

Minutes London Luton Airport Accessibility Forum (LLAAF)

Thursday, 16 March 2023 11:00 a.m.

Attendees	
Andy Wright - Committee Chair	Denise Hobbs - Accessibility Manager, LTN
Andrew Heelis - Station Manager, Wilson James	Rui Campos - Purple Door App, Ostrum
Dr Rita Egan - Luton Passenger Services Committee	Mary Doyle - Disability Etiquette trainer
Raj Anujan - Autism Bedfordshire	Lisa Mallett - Alzheimer's Society
Peta Barratt - Spinal Injuries Association	Libby Herbert - Colostomy UK
Phil Rutter - Thomas Pocklington Trust	Chloe and Linda Walters - LTN Passengers
Apologies	
Samantha Leftwich - Thomas Pocklington Trust	

Welcome and Introductions
<p>Andy welcomed attendees to the London Luton Airport Accessibility Forum (LLAAF), which was held at Putteridge Bury Hall, close to the airport. Introductions were made and new attendees were introduced, and apologies read.</p> <p>Andy ran through the main action points from the previous meeting, which included an update on staff training (which was addressed later in the meeting). As well as the possible introduction of weatherproof covers at the airport to help protect mobility scooters and power wheelchairs in the rain. And how development of the PRM Passenger Assistance App, <i>Purple Door</i>, was progressing.</p> <p>Denise informed the Forum that she had now sourced some weatherproof covers, which she hoped would be suitable to protect mobility equipment whilst waiting to be loaded/unloaded from aircraft in bad weather. But if not, she had also identified another product, which she felt may also be more suitable, just in case. Denise advised that she would provide an update on the most appropriate cover type chosen and its effectiveness at the next meeting. Denise also confirmed that an agreement with process plan for the ground handling staff would need to be implemented to make this work.</p> <p>The final action from the previous meeting, concerned a progress update on the PRM Assistance App, <i>Purple Door</i>, which had been discussed at the previous meeting. Andy informed the Forum that there would be a full demonstration of the prototype product later in the meeting.</p>

LLA Operational Overview
<p>Denise then updated the Forum with a summary of recent passenger related statistics from the preceding months. Admitting that the airport had been disappointed by the results from the last Accessibility report conducted by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). Which despite achieving three out of four of its targeted areas. One of these being satisfaction scores, where LLA was recognised as a top UK airport performer. The airport had unfortunately been rated overall as 'Poor', due to its failure to achieve the necessary time response scores for meeting pre-notified Arriving passengers flying into the airport.</p> <p>Since then, Denise explained that the airport has been working hard to address these performance issues in conjunction with the airlines. Including looking at ways to improve airline pre-notification rates. As well as, collaborating with Wilson James (the company contracted by Luton Airport to manage the needs and requirements of the airport's disabled passengers, and those who require additional assistance when they fly), to address the shortfalls and ensure continual service improvements were made from now on.</p> <p>Such measures included enhancing the Management team, improving staff training, and introducing new IT. So as to be able to capture far more accurate performance data. Denise was confident that future CAA timing related targets would be improved upon going forward, due to these measures. (More information can be found on the attached presentation document- slide 6).</p>

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Denise then went on to talk about a number of projects the airport was progressing, to enhance services for PRM travellers. These included approval for a new dedicated PRM lounge area. Which will be developed on Pier B and aims to be completed by the end of this year.

Also, new automatic door openers had recently been installed on the airport's *Quiet Room*. As well as enhancements to the toilet block, which will result in a *stoma friendly toilet* being available once completed.

Libby asked about the current door locking mechanism and questions were raised about the apparent height of the sensor for the flush mechanism. With **Lisa** asking if there were plans to introduce a sign to indicate that a flush mechanism was present. In addition, **Andy** asked which regulations do LLA follow as far as their accessible toilet specifications are required. As many Forum members commented about the current layout not necessarily being to everybody's liking, especially with the proximity of the basin and its size. Also, comments were made as to why sensor taps were not used. As **Phil** said he often finds the pressure far too high in many accessible toilets, with water from the tap splashing all over him.

Pagers had now also been purchased by the airport, which just require signal boosters before they can be fully implemented. Whereupon PRM travellers will be able to enjoy the food and beverage outlets, as well as Duty-Free, knowing they can be contacted when needed by the support staff.

