

Minutes of Special Assistance Consultative Committee meeting

Date of meeting: 30th January 2018

Meeting participants:

Birmingham Airport (BHX), OCS, Stomawise, Guide Dogs, CP Midlands, Whizz-Kidz, Autism West Mids., JDRF, assist-Mi, Action on Hearing Loss, Spinal Injuries Association, Alzheimer's Society

Purpose of meeting:

To evaluate current service levels provided to special assistance passengers travelling to/from Birmingham Airport, and propose improvements and enhancements for consideration

Discussion points & actions to consider:

- The Committee proposed more passengers should communicate as much information as possible about their assistance requirements to their travel agents or tour operators. As this information can help to ensure BHX provide the best possible service to meet their passengers needs
- Committee suggested that Birmingham Airport should advise OCS, that some passengers may wish to use own Promove slings (or similar)
- The committee highlighted a lack of information on the Airport website regarding the assistance service. Suggesting it requires more images / videos, downloadable terminal maps with suitable ALT text for images, subtitles on videos, and be more compatible with popular software. Guide Dogs offered to share recent review of BHX website, conducted by their tech team
- AOHL suggested a review of parking access/exit accessibility when in vehicle, particularly for hearing impaired (text based 'help' as well as audio 'help'). Also, alternatives to current ticket collection/deposit method should be considered
- Guide Dogs suggested tactile or high contrast flooring should be considered, leading up to and/or around assistance areas/call points, to assist visually impaired passengers
- Braille signage needs to be improved and wording needs to be changed to be more user friendly
- Disabled toilets should have different colour scheme to support visually impairment
- BAL advised the Committee about the recent installation of ADi Access RoomMate
- Review facilities to spend guide dogs' airside (e.g. Astroturf)
- OCS to review availability of animal chip readers following feedback about delay on arrival
- Discussion around support for dementia carers to use toilet facilities and leave companion supervised in assistance waiting areas for short periods

- Review viability of using volunteer support for assistance service
- JDRF suggested services for travellers with diabetes should be reviewed, especially for security staff around insulin pumps - which must not be x-rayed - and security processes. Vending machines should be provided close to security exit and be included on forthcoming specialised assistance map
- Stomawise suggested introducing the `sunflower coat pin` alongside hidden disabilities lanyard following feedback
- Consideration was given to creating a downloadable app onto mobile devices, in order to provide website information and specialised maps
- The Committee encouraged BHX to consider a comprehensive review of training for ALL airport staff. This should include BHX and OCS staff, as well as airline front line staff and retail units. Consideration should be given to engaging further with all charities represented at the Consultative Committee to develop training, including trial days and infrastructure re-evaluation.

Next meeting date and time: 2nd of August 2018