

Minutes: Stansted Access for Everyone (SAFE) Forum

Tuesday 3rd December 2025, 10:30 am, Enterprise House

Attendees:

Libby Herbert – Chair SAFE Forum & CEO, Colostomy UK	Stephanie Putt - Accessibility Manager, STN
Eve Livingstone - General Manager ABM, STN	Sarah Yianni - Accessibility Support Officer, STN
Peta Barratt - Spinal Injuries Association member	Mark Neville - Alzheimer’s Society
Gobi Ranganathan - Norman Rourke Pryme Consulting	Harry Meade - Thomas Pocklington Trust
Anne Wafula Strike - Paralympian and traveller	Kevin Gay – Representing travellers with Autism
Sonia Sparkes - Representing travellers with MS	Emily Kilby – Civil Aviation Authority
Amy Askew - Thomas Pocklington Trust	

Apologies:

Alice Fullicks - JDRF (Type I Diabetes support)	

Welcome and introductions

Stephanie welcomed members to the December meeting, noting the importance of closing the year with a reflective and solution-focused discussion. She provided an overview of the agenda and emphasised the value of members lived experience in shaping Stansted Airport’s accessibility programme. Attendees introduced themselves, sharing their role and perspective. Stephanie also acknowledged apologies from those unable to attend