

Minutes London Luton Airport Accessibility Forum (LLAAF)

Tuesday 04 March 2025, Percival House - 10:30 a.m.

Attendees	
Andy Wright - Committee Chair	Denise Hobbs - Accessibility Manager, LLA
Tom Emery - Regional Director Aviation, Wilson James	O'Neil Mclean - Station Manager LTN, Wilson James
Ann Munro - Luton Borough Council	Anna Clough - Luton Borough Council
Gemma Malins - Autism Bedfordshire	Nicola Orza - Alzheimer's Society
Samantha Leftwich - Thomas Pocklington Trust	Phil Rutter & Marion Burchell - Thomas Pocklington Trust
Chris Lewis - Colostomy UK	Lesley Jordan - Breakthrough T1D (diabetes charity)
Emily Kilby - Civil Aviation Authority	
Apologies	
Mary Doyle - Disability Etiquette trainer	Peta Barratt - Spinal Injuries Association
Abbey Barlow - Disability Resource Centre	

Welcome and Introductions
<p>Denise welcomed attendees to the meeting, which was hosted in the new LLA Excellence Academy at Percival House near the airport. Introductions were made and new attendees were introduced, with apologies for those unable to attend shared with the group. Upon Andy's arrival, he provided an overview of the Accessibility Forum, its aims, and ambitions, for the benefit of the new attendees.</p>
LLA Operational Overview
<p>Denise then ran through the agenda for the day which included a summary of the airport's recent <i>assistance</i> performance from Wilson James, the assistance service provider. Before going on to highlight some of the customer feedback the airport had received in the last few months and providing an update to the forum members on staff training and progress with the airport's terminal development work.</p> <p>Denise began by informing the group about some supported staff training sessions that had been delivered by Sam from Thomas Pocklington Trust and Jo from the Alzheimer's Society. Who each provided vision awareness and Dementia Friends awareness to over 80 members of staff. Adding that her next ambition was to ask Gemma from Autism Bedfordshire, if she could deliver a similar autism awareness programme to key members of staff.</p> <p>Denise continued by providing an overview of the airport's recent performance for the passengers who had been supported by the Assistance service providers during the last few months. Demonstrating how the time metrics that the Civil Aviation Authority assess and audit the airport by, had improved considerably. With virtually all results being above 99% which met the CAA's 'Very good' criteria. Similarly, the number of completed surveys providing feedback from passengers who used the assistance service during that period had also seen a positive increase.</p> <p>Tom then introduced himself and O'Neil, the airport's new Station Manager for Wilson James, highlighting a number of positive changes that had been introduced to the airport, since their arrival. Now adding a particular focus on Performance, Safety & Service, which in turn provided Confidence to the operation. Tom showed a new structure chart for the Assistance team at London Luton, which included a new Operations Manager, Amir Baig. As well as highlighting some key focus areas Wilson James were concentrating on in preparation for summer 2025. These included providing faster assistance times, improved communication with the guests and measuring this, with improved customer surveys. Other focus areas included improving uniform standards, enhancing staff training and introducing new reward and recognition initiatives for all staff. These had been initiated to enhance the passenger experience at the airport. Tom also explained the challenges which lay ahead in preparation for the summer. With ever-increasing assisted passenger numbers expected, which will inevitably increase further, due to the introduction of Jet2 to the airport. With between 4-5 flights a day and a good reputation within the assisted passenger community.</p>

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Customer Feedback

After pausing for lunch, **Denise** then continued the afternoon session by sharing some examples of recent customer feedback. She started with the Airport Service Quality (ASQ) survey, which is operated by the Airports Council International (ACI) organisation, who provide a global benchmarking measure of passenger satisfaction across airport journeys to help to improve customer experience. These results were very favourable where London Luton Airport had achieved a score of 4.07 out of 5, rating the airport with an 82% customer satisfaction score. This was further supported by an independent survey carried out by ACI where London Luton Airport was measured against the Guest Experience metrics of other airports, such as Gatwick, Heathrow, Manchester and Stansted and scored highest for overall satisfaction.

