Minutes London Luton Airport Accessibility Forum (LLAAF)

Thursday 17 September 2026, Percival House - 10:30 a.m.

Attendees	
Andy Wright - LLAAF Committee Chair	Denise Hobbs - Accessibility Manager, LTN
Carla Russell - Guest Relations Manager, LTN	Deborah Smith - Guest Experience Manager, LTN
Anthony Hunt - Security Ops Manager, LTN	Liz Boadella-Burton - Head Customer Experience, WJ
Mary Doyle - Disability Etiquette trainer	Sam Leftwich - Thomas Pocklington Trust
Gemma Malins - Autism Bedfordshire	Jo Hill - Alzheimer's Society
Phil Rutter & Marion Burchell - Sight Loss Council	Peta Barratt - Colostomy UK & wheelchair user
Samina Hussain - Disability Resource Centre	Nicholas Orpin & Maxine - Hearing Dogs for Deaf People
Lesley Jordan - Breakthrough T1D (diabetes)	Ann Munroe & Anna Clough - Luton Council

Welcome and Introductions

Denise and **Andy** welcomed attendees to the forum, which was operated as a hybrid meeting allowing members to either join online or to attend in person at the LLA Excellence Academy, Percival House near the airport. Introductions were made, with apologies for those unable to attend shared with the group.

LLA Business Update

Denise outlined the agenda for the meeting, including a summary of the airport's recent performance, before reviewing the key actions arising from the previous meeting.

1. Wilson James Disability Awareness Training

Denise provided an update on the forum's request to participate in the assessment and evaluation of Wilson James's disability awareness training for the airport's security team.

To support this, an observation session was arranged for 3 July 2026, with seven forum members invited to observe a live training session delivered to new recruits.

Following the session, members agreed that the training content, delivery and overall approach were very good. Only minor adjustments were suggested, reflecting the positive feedback received from the forum.

2. Airport Website Update

Denise updated members on progress with the airport's website, following suggestions and feedback previously shared with the Marketing Team. Which included more info videos especially for those passengers who require more detailed information about how they would be transferred from their wheelchair to an aircraft seat for example.

Several improvements had been completed, including the full integration of the Assisted Travel brand and an accessibility audit. However, the remaining website updates had been delayed due to several major projects taking priority over the original plans.

Denise confirmed that a further update would be provided in due course. The outstanding website improvements therefore remain an area for continued monitoring.

3. Passenger Performance and Demand for Assisted Travel

Denise reported that airport passenger numbers had exceeded 2019 levels by 3.3%. Passenger numbers had also increased by more than 6% year on year so far in 2026. In comparison, the number of passengers requiring assistance (PRM) had increased by 58% since 2019.

This substantial growth in demand had placed additional operational pressure on Wilson James, which was required to assist increasing numbers of passengers across multiple flights. This had presented considerable challenges at times, highlighting the importance of maintaining appropriate staffing levels, effective coordination and a consistently high standard of service.

Despite these operational pressures, the airport had achieved a 'Very Good' rating from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) for its overall performance and service levels for the second consecutive year.

Denise acknowledged and thanked forum members for their continued support, feedback and contributions, recognising the important role they played in helping the airport achieve this positive outcome.

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4. Assisted Travel Complaints and Compliments

Carla joined **Denise** to provide an overview of the complaints and compliments received from Assisted Travel passengers, highlighting the main reasons for the feedback. Further details were presented in the accompanying slide pack on pages 10–13.

The feedback provided an opportunity to recognise areas of good practice while identifying potential improvements to the passenger experience. Continued monitoring of complaints and compliments will help inform future service improvements and ensure that passenger feedback remains central to the development of Assisted Travel provision.

5. Planned Initiatives and Future Improvements

Denise and **Carla** outlined upcoming initiatives that the airport intended to trial to improve the experience of passengers requiring assistance.

One of the proposed initiatives was a dedicated Family/PRM Lane to provide additional support during the security process. The trial would involve deploying a greater number of security officers with enhanced disability awareness training, with the aim of improving the level of assistance provided and creating a more supportive and accessible passenger journey.

The effectiveness of the proposed arrangements would be important in assessing whether the initiative delivered the intended benefits for passengers.

