

 **Bournemouth Airport 1st Special Assistance Consultative Forum
27 February 2024**

 **Airport representatives:**

* D B (Special Assistance Supervisor) (DB)
* L C (Special Assistance Agent) (LC)

**Attendees:**

* P B (Guide Dogs Association) (PB) CHAIRMAN
* P C (Diverse Abilities) (PC)
* S M (Diverse Abilities) (SM)
* C W (PINNT) (CW)

**Apologies:**

* E L (Duty Terminal Operations Manager)
* C C (Autism Unlimited)
* P B (Blind Society)

**Meeting commenced at 13h00**

 **DB** - Welcomed all guests, especially those attending the forum for the first time. The purpose of getting together is to strengthen ties between Bournemouth Airport and various charitable and community associations and to ensure passengers who require any form of special assistance are able to travel comfortably, and with as little stress as possible.

The forum is also to provide feedback on points that were raised at the previous meeting in November 2023.
DB mentioned that in the period 01 January 2023 – 31 December 2023, 11549 passengers had been assisted. This number included 267 passengers travelling with electric mobility aids.
The 11549 passengers requiring assistance were made up of passengers needing assistance to the boarding gate, assistance onto the aircraft, fully confined passengers, those who were visually or hearing impaired and those with hidden disabilities.

The Bournemouth Airport Special Assistance team have recently completed training with the Blind Society. They had also all undergone Customer Service training as well as Emergency First Aid training in the workplace. Two members of the team had qualified on the Supervisors First Aid Course and two members of the team had attended the pet checking document course (APHA)

In accordance with CAA regulation where an external person should chair the meeting - DB introduced PB who had kindly agreed to do this for the forum.

**PB** – asked each person to introduce themselves and explain a little about their organisation and then asked DB to provide feedback on points raised at the last meeting in February.

**NOVEMBER CONSULTATIVE FORUM POINTS RAISED:**

**November meeting points raised**:

* A suggestion had been made about adding additional signage to the car parks, as finding car park 2 and 3 could be confusing and difficult for visually impaired passengers, and those who suffer from anxiety.
**Action taken**: The car park layout has been recently updated and the new map added to the website.
The airport is also in the final stages of additional signage approval which should be installed within the next two weeks.
* A suggestion was made to paint the Special Assistance phone box in the disabled area of the car park in a very bright colour, as the current dark blue was difficult to see (especially for visually impaired passengers) **Action taken**: The phone box will be painted pink in the next few weeks. This ties in with all the other Special Assistance signage at the airport and will make it much more visible.
* The online 360 tour should include more detailed information on where the different car parks were and from where parking charges start.
**Action taken**: Bournemouth Airport is in the process of putting together a car park video for use on our website and social media channels outlining all of the above. The video project is scheduled for the week commencing 25th March
* The Guide Dog Associationhad asked ifthere could be an area where guide dogs could spend before boarding their flight.
**Action taken**: It was agreed that due to the Bournemouth Airport flight profile being effectively short haul (max 4/5 hour flights) if we did need to facilitate, the owner and dog would re-locate landside and on completion would be “Fast Tracked” back through Security.
There is also an area that passengers and guide dogs can be escorted to alongside the arrivals building (airside)

**PB** – Asked if anyone wanted to share any thoughts / discuss any ideas which could then be addressed at the next forum.

**SM** – asked about the possibility of signage on Parley Lane and on the road leading directly into the airport - especially highlighting parking charges and that there is no free ‘drop off’ area. Perhaps the current sign in the road leading into the airport stating that ‘parking charges apply from this point on’ could be made bigger, so that it’s more visible.

**PB** – mentioned that he had walked from home to the airport and had found there was no designated walkway from Parley Lane along the road into the airport. Although most passengers arrive at the airport by car, the concern was for passengers who had no transport and had no option but to walk.

**CW** – asked about extended parking times for passengers who have booked assistance - as the 30 minutes may not be enough to unload wheelchairs, luggage etc
DB mentioned that the airport offers dedicated pick up and drop off spaces for Blue Badge holders in Premium Car Park 1 where time allowed is up to 4 hours for the current 30 minute rate of £5.

**CW** – Suggested creating more awareness by means of social media posts to highlight the fantastic facilities Bournemouth Airport have for Special Assistance passengers (i.e.: quiet route / familiarisation tours)

**CW** – suggested having an ‘online form’ that passengers could fill in and send to the special assistance team. This form could be used to pass on information about an electric mobility aid the passenger may be using / battery type or if the passenger has a Stoma etc
**DB** explained that when special assistance is booked with the airline, all this information is taken and then passed on to the Special assistance team.
**CW** mentioned that in the case where this doesn’t happen this ‘booking form’ could be used by Bournemouth Airport as a ‘What can we the passenger do, to help Bournemouth Airport help us’

**CW** – asked how passengers book assistance. **DB** explained that all special assistance should be discussed directly with the airline to ensure that the required assistance is available, as the level of assistance differs for individual airlines.
Phone numbers for requesting assistance and more in-depth information on booking assistance can be found on the Bournemouth Airport website under the ‘Special Assistance’ tab. **Tour of Bournemouth Airport (landside and airside)**

**DB** – highlighted the following:

* A new ‘very easy to see’ Special Assistance area, as passengers enter the departure terminal building.
* Six Special Assistance phone points around the airport connecting the passenger with a Special Assistance agent at any time during their journey through the airport.
* A dedicated ‘Fast Track’ route for Special Assistance passengers into Security.
* The clearly marked ‘Quiet route’ from Security into the departure Terminal. This had already proved to be incredibly popular with Autistic passengers, and elderly passengers who didn’t necessarily want a wheelchair but preferred the independence of walking.
* The clearly visible and designated ‘Special Assistance’ seating areas in the main terminal building, departures and arrivals hall.
These areas also served as a quiet area.
* The use of the Amazon (Stair climber) for fully confined passengers.

**DB** – thanked everyone for being at the forum and reiterated that Bournemouth Airport will strive to always make travel for Special Assistance passengers as comfortable and as stress free as possible.

Next meeting planned for November 2024.