBA [®]
Damian Ives	Chief Operating Officer, LBA [®]
Chris Wilkinson	Head of Customer Operations, LBA [®]
Charlie Aldridge	Customer Care, LBA [®]
Kirsty Wilkinson	Customer Care, LBA [®]
Carole Ballinger	Security, LBA [®]
Lisa Cross	Security, LBA [®]
Dan King	Customer Experience, LBA [®]
Andy Leat	Customer Experience, LBA [®]
Nicky Bartholomew-Esders	Customer Experience, LBA [®]

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Apologies

Kim O'Connor	Leeds Diocese pilgrimage to Lourdes
Pete Hughes	Leeds Autism Services
Josh Wintergill	AbleMove
	AVSED
	William Merrit Disabled Living Centre

1. Introduction, Welcome & Apologies

The meeting was opened by KA. Explanation given as the hybrid format and asked that feedback is provided to how members found the hybrid model. Introductions made – names and where represented.

2. Previous Minutes review

Previous minutes were sent out via email prior to the meeting. The group were asked to check and raise any issues if identified so amendment can be made.

3. Executive Update

An update was provided regarding the new terminal opening and transition to the refurbishment of the existing building. It was acknowledged this has been both challenging and tough. The new facility opened in June and was seen as a success. The new challenge is the refurbishment due to the building being 60 years old and although have tried to identify potential issues there are further issues occurring which does mean there are delays. It is expected to run past the predicted timeline of December 2026.

Currently the new security are getting work done. Once complete this will double the capacity improving passenger flow. There is a large investment in tech occurring to assist.

The next stages will be phased with partial closures of sections of the airport which the refurbishment of those areas take place. This does create the challenge around directing passengers

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and managing the changing layout. There is a review around the signage with further meetings tomorrow.

An area of feedback has been the assisted travel waiting area. This is going to remain for another 6 months so the feedback has been taken on board and are currently looking at how this can be improved to make the area better in the interim.

The arrivals process is the current issue, but it was emphasised that the airport is in a transition stage. The arrivals process is difficult currently for both staff and passenger, but the current process is in place until next summer due to the redevelopment of the area. It is under review to what can be changed to assist the process during the transition stage. This part of the passenger journey has been the main source of feedback. Are particularly impacting wheelchair users.

There has been investment in airramps which has assisted.

The process from arrival to getting over the boarder is working well. But after the border is where the issue is occurring as there is no option to pass over staff and the process has been increased significantly in time. The delays have been flagged so it is under review to how can make changes. This section hadn't been pre-identified as causing a challenge so has been a test and learn scenario.

Q – should wheelchair users arrive earlier given the current refurb

- No requirement to arrive earlier as departure all KPI's are being met, and the process works well. The current issue relates to arrivals.

Q - when signage is removed can it be remembered that the journey starts at entry to the grounds not the terminal, it had been identified some of the signage to disabled parking was incorrect following layout changes

Q- lack of accessible seating in the new area

- There is an area for assisted travel passengers
- Discussion that this may need better identification as it hasn't been noticed by those who have travelled through and there has been difficulty gaining appropriate seating.
- A discussion was had around issues with people giving up seats if they don't need and management of the accessible seating. This also included staff sitting in assisted travel seats. However different viewpoints occurred, in that some would prefer staff at eye level and engaged in conversation so would need to be seated as would feel intimidated if they were stood and passenger sat. However, was also flagged that if no seats available they need to

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be there for the passengers. It was felt more seats could be made available, and flexibility to observe the situation and adapt accordingly rather than a blanket rule.

Q – Issues with Swissport and conduct of employee towards assisted travel customer when there was a gate change and they requested assistance team contacting.

- Discussion around the third-party providers in the airport and how this can impact LBA brand. The feedback on this incident had been received prior to this meeting and has been taken back to Swissport directly. It will be reviewed to what education needs to be provided.
- Swissport are also receiving more training in the Aviramp which is fairly new equipment.

The airport team were thanked for their honesty around the challenges they have faced an openness to discussion around the learnings taken.

4. Quality Standards and Performance Review

An overview of what the airport is marked against by the CAA was provided to the group.

