



Special Assistance at George Best Belfast City Airport

Summary Report
May 2022

- 1.1 European Regulation (EC) 1107/2006 (the Regulation) provides rights for passengers with disabilities and reduced mobility when travelling by air. This has been retained in United Kingdom (UK) law following the UK's exit from the European Union (EU).
- 1.2 The Regulation requires all airports and airlines in the UK and EU to provide assistance to passengers with a disability or reduced mobility. The Consumer Council has been designated by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to be the complaints handling body for the Regulation.
- 1.3 In 2014 the CAA issued guidance requiring airports to consult with passengers with a disability or reduced mobility. The Consumer Council subsequently worked with George Belfast City Airport to establish an Accessibility Forum at the airport. The Forum is made up of a range of organisations which represent consumers with a disability or reduced mobility. They met on 4 April 2022 and toured the airport building.
- 1.4 The intended outcome of this visit is for the Forum to continue to work with the airport in looking specifically at special assistance to gain a better understanding of issues faced by passengers using this service. In particular, it is intended to identify areas where it works well, and to implement suggestions made by Forum members to help make travel more convenient for those passengers.
- 1.5 The Forum was very positive about the airport's facilities and, in particular, the special assistance services that are provided to passengers right through from the initial car park call points to departures. There were a number of recommendations made by participants. These focussed on:
 - Signage;
 - Colour contrasting on escalators/steps; and
 - Improvements to seating areas.

A full list of the recommendations is provided on Page 2.

- 1.6 The findings of the visit will be shared with the airport. An update on progress made against the recommendations will be reported by the airport to the Accessibility Forum at its next meeting.

Summary of Recommendations

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| | Signage |
| 1 | Review signage on call assistance points to ensure people who are deaf or hard of hearing are aware that a member of staff will come out if the button is pressed. |
| 2 | Provide clear signage to the special assistance desk at the entrance/departures area. |
| 3 | Provide signage to indicate the availability of a Changing Places toilet. |
| 4 | Check-in desk numbers should be black on a white background, with a matt finish if possible to prevent glare. |
| 5 | Consider additional signage at eye level to gates/shops. |
| 6 | Provide signage at an earlier point in gate area advising passengers of additional toilet facilities near the restaurant area. |
| 7 | Provide larger signage with regards to hidden disabilities on assistance toilets. |
| 8 | Provide additional signage at eye level directing passengers to toilets. |
| 9 | Provide markings at police stands in arrivals area to note clear perspex surrounds. |
| | Special Assistance Desk |
| 10 | Consider location of special assistance desk so that it is not hidden behind other information areas – could it be located nearer to the check-in area? |
| | Check-in area |
| 11 | Consider height of desks or signpost to an alternative area where check-in can take place if this is an issue for individual passengers. |

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| | Seating |
| 12 | Make seating area immediately after security more visible. |
| 13 | Update assisted travel seating area in line with improvements to other sectioned areas to ensure it is as welcoming as possible to passengers. |
| 14 | Consider changing lighting mode in Danske Bank section. |
| | Escalators/steps |
| 15 | Insert yellow strips at the top and bottom of all steps in the airport. |
| | Contrasting Colours |
| 16 | Consider better contrasting floor colours with a matt finish in shopping area. |
| 17 | Consider providing contrasting colours for toilet seat/handles to assist people with dementia or visual issues. |
| 18 | Change colours of queue poles so that they contrast more clearly with the floor/walls. |
| | Toilets |
| 19 | Consider replacing push button flush with handle in assistance toilets. |
| | Lounges/Restaurant areas |
| 20 | Consider an automatic door to Aspire Lounge. |
| 21 | Restaurant operators to audit space to ensure full accessibility for people with mobility issues. |



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