Denise went on to explain how many of the Help Points were due to be replaced, with additional points being installed within the terminal. Before the airport prepares to install the new 3D Security scanners, which will enable passengers to keep both their liquids and electronics within their hand luggage when entering Security. As the new technology will be able to scan these items thoroughly, which of course will save considerable time and stress in Security queues. She said Forum members would be invited to proof test this new equipment before the airport introduces it fully into the operation.

Rita then mentioned that there were now no longer any tables between the seats within the Special Assistance lounge. Making it very difficult for PRM passengers to eat and drink whilst they are waiting in the Assistance area.

Denise said she would look into this further and report back.

Denise then shared details of a number of recent events, in and around the airport. Starting with the soft launch of the DART rail link to the terminal, which was due to take place the following day, 17 March 23. Explaining that for those passengers who hold an older person's bus pass or a Blue Badge, concessions are available. Further information can be found at <https://www.lutondart.com/concessions/>

Other activities included an Accessibility Familiarisation Day which was hosted by the airport in partnership with EasyJet on 1 February 2023. Where a number of *potential* travellers had an opportunity to look at the support that is offered by the airport for people who require some form of additional assistance when they travel. In addition, **Denise** also hosted Chloe and Linda Walters when they visited the airport and an inspection visit of the DART rail link by some Forum members, was also organised before it became operational.

Wilson James - Special Assistance performance update

Following lunch, **Andrew Heelis** then introduced himself as the new Manager for Wilson James at the airport. Providing a brief overview of his Operational Team and the challenges they had all collectively had to overcome in recent months. This was supported by a wide array of operational performance statistics (More details can be found in the attached presentation slide pack).

Going forward, **Andrew** said he felt more confident about this year, mainly due to the addition of new members to his team. Including a new Concierge position, which had been created to improve the PRM passenger experience. As well as various improvements to the level and quality of training, both for the Management and Operational team.

With the introduction of the new PRM Assistance App, Purple Door, soon to be introduced to the airport, he felt that he, and Wilson James, were now better prepared for Summer 2023.

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Purple Door PRM Passenger App.

The Forum members then received an online presentation, hosted by Akhila Chacko and Rui Campos from Ostrum, the company behind the Purple Door App.

Forum members had previously been told about a new PRM Passenger App that was being trialled and would be available for them to explore in the months ahead. It had been designed to enable them to communicate directly with the Special Assistance provider at their chosen airport. And in time, the airline, and relevant support staff of the airport they wished to travel from/to.

Rui introduced himself, sharing his screen online, whilst he went through the various stages of registering as a new member to the app. Before explaining how to advise the airport's Special Assistance Team of any further information the user may wish to share with them, beyond that already provided directly to their airline or booking agent. Such as the exact dimensions of a wheelchair, further details about the nature of a condition, and perhaps additional needs and requirements the user may have for their journey. Where and when the user may wish to meet the Assistance staff, along with additional information that may aid them when supporting the user.

The Purple Door App was generally well received, and feedback was positive. Naturally it was felt by a number of the Forum members that for them to be able to use and better understand the App themselves, a proper trial would need to be carried out.

Therefore for those members who wanted to try the App themselves, it was suggested they email Akhila Chacko on akhila.chacko@ostrumtech.com, saying that they were a member of the Luton Airport Accessibility Forum and would like to trial the Purple Door App.

Luton Airport is one of the first airports to run the trial, so would be very interested to learn of any user's experience.

New Staff Training Module

Denise provided a brief overview on the progress to date of the new staff training module. Informing the Forum that the Version 1 of basic online model had now been presented to the airport for comment. **Denise** had met with the airport Management team, who in principle were happy with the first draft. Which included members of the Forum speaking to camera about their own personal travel experiences flying through the airport. But it had been agreed that a number of tweaks and enhancements still needed to be made, which **Denise** and **Andy** were now in the process of structuring.

Therefore, it was agreed that when these changes have been made and the next version is available, this will then shared with Forum members for further comments and feedback.

AOB

There were no other topics for discussion or comments from Forum members, so the meeting was officially concluded. **Andy** and **Denise** thanked all the Forum members for their participation and continued support and advised that the next Forum will be **14 September 2023**.

Actions:

- **Denise** to liaise with **Andy** and nominated Forum members, for further collaboration and input in support of the ongoing London Luton Airport staff training module.
- Forum members to contact Purple Door directly, if they wish to trial the new App.