
Minutes of the Leeds Bradford Airport[®] Accessibility Group Forum held at William Merritt Disabled Living Centre on Wednesday 2nd October 2022, 10:30-14:00 hours.

Attendees

Michael Connolly	Independent Chairperson	MC
Everita Strelca	Skywise Solutions Ltd	ES
Leesh Dusauzay	Sparkle Sheffield	LD
Phil Chan	Leeds City Council & NHS Leeds	PC
Bairbre McKendrick	Leeds City Council	BM
Kay Atkin	LBA [®] Customer	KA
Katie Turner	Leeds Autism Services	KT
Danielle Furness	Leeds Autism Services	DF
Christine Pearce	AVSED	CP
Michael Jowett	AVSED	MJ
Erica West-Padgett	Therapy Dogs	EW
Jarvis	Therapy Dog	JA
Rachel Hirst	William Merritt Disabled Living Centre	RH
Dan King	PRM Manager, LBA [®]	DK
Andy Leat	Customer Operations Manager, LBA [®]	AL
Chris Wilkinson	Head of Customer Operations, LBA [®]	CW

Apologies

Karl Wilson	Transpennine Route Upgrade	KW
Linsay Medica	Little Hiccups	LM
Scott Davies	LBA [®] Customer	SD
Diane Wilson	LBA [®] Customer	DW
Jane Hudson	LBA [®] Customer	JH
Chris Bright	JDRF	CB

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1. Introduction, Welcome & Apologies

Mick Connolly was introduced to the group by DK as the AGF independent chairperson. MC delivers PRM training to all Customer Experience Staff at LBA[®] along with ES.

DK Thanked staff at WMDLC for the use of the large training room, he explained that the board room at LBA had a maximum capacity of 15 persons, moving forward other venues would be used.

MC welcomed everyone to the forum, and basic housekeeping instructions were given. There was a round the room introduction given by everyone.

2. Previous minutes, April 2022 & November 2019

Copies of minutes were handed out and reviewed. Discussions were held about various changes. MC confirmed that moving forward there would be two forum meetings every year, the format that is planned is to be in person and round a room rather than online.

3. Leeds Bradford Airport[®] Customer Operations

CW was introduced to the group. Chris joined LBA[®] in 2022 as Head of Customer Operations and is responsible for Customer Experience Team, Cleaning Team, Airport Duty Management Team, Duty Support Officer Team and Supported VIP lounges until the team transferred to Commercial. CW had previously worked for LNER and brings a wealth of experience and knowledge with him from previous roles. He spoke about his time at London St Pancras

CW spoke about changes and improvements made at LBA[®], including staff benefits to retain staff, removal of temporary summer contracts to ensure staff are not lost in winter. New equipment from Security Queue time screens in the terminal to improved signage and robotic floor cleaners.

There is a lot of investment planned over the next few years, but we need an increase in passenger numbers to increase cash flow before investments are made.

AL spoke about the new Customer Experience Team. We now have a multi – trained staff profile to deliver PRM service, Car Parking service, Airside and Landside Bussing, CCTV monitor room and Meet and Greet. All staff are trained in PRM & parking to ensure we can meet demands at peak times.

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CW said that two brand new ambulifts have been ordered, but there is a supply issue with new Lorries, so LBA® can expect those late 2023. CW also said there would be more management support in 2023 with a new role, Customer Experience Development Manager and two extra supervisors.

4. PRM Operations overview Summer 2023

DK handed out a summary of PRM passengers at LBA®.

In 2019 there were 53,646 customers. In 2020 there were 10,900 customers and in 2021 there were 11,102 customers.

When the UK Government announced that all COVID travel restrictions would be lifted, it was a challenge as there was little data from airlines about booked customers. Many customers were unable to book holidays due to restrictions.

In May – September we were assisting over 6,000 customers per month. We started summer with around 30 staff, we needed 100. Recruitment had been taking place all through summer but bring a new member of staff in takes up to two months for ID badge and training.

Performance had been excellent for departing passengers, but poor for arrivals. We had not met the 80%, 90% and 100% ECAC targets. The CAA had visited and been supportive. There was a shortage of Ambulift Drivers, but a large training program was delivered and there are now three ambulift drivers per team.

There are now four teams, covering 24/7.

A group discussion took place about post COVID travel.

5. Introductions to new Groups / Updates about previous Groups

MC introduced LD who gave a presentation on the work of Sparkle Sheffield. PC was welcomed to the group and he spoke about his role with Leeds NHS & Leeds City Council.

KW has moved to Transpennine Route Upgrade and sends best wishes to the group for the future. Charli Brunning has left Leeds Mind and is now at Living Streets Charity in Leeds. JDRF have had a change of personnel in the North. Leeds Older Peoples Forum have had engagement, but not able to attend today.

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KA was welcomed and presented details of work with Airports and PRM providers for her PHD.

LBA[®] was asked if Airport Tours would recommence. DK confirmed that tours can take place but would prefer small numbers on each tour to ensure it's personalised. DK to issue instructions with the minutes.

6. Quality Standards Framework

ES gave a summary of the Quality Standards. In experience, the PRM service in the UK is generally best in class and there are a number of standards in place. The CAA will make public their finding and provide an annual ranking.

Discussions were held about improvements and requirements UK wide. Pre-flight information about airports is online but some users prefer a video. Therapy dogs would be a valuable service to customers.

LBA[®] customers had said that there seemed to be issues with Airline & Airport communications. There was concern about making specific requests to Airlines and no communication to Airport. DK spoke about the "free text" box that Airlines can use to send messages to PRM staff.

7. Independent Chairperson

MC advised that due his role as Trainer for LBA[®] staff, he will stand down as Chairperson at the end of this meeting. DK spoke on behalf of LBA[®] and thanked him for his service and support in the position. Minutes would be typed up by DK. If anyone would like to take up the position as Chairperson, please contact DK.

8. AOB

Good round the room discussion was had and time given to allow networking opportunity.

CP and MJ asked if there was a volunteering position available at LBA[®], DK would share contact details.

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EW advised that she was still in contact with Pets as Therapy (PAT) and would love to support a therapy dog scheme at LBA[®].

KT & DF said they would be happy to support with pre-flight information and video

LD will make contact and come to LBA[®].

BM & PC extended their support for LBA[®] and would be happy to provide advice for the terminal.

KA spoke about her PHD and asked to share a link to a Questionnaire about Air Travel, this will be shared with the minutes.

RH offered to show everyone the QEF TryB4uFly airplane cabin in the centre.

9. Next Meeting

If a new Independent Chairperson is appointed, the next meeting will be
Wednesday 10th May 2023.

If this meeting does not take place, the 2023/24 meetings will be
Wednesday 18th October 2023

Wednesday 20th March 2024

DK will make contact.

Meeting Closed