



Special Assistance at Belfast International 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 Belfast International 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 15 March 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 the special assistance to help gain a better understanding of the 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 made suggestions based on their experiences and knowledge of some of the barriers passengers may face. These focussed on:
 - Signage;
 - Flight Display Boards;
 - Colour contrasting on escalators/steps;
 - Wheelchair access;
 - Toilet facilities.

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

	Signage
1	Provide additional signage at entry to short stay car park with directions to disabled parking bays.
2	Make signage clearer around the accessible drop off areas to deter other vehicles from stopping there.
3	Increase size of signage to reserved seating in the check-in area.
4	Provide additional signage e.g. arrows at eye level in toilet corridors.
5	Provide signage in check-in area and at earlier points in departures to indicate presence of changing places toilet beside Gate 19.
6	Provide braille/"not every disability is visible" signage at disabled toilet in check-in area.
7	Make signage indicating priority/special assistance lane larger.
8	Add signage beside flight departure screen at security indicating that larger screens are available elsewhere in the airport.
9	Add additional textual "toilet" signage in addition to figures.
10	Provide additional signage in main toilet areas to distinguish cubicles.
11	Provide additional signage for hand dryers.
12	Improve signage on reserved seating area immediately after restaurants e.g. mark in yellow to differentiate. When undertaking refurbishment of PRM seating ensure they are in contrasting colours and so can be defined more easily.
13	Provide additional directional signage to gates at eye level where possible and/or on floor where this is possible.

14	Brown/green colouring on signage is problematic for accessibility purposes as it is more difficult to perceive information than other backgrounds e.g. black on yellow. This should be raised with the airport owners.
15	Make signage indicating Gate 10 (and similar gates across the airport where applicable) larger.
16	Review size of flight information screens across the airport and consider increasing.
17	Provide bigger signage at the entrance to the Changing Places toilet indicating that it has that facility – including text.
18	Provide braille signage to Changing Places toilet.
19	Consider replicating signage at toilets at international departures in other toilets across the airport.
20	Increase size of signage in quiet area.
21	Highlight the availability of the quiet area elsewhere in the airport and on the airport website.
22	Review signage in border control area to ensure it is not over “busy”.
23	Provide signage at eye level to lift down to baggage reclaim.
24	Provide additional signage e.g. arrows along the corridor indicating the exact location of the lift.
	Parking/Drop off areas
25	Review the size of disabled parking bays and consider expanding beyond the regulation standard if possible.
26	Ensure that the five-stage process for booking car parking is easily accessible on the airport website.

27	Provide additional information at pay stations so that passengers know they can avail of special assistance for parking.
28	Give consideration to increasing the amount of disabled parking bays in the coach park.
Toilet Facilities	
29	Investigate possibility of installing an additional changing places toilet at check in area.
30	Investigate design of disabled toilet in check in area i.e. could more room be provided for wheelchair users.
31	Investigate whether push button flush could be replaced with a handle.
32	Check configuration of disabled toilet at restaurant area after check-in to ensure there is enough space for wheelchairs.
33	Consider installing automatic “toilet protectors” in the disabled toilets to ensure users can easily disinfect the seat.
34	Consider replicating the blue contrasting handles in disabled toilet at international departures in other toilets across the airport.
35	Consider placement of bins in toilet areas across the airport to ensure they are not in the way of users.
Escalators/Steps	
36	Provide yellow paint at top and bottom of all escalators/steps across the airport.
Security area	
37	Mark out priority queue clearly with one, contrasting colour for the poles and ropes e.g. yellow or blue.
38	Replace carpeted areas in the private search/interview room and in other areas of the airport with tiled/smooth flooring where possible.

	Flight Information screens
39	Review size of flight information screens across the airport and consider increasing.
	Restaurant/car hire services in arrivals hall
40	Liaise with third party delivery partners to conduct an accessibility audit of their facilities.
	Quiet Room
41	Consider redesign of the Quiet Room as part of the overall renovations, in order to better facilitate wheelchair users.
	Pavements outside airport
42	Investigate specifications for the use of tactile paving surfaces and upgrade paving accordingly.
	Future Airport Expansion
43	Liaise with the Airport Accessibility Forum and other groups at the design stage to ensure the new facilities are accessible to all.



The Consumer Council

Seatem House, Floor 3
28 - 32 Alfred Street
Belfast, BT2 8EN

T: 028 9025 1600
F: 028 9025 1663
E: info@consumercouncil.org.uk
W: www.consumercouncil.org.uk