

# **Bournemouth Airport 2nd Special Assistance Consultative Forum15 November 2023**

 **Airport representatives:**

* E Lowe (Duty Terminal Manager) (EL)
* D Beard (Special Assistance Supervisor) (DB)
* E Wood (Terminal Duty Officer) (EW)

**Attendees:**

* P Tarrant (Bournemouth Blind Society) (PT) CHAIRMAN
* S Shave (Diverse Abilities) (SS)
* J Fletcher (Diverse Abilities) (JF)
* T Thompson (Diverse Abilities) (TT)
* P Croxford (Diverse Abilities) (PC)
* S Murphy (Diverse Abilities) (SM)
* A Dennis (Diverse Abilities) (AD)
* E Cavazza (Guide Dogs) (EC)
* A Jakubczyk (Autism Unlimited) (AJ)

**Apologies:**

* L Herbert (Colostomy UK)

**Meeting commenced at 13h00:**

 **DB** - introduced all guests to the Bournemouth Airport Team and thanked them for their time.

DB also mentioned that the meeting was not only to establish ties with those representatives from organisations who were attending for the first time, and reconnect with guest who had attended previously – but also to provide feedback on points that were raised at the last meeting in February 2023.

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

**PT** – asked each person to introduce themselves and explain a little about their organisation.

**PT** – asked DB for an update and to provide feedback on points raised at the last meeting in February.

**DB** – mentioned that there had been a 35.14% increase in Special Assistance passenger numbers over the Summer and provided actual Special Assistance numbers (both inbound and outbound)
July 2023 – 1043
August – 932
September 1327
October 1521

**FEBRUARY MEETING FEEDBACK:**

At the above meeting, Bournemouth Airport were in the process of putting together a 360-video tour which would give any passenger the opportunity to have a virtual ‘walk through’ the airport.
**Action taken**: The 360-video tour has now been ‘live’ on the Bournemouth Airport website for 6 months.

**PT** – mentioned that white writing on a pink background can be difficult to read for someone who is visually impaired.
A yellow font on a black background is best.
**Action taken**: Additional signage has been added to assist passengers who are visually impaired. A yellow font on a black background has been used.
 **LB** – said that disabled toilets ideally needed a drop-down shelf and lowered hooks on the back of the door. Sanitary bins would be hugely helpful in the men’s toilets for gentlemen with stomas.
**Action taken**: Stoma friendly toilets are now in place. There is one toilet in each block of bathrooms anywhere around the airport. All have drop-down shelves, lowered hooks on the back of the door and sanitary bins.

**LB** – mentioned that perhaps the signage saying, ‘Passengers with Reduced Mobility’ could be changed as people with stomas do not have reduced mobility
**Action taken**: All signage has been replaced and the wording changed from ‘Passengers with Reduced Mobility’ to ‘Passengers requiring Special Assistance’.

**CC & PT** –said that some signage displayed too much wording – especially for visually impaired and autistic passengers.
**Action taken**: Signage has been replaced and wording reduced where possible.

**November meeting points raised**:

* DB will be booking some training sessions with various organisations now that we are in the winter months
* Check in Supervisors and DB will be attending an upcoming pet checking document course (APHA)
* In order to be of more assistance to our visually impaired passengers, Bournemouth Airport will be hosting a Guide Dog puppy visit on the 29th of November.

**PT** - suggested adding additional signage in 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.
He also suggested that the Special Assistance phone available for passengers to use in the disabled area of the car park be painted yellow as opposed to being blue (as this is especially hard for visually impaired passengers to see)
He also suggested the possibility of another phone for special assistance passengers in other car park areas and/or in the drop off area.
**Action**: EL to investigate possible options.

**AJ** – suggested the online 360 tour include more detailed information on where the different car parks are and from where parking charges start.
**Action**: EL /DB to investigate this

**EC** – asked if there could be an area where guide dogs could spend before boarding their flight.
**Action**: DB pointed out different areas that are currently available but will investigate further options.

**SM** – mentioned an incident where a colleague had arrived back into Bournemouth Airport and the Special Assistance agent had said they weren’t able to take them out to their vehicle.
EL explained that once an agent left the arrivals building, they couldn’t re-enter the baggage area. They would have to go back into the terminal building and clear security again.
EL mentioned that the agent may have gone back to fetch another passenger, but it should always be communicated clearly that the agent can take an arrival passenger to the car park, however this would take place after collecting all other passengers.
**Action**: Refresher training for all Special Assistance agents

**PT** - reiterated that although the assistance team at Bournemouth Airport could do everything in their power to ensure the passenger has a stress free journey with the required amount of assistance, it could be another airport that lets them down.
PT also mentioned that the individual airlines have their own policies and procedures in place which the airport need to adhere to.

**AJ –** reminded everyone how frightening the experience of travel *could* be for someone living with Autism
To make anxious passengers, or any passengers requiring special assistance feel more at ease, EL mentioned that the airport provides free pre- flight familiarization tours which are available in the winter months. Both the 360 degree virtual tour and the familiarization tours provide passengers with a wonderful opportunity to get a real life experience of their ‘day of travel’ before they fly, and in turn allow them to feel a little more at ease.

**PT –** remindedeveryone how important it was to remember that a passenger’s eyes may be open …. but they may still not be able to see anything. A sign may be large, but it doesn’t mean someone who is visually impaired can see it.

**Tour of Bournemouth Airport (landside and airside)**

**DB** – highlighted the following:

* The new signage with the wording ‘Special Assistance’ as opposed to ‘Passengers with reduced mobility’
* The dedicated Special Assistance desk (number 12)
* The Special Assistance telephones found at 6 points around the airport
* The dedicated ‘Quiet route’ from Security into the departure’s hall. This is clearly visible on leaving the security area.
* Clearly visible and demarcated ‘Special Assistance’ seating areas in the main terminal building, departures, and arrivals hall.
These areas also serve as quiet area
* The boarding process and demonstrated the use of the Amazon (Stair climber)

**DB** – once again thanked everyone for being at the forum

As always – Bournemouth Airport will continually strive to make travel for Special Assistance passengers as comfortable and stress free as possible.

Next meeting planned for February 2024.