

Access Aberdeen Forum – Tuesday 1st November 2022, 10am.

Present

Kevin Douglas	Aberdeen International Airport, Terminal Operations Manager.
Gemma Mason	Aberdeen International Airport, Administrator.
Fraser Bain	Aberdeen International Airport, Project Manager.
Mark Beveridge	Aberdeen International Airport, Operations Director.
Joan Allan	ABM, Manager
Hussein Patwa	Access Consultant
Sam Reid	Deaf Action
Kirstin Torrie-McPherson	Deaf Action
Judith Forbes	NHS Grampian, Orkney & Shetland discharge Nurse.
Stan Flett	Aberdeen action on disability
Phionna McInnes	Wee Too
Katrina Michie	Shop Mobility Aberdeen
Carolynne Fishburn	Aberdeen City Council
Fiona Heinonen	Kayleigh's Wee Stars
Andrea Barclay-Scarry	Airport User, Representative on Airport Consultative Committee
Pamela Munro	Airport User
Shona Owen	Airport User
Laura Baxter	Airport User & Cabin Crew

Apologies

Alison Conn	Aberdeen International Airport, Administrator
Susan Strachan	Sesationall
Mags Corbett	AlzScot

Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Airport Update
3. User Feedback
4. Service Performance
5. Move towards an independently chaired Forum as required by the CAA
6. Input from Forum members

Minutes

1. Introduction

K Douglas welcomed all present and noted apologies from the meeting and went round the boardroom table and screen for introductions.

2. Airport Update

K Douglas provided a general overview of airline and handling agent activity at AIAL throughout the pandemic 2020-2022. PRM kept their staffing levels throughout.

Delayed baggage caused by cancelled flights continues to challenge the ground handlers at present. However, QR code has been setup at ticket desk and baggage claim for passengers to enter details for tracking and allow carriers to reunite bags.

Operational issues at other airports have created issues here at Aberdeen throughout the summer.

L Baxter, shared her experiences working as cabin crew during Covid.

Performance update with special assistance. Despite increased staff, there has been less demand for PRM. 97% pax assistance within 20mins. 100% assistance within 30mins of PRMS prebooked within 36hrs.

Penetration rate, based on passengers using the PRM service against total passengers. 0.99% 2019, now 0.87% in Sept 2022

S Owen and A Barclay-Scarry commented that the reduction in figures could be based on passengers being unable to travel due to shielding or avoiding travel.

J Forbes, advised travelling patient numbers are not up to the same as pre covid Orkney/Shetland levels, due to changes in processes.

K Douglas – noted that 2 separate forums had been convened specifically for the NHS aspect of the Assistance service, with participation from NHS, AIA, Loganair and MSP Beatrice Wishart.

K Douglas, highlighted the airlines with the highest number of passengers requesting assistance – Loganair, BA, EasyJet, TUI. The BA requests for

assistance may see an increase once flights to London City commence 2/11/22 and the Heathrow schedule returns to normal levels.

The prenotification rate was high from Ryanair which to Joan confirmed the airline is good in notifying passenger and emphasising the request is booked directly on their website.

H Patwa, commented it would be beneficial for airlines to build assistance requests into booking rather than separate add on.

S Owen, asked if the CAA can drive uniformity to book assistance online? Action on KD to discuss with CAA regarding a consultation with airlines to look align process and policy.

Andrea, Compliments security process at AIAL. However, no consistency with screening process, changes every time regarding her guide dog. Example, it isn't always a requirement to remove guide dogs' harness during screening etc.

Action on Fraser Bain to look at refresher training to overcome irregularities at screening.

Hussain suggested it would be beneficial for ABM to pre-check the passengers' liquids which would reduce anxiety by pre-empting mistakes. Passengers have avoided travel due to pre-empting mistakes.

Andrea raised a query reference receiving an automated reply missing from PRM email address which notes, PRM needs to be booked directly with airline. K Douglas to follow-up.

3. User Feedback

K Douglas provided overview on passenger feedback. There were 8 compliments against 11 complaints for the PRM service for the first nine months of the year.

Compliments included ABM staff praise along with issue free experiences while travelling through Aberdeen Airport.

Complaints covered various issues; the feedback was forwarded to ground handlers and ABM to help improve experiences moving forward. Some

related to passenger assumptions and that they were subject to the same (although adapted) Security protocols.

A recommendation was raised by Hussain advising there is a reoccurring theme with PRM passengers not always being kept up to date regarding flight status changes for example. A pagers or phone issued would keep PRM in touch with staff.

Action on K Douglas to investigate the possibility of a device which would allow better communication.

Andrea commented that ABM's Manoj fabulous, sighted guiding is on point.

4. Service Performance

Overview of improvements provided by KD which included John Muir Lounge which is a quiet space available to all assistance passengers, whether escorted or travelling independently.

Increased assistance staff, providing additional assistance and flexibility.

There is a dedicated area for assistance pax if required outside Boots, in the upper departure lounge.

Blue badge spaces will be relocated into the multistorey carpark which will reduce exposure to the weather. Changes to be carried out in next couple months.

Mark Beveridge advised AIA are trialling walkways with red painted surfaces, studs etc. With looks to increase throughout car park.

5. Move towards an independently chaired Forum as required by the CAA

The Aberdeen Access Forum is seeking an independent chairperson who will be responsible for the performance, legislation reviews and comments. Action on KD to confer with CAA for further info.

Andrea and Hussein voluntarily nominated themselves as the new chairperson for the Forum. Support will be provided by GM/KD.

6. Input from Forum members

Laura asked for advise on the correct procedure for electric wheelchair passengers. It was confirmed by Joan that electric wheelchair can be taken all the way through to aircraft. Stating, wheelchairs should be “tagged to bottom of stairs”. Batteries are to be declared, as there are different processes for each type of battery.

Shona, extends thanks to KD for meeting and efforts.

KD brought meeting to a close.