



Birmingham Airport Accessibility Roundup

March 2019

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1. Introduction

Birmingham Airport is fully committed to the ongoing development of our assistance service and facilities so that air travel remains fully accessible, and so that we can offer an infrastructure that accommodates everyone's needs.

We regularly engage with disability groups and charities and use their feedback to improve our services and improve training content for airport staff.

2. Accessibility improvements

We are continuing to promote our 'sunflower' lanyard scheme to both customers and airport staff. During 2018, a new logo was created to use on airport wayfinding signage in key locations to make it easier for lanyard wearers to identify the best routes.



Increased exposure on social media of the sunflower lanyard scheme has significantly increased the number of passengers asking for lanyards and we are delighted that so many more people are now benefitting from this scheme.

Following engagement from the Birmingham Sight Loss Council, Royal National College for the Blind and Guide Dogs, we now have a new standard of help point design that will improve visibility as well as bringing together the new brand designs.

Help Points now have a clear 'Location' to better identify where a passenger is calling from, and there is now an SMS / Whatsapp alternative for people with hearing impairments, both at Help Points and all car park entry / exit barriers and payment machines. During 2019, there is a project to renew key Help Points with more modern technologies that are better suited to a variety of disabilities.



For many disabled passengers, the only barrier to fully accessible air travel is the level change between the ground and the aircraft cabin. Depending on the



operational choice of the airline, access has traditionally been offered by an airbridge / jetty or with mobile steps. In the summer of 2018, we took delivery of 3 new Aviramp Continental and 1 Aviramp International passenger access ramps. Aviramps replace traditional steps / stairs with a ramp and offer a safer access route for every passenger, as well as better accessibility for disabled passengers. These complement our existing provision of Aviramp Lites and these new models of Aviramp give airlines the choice to provide step free access on a range of aircraft types. This takes us one step closer to our vision of offering truly step free access to every aircraft.



3. Recognitions and awards



TOURISM FOR ALL
Making Accessible Travel Better



4. Engagement

In February 2019, we hosted our 3rd, bi-annual Accessibility Forum. This group is made up of representatives of disability charities or support groups and their constructive feedback is really helping re-shape our airport. Minutes of these meetings can be found on our website.

During the latter part of 2018, we were proud to host two Tryb4uFly familiarisation days. These comprised of a short airport tour, and classroom-based learning for Occupational Therapists from the local area.



Two of our own security officers who both have stomas continue to deliver airport security and assistance talks to support groups within the midlands area, at least 1 per month. Feedback from these groups is used to further improve training within the security team and the talks are very well received by the attendees of the groups, many of whom have only recently started living with a stoma but are keen to fly away on holiday.

Throughout 2018, OCS continued to host airport familiarisation tours for individual families or groups so reduce some of the anxiety ahead of their day of travel. In 2019, in response to feedback from our advisory group, we will be looking to set up a more structured way to promote and book these via our website.

Most recently in March 2019, we started building a new relationship with the Network Rail assistance team at Birmingham New Street. Not only will there be great ideas or initiatives we can share, but opportunities to offer specific information to passengers travelling between the airport and New Street and create a more seamless journey between the two places.

5. Assisted Travel improvements

Fundamental to ensuring disabled people can easily travel by air is our Assisted Travel service, fulfilled by OCS.

During 2018, this contract was put to the market and in December 2018 we awarded OCS a 22 month extension. With this extension, we agreed new targets and measures that exceed the industry minimum standards and OCS have committed to deliver a refreshed Customer Service course to all staff.

This extension also brings the introduction of the new, cutting edge operational allocation / planning system that uses fixed location 'beacons' that will launch on 1st April 2019. This system is specifically made for this type of operation and keeps the customer at the centre of each journey. Whilst a computer programme may not seem like it will offer much in the real world to disabled passengers, we believe customers will have a more consistent quality of service, staff behaviours will improve, more effective staff





planning can be made and the quality of the data will be very accurate.

We continue to look for innovations to offer our disabled customers, and early in 2019 we became one of the first UK airports to be able to offer a 'Ramble Tag' – an alternative to traditional physical-contact guidance for visually impaired passengers.



At the beginning of 2019, we renewed our fleet of complimentary assistance scooters available for departing passengers and these continue to be a very popular choice!

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