



**Access Forum - Microsoft Teams meeting
Thursday 29th April 2021**

Attendees

Fraser Bain – Airport Duty Manager, Aberdeen Airport
Kevin Douglas – Terminal Operations Manager, Aberdeen Airport
Alison Conn – Administration Support, Aberdeen Airport
Ailsa Flett – Service User
Andrea Barclay – Access Forum representative on Airport
Consultative Committee
Andy Hyde – Upstream Scotland
Carol Kennedy - JD RF
John Callender – Service User
Joan Allan – ABM
David Cordiner - ABM
Pamela Munro – Service User
Sam Reid – Deaf Action
Martin Quinn – Able2Fly

Lesley Crerar – Sign Language Interpreter

Apologies

None



Discussion points during and after the presentation

Passenger Numbers and PRM Data

- Fraser Bain (FB) advised that the number of passengers provided with assistance for the first 3 months declined by 85% compared to the first 3 months of 2020. As the lockdown began in late March 2020 we will expect to see a rise in the number of PRM's in April and subsequent months.
- 96% of passengers requiring assistance travelled with either Loganair or British Airways between JAN and MAR this year. KLM only restarted the AMS flight in mid-March.
- FB talked about the early signs of recovery and the gradual increase of passenger numbers but highlighted the uncertainty that still exists about flight schedules and the resumption of international travel.
- Carol Kennedy (CK) asked about the current restrictions on international travel and FB clarified that non-essential travel has now resumed within the UK but it is not clear yet as to the system that will be in place (testing & quarantine) for passengers travelling abroad.

Updates

- FB provided some updates on activity that has taken place since the last meeting in February.
- The airport has been signed up to the Keep Safe Initiative for the past few years which means that the airport is listed as a (keep) safe place for people to go if they feel frightened, vulnerable or the victim of crime when out in the community. Keep Safe was developed from a partnership between the



charity 'I am Me' and Police Scotland and came about as a result of feedback from the disabled community that they don't always feel safe when travelling independently. The opportunity was taken recently to provide refresher training for the passenger assistance team who would likely be the first point of contact at the airport.

- CK had highlighted at the last Access Forum the needs and concerns of passengers with diabetes travelling through the airport. Based on this the airport has since the last meeting updated the security pages of the assistance section on the website with relevant information about the carriage of medical equipment. [Assistance: Security Checks | Aberdeen Airport](#)
- FB further explained that the COVID information pages on the assistance section of the website have been fully updated with FAQ's and the layout of the pages have been designed to make it easier to access the information. [Special Assistance COVID-19 Info | Aberdeen Airport](#)
- Looking ahead to later in the month of May a project will begin to upgrade one of the airports taxiways. The work will have an impact on the northern gates of the terminal with the Orkney and Shetland flights reallocated to the front

stands for a period of approximately a month. The NHS patient lounge and adjacent toilets will be closed for the same duration.

ABM Updates

- David Cordiner (DC) provided some updates from ABM and discussed the areas they have been focusing on since taking over the passenger assistance contract.
- DC explained that all the team have been provided with training on customer service, disability awareness, hidden disabilities and health and safety.



- ABM are keen to provide their team training on a wider range of disabilities and DC appealed to the forum for their suggestions e.g. Diabetes, Stoma awareness etc
- CK wondered whether it would be feasible for all airports contracting with ABM to be trained at once? DC will investigate.
- Andrea Barclay (AB) suggested that online sighted guiding training has its limitations but advised to contact NESS (North East Sensory Services) as they have on-line packages available for both sighted guiding and assisting persons with hearing difficulties. AB noted that the training does not cover assistance dogs.
- DC asked AB whether she was aware of a product called Rambletags which ABM can offer passengers ([Home - Ramble Tag](#)) AB advised that she was aware and although she would not choose to use them herself, she feels it is important that passengers are given the choice. DC highlighted the advantages they can offer of making it easier to maintain physical distancing and reducing physical contact.
- Vaccinations – ABM have a voluntary vaccine register set up through their UK sites and Joan Allan (JA) confirmed many staff are now wearing a badge to show they have been vaccinated. DC can provide an update at the next meeting as to the number of staff that have been vaccinated. The question was asked about what would happen if passengers requested to be assisted by someone who had been vaccinated. DC explained they always try to accommodate specific requests but can't provide any guarantees.
- Testing – ABM team members are encouraged (voluntary) to take lateral flow tests on the 1st day they return to duty.
- ABM have invested in equipment to improve the passenger experience. This includes new wheelchairs and stair climbers (S-MAX) which are a contingency if the ambulift vehicle is not available. The forum members were shown a video of



another piece of equipment that has been introduced called the Pro-Move Sling. Please see the link to the video; https://youtu.be/nSTSq_1wVT0 The team have been trained up to use this to help passengers in to their seats and it is designed for greater comfort and to reduce the amount of contact with the passenger.

- Pamela Munro (PM) raised a question about cross contamination issues with the use of the Pro-Move Sling device. Although the device would be cleaned after every use, the group mentioned that passengers might have their own sling. DC mentioned that some airlines have their own equipment e.g. Easyjet. [easyTravelseat - Wheelchair transfers with safety, dignity & comfort](#)
- ABM have placed great importance on hygiene and cleaning procedures since the start of the contract as it is essential passengers feel safe when travelling. They continue to use a long lasting sanitiser application called Zoono. It offers extended protection on treated surfaces and it is utilised on a cyclical basis in all areas throughout the airport. DC also discussed using interactive posters for passengers to view cleaning schedules. All staff are provided with a full set of PPE.
- DC discussed the email address that ABM have in place for passengers to use if they have any airport queries. The email address is emailusforconfidence@abm.com and it is listed on the airport website under the assistance section. It is monitored by a central team and the aim is to provide reassurance for passengers and boost confidence in travelling. The airport will look to promote the email address as a special assistance helpline through its social media channels. CK said that she thought it was a great idea and is keen to add it to the JDRF website. DC to follow up.
- ABM are looking at hiring an electric wheelchair that will be available for passengers to use in the terminal to give them an option of being more independent.



- Signcode – ABM and the airport will investigate whether the use of sign language videos accessed using QR code signs in the terminal and/or on the website will be useful for deaf and hard of hearing passengers
- John Callender (JC) raised a question about the number of powerchair users that travelled through the airport. Martin Quinn (MQ) advised the following numbers which are recorded as EMA's (Electric Mobility Aids);
 - 2019 -1595
 - 2020 – 371
 - 2021 YTD – 19
- JA advised that the procedures vary depending on the type of battery but they don't cause any issues. DC advised there is a website which provides information about how to dismantle the powerchair which is required for carriage on the plane. The link for the website was requested and FB will look at including this on the airport website.
- Sam Reid (SR) advised that Deaf Action have a deaf awareness online training package. SR also mentioned she would need to review the content on the airport website before providing feedback.
- FB advised that the airport and ABM will be looking to produce a survey for Access Forum members to get a better understanding of needs and expectations and to help draw up a priority action list.
- The provisional date for the next Access Forum meeting is Wednesday 4th August.