It was shown that the customer numbers utilising assisted travel have risen again with a 21.3% increase in year to date.

This has been a massive increase in demand in a challenging environment.

There has been an increase in flights but the increase in assisted travel passengers has increased beyond that.

Currently this year 86% of passengers have been pre-notified.

There have been 5 incidents this year where passengers have missed flight, this is an improvement on last year where there were 11 in total.

An update around the assistance team, the last 6 months have been a review period to look at how best to meet the increased demand, so the team has undergone a restructuring period.

Rachel joined the team about 6 months ago

Ann-Marie is now the assisted travel manager

Dan is the compliance and training manager.

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There is also a project being undertaken looking at new software that can assist. Looking at capacity planning and being more data driven using the information the data team are providing in power Bi.

It's hoped the right software will assist with ensuring that resource allocation occurs efficiently and effectively based on the passengers attending.

5. Security

The security team were invited to attend following the discussion at the last meeting around medical devices and identification that security was a key area of concern for many assisted travel passengers.

An overview was provided of the requirements placed on security around the processes and what procedures must be followed for different passengers.

It was noted that passengers with medical devices would be taken to a private area to have a further security screen including visual assessment, and swobs.

It was questioned regarding CGM devices to if they were in an easily visible location to if they had to go to a private area of if could show the security agents in the main hall. There is concern around leaving companions but also luggage unattended.

The security team fed back they were aiming for consistency so felt that it needed the same process regardless so that the process wasn't open to interpretation by the wider team leading to poor service.

Will look into the feedback around luggage to how this could be managed better.

It was further questioned that the numbers of passengers with wearable medical devices is likely to raise significantly over the coming years and if it is manageable to take all those to private areas.

This feedback will be reviewed to if there can be a type of chart of what location of device can be viewed in the security hall and what areas need to go to the private area. Want to avoid inconsistency.

There has been feedback by security and customer service that some passengers feel they are exempt from screening due to disability, but this is not the case.

It was highlighted by the group that people don't fit in boxes and individual scenarios need to be considered.

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The security team would aim to keep groups together and not separate.

It was queried how the team would manage autistic children as an example that do not like touch and the scanners would take out of comfort zone. The security team have undergone workshops with Autism Leeds.

New scanners and devices – it was flagged that quite a few manufacturers haven't tested devices in new scanners so are issuing a don't go through rule as they can't guarantee safety.

Discussed need for better signage in security.

There is work occurring on a medical device awareness card with the airports in the UK.

In the last 12 months security has brought training back in house which has given more control and allowing to adjust training based on organisation need,

It has been highlighted that staff follow procedures well but how they handle in terms of customer service skills may not be as good.

As such customer service training has formed part of new training. Have also had training with Autism Leeds and working with Stoma UK and Diabetes to develop training workshops.

Some positive feedback received from visual impaired passengers having had good experiences recently with staff offering an excellent level of support, and consideration of the passengers needs.

Security team have also been working on new website information with different guides for different condition. They would appreciate if the group can review these once they are complete.

Security will continue to provide representation into this forum moving forwards as they can see the benefit of the discussion and experiences shared.

When security receives any feedback full CCTV and investigation occurs to allow them to review and implement training or praise as required.

6. Open Forum

- The group would like to have other third party providers invited to the meeting. Examples – Swissport, Cleaning team, Shop/commercial outlets, Terminal Manager.
- Commercial area card machines. Difficulty in paying for visual impaired as card machines are not tactile and the tactile overlay is not available. This is likely awareness and training.

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- Chairs – is it possible to consider the style, height and ability to transfer into seating which is placed in new terminal/assisted travel areas. Seating needs to meet BS8300
- Accessible toilets – issues with bins blocking ability to transfer and manoeuvre. Airport now placed daily checks, cleaning team had placed extra bins into toilets whilst other facilities were closed. These have now been removed. Suggestion from group to use floor marking so easy for cleaning team to know where they should remain

Attendees' thanks for giving up their time to attend. Any feedback on the hybrid meeting format is welcomed to assist planning moving forwards.

Meeting was closed by KA

Meeting Actions:

- **Plan other groups to bring into future meetings**
- **Rachel to link with Barbara for more information around BS8300 and seating**