Denise then handed over to Liz Bordella-Burton, Head of Customer Experience at Wilson James, who proceeded to deliver her presentation.

Wilson James Operational Update

Liz introduced herself and summarised London Luton Airport's recent ECAC figures, which her Wilson James team was contracted to manage and support. These CAA-set time metrics are used to monitor and compare UK airports' performance. Results had remained strong over the past 12 months, showing consistently high performance despite the challenges of growing passenger numbers. In 2026, passenger numbers had increased by nearly 20% compared with previous years. The busiest day was 18 May 2026, when Wilson James assisted 884 passengers.

Andy praised **Liz** and her team for assisting so many passengers in one day, many arriving simultaneously on different flights. He asked how Wilson James (WJ) would meet increased staffing and equipment needs if passenger numbers continued to grow at similar rates.

Liz was confident that WJ's growth modelling was already informing recruitment plans. However, she acknowledged that she would need to discuss future assistance equipment requirements directly with the airport.

Andy Wright Announcement

Andy announced his decision to step down as Chair of the London Luton Accessibility Forum, having served since 2019. He was pleased to confirm that Mary Doyle had agreed to succeed him and support the airport's ambition to become the UK's most inclusive and accessible airport.

Andy thanked fellow members for their support and dedication throughout his tenure and wished Mary and the forum continued success.

The forum concluded the morning's discussions before breaking for lunch and a comfort break.

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Security Performance Update

Anthony introduced himself and his colleague, **Ross Parker**, and outlined recent security changes reflecting the airport's move away from a 'one size fits all' approach. These included consideration of a dedicated PRM Lane, the introduction of next-generation x-ray machines, wider lanes for wheelchairs, lower baggage benches and more seating. Targeted hidden disability awareness training would also be introduced. All new recruits would receive Level 1 Ground Security Officer (GSO) training covering mobility aid screening, body searches for passengers with stomas, sensitive handling of pacemakers and insulin pumps, and screening passengers seated in wheelchairs. They would also receive bespoke 'How may I best assist you?' training.

Anthony reported that 125 security officers had completed the new WJ disability awareness training programme during 2026. Feedback had been positive, with one participant commenting: 'Hollie is an excellent trainer. She really opened my eyes as to how we should be treating our customers with disabilities'.
Anthony confirmed that the enhanced training programme had reduced complaints about security, a welcome outcome for the airport.
He also described other complaints and asked members whether these had been handled appropriately. In one case, a security officer had stopped a passenger on suspicion of carrying 'bomb making' equipment. The items were lubricating deodorant and adhesive removal spray, which **Peta** confirmed were routinely used by people with stomas. Such cases called for greater consideration for passengers and further staff training to prevent similar mistakes.

Ross described his experience working in security at London Luton Airport and shared colleagues' accounts of how the training had helped them improve passenger service. He introduced the following example of passenger feedback:

'I would like to recognise Mark for his exceptional kindness and quick thinking earlier today. While on duty, Mark stepped in to assist an elderly gentleman who had suffered a fall just before the underpass. Mark didn't hesitate to provide immediate aid and comfort, and he even ensured the guest made it to their gate on time.'
Ross answered members' questions before handing over to **Debbie Smith** for her presentation.

Customer Experience Achievements

Debbie introduced herself and outlined London Luton Airport's recent cultural changes and resulting achievements. She explained that the airport was encouraging closer staff collaboration to build a more inclusive, *guest*-focused culture, supported by enhanced training and a better understanding of each person's role.
This change alone had significantly improved the airport's Airport Service Quality (ASQ) scores, an internationally recognised measure of airport service standards. Scores rose from 3.55 in 2018 to 4.14 in 2025.

With over 85% of its end-to-end passenger journey outsourced, London Luton Airport had introduced innovations and initiatives to improve collaboration and efficiency. These efforts helped it win Best Airport at the 2024 and 2025 Customer Experience Awards, with hopes of repeating this success in 2026.

AOB

Andy and **Denise** invited any final points from members. With no further questions, **Andy** thanked members for their continued support and contributions and closed the meeting.

Actions

- Share dates for an Accessibility Open Day for forum members, service users and beneficiaries.
- Arrange additional staff training on vision, autism and dementia awareness over the winter.