Denise then shared some examples of recent negative feedback the airport had received, where fortunately most of the more common issues had since been addressed. Such as improved Wayfinding and Signage and enhanced Help Points, which had now been installed throughout the airport. She then moved on to focus on some examples of positive feedback the airport had received. These mainly included a selection of positive comments that were great examples of the airport's staff going above and beyond with delivering exceptional customer service.

Forum members were very pleased to read such positive comments, which is reflected by the feedback they had also received from their respective service users and beneficiaries.

Staff Training

Denise moved on to provide an update on the continued rollout of the 'How May I Best Assist You?' Disability Awareness/Etiquette staff training module. Where of the original number of London Luton Airport employees who had registered for the training, being 1012, 965 had now completed the training. Representing 95% of the airport's staff members.

A further 75 of the Wilson James staff undertaking the training had since passed and there had been more requests to take part in this program from third party suppliers working directly for London Luton Airport, including DHL.

Also, now being aware that the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) wanted all airport Security staff to receive in person Disability Awareness and Equality training. **Denise** explained how the entire Security team, who had originally been subcontracted through a third-party provider, were now employed by London Luton Airport directly and as such would benefit from the airport's own Disability Awareness/Etiquette staff training module. This was planned to be delivered by adding an additional week to the existing staff training schedule, to allow for the Disability Awareness module to be delivered during this period.

Andy commented that he was very aware with the new expectations from the CAA as far as Security staff were concerned, had been challenging for a number of airports. So was very impressed by the lengths London Luton airport had gone to in order to meet this requirement.

Terminal Infrastructure & Assisted Travel brand update

Denise then advised the Forum members that the plans to transition across from the term of *Special Assistance* to *Assisted Travel* were progressing nicely. With expectations that the new brand, along with the proposed changes to the airport's wayfinding, signage and website should all coincide with the launch of the new *Assisted Travel* lounge during summer 2025. At this point Denise shared a number of proposed design finishes including furniture that were being considered by the airport, in order to obtain feedback from forum members.

Sam considering the various furniture designs offered, suggested that colour contrast was key especially with furniture and flooring choice. Which was supported by both **Phil** and **Marion**.

Gemma and **Nicola** also strongly advised against using busy patterns and designs for those with sensory related issues.

Similarly, **Sam** also expressed concerns about the proposed tone of the grey floor vinyl being considered for use in the *Assisted Travel* lounge. Advising that great care should be taken to ensure that it was fitted properly and there was clear definition between it and the remaining surface areas.

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Denise moved on to update the forum on the Help Points project, which had now seen 18 new devices installed across the airport. These included International Arrivals, at belt 3 & 5-6, Domestic Arrivals, and other key points in and around the airport itself.

Finally, **Denise** explained how London Luton Airport, due to previous successes, was again hosting another Accessibility Open Day this year, on Monday, 17 March 2025. As an opportunity for potential new passengers to familiarise themselves with the airport environment in a 'try before you fly' exercise, prior to undertaking their first flight or booking a package holiday to depart from the airport. The day is due to commence at 10:45, and will allow guests to experience check-in, the Security process, and even board an aircraft. So that they are completely familiar with the airport process in advance of their own potential travel arrangements.

There was a lot of interest from the forum members on behalf of their respective disability organisations and charity members, who said they would happily reach out to their service users and beneficiaries to seek further interest in the day.

AOB

Andy then asked if there were any points or questions the members wanted to raise.

Lesley wanted to know if there had been any further feedback, or indeed issues, from passengers travelling through Security with insulin pumps or similar devices.

Denise replied saying following Lesley's feedback at the last forum, more information related to passengers with diabetes and a stoma, had been relayed to the Security team to better prepare them future passengers with similar conditions. Consequently, there had been no recorded incidents since. And she felt comfortable that now the new training module will soon be rolled out to the entire Security team in the months ahead, there will be far greater awareness.

Andy and **Denise** then thanked members for their continued support and contributions, saying that the minutes would follow the meeting and would include a short questionnaire for the forum members to complete. Which would endeavour to capture their feedback on the effectiveness of the forum and areas that they felt could be potentially be improved upon.

Actions

To provide Forum members with an update on *Assisted Travel* rollout including branding, signage and website.

To provide Forum members with a date for the official opening of the *Assisted Travel* Airside lounge.

Next meeting Wednesday 10 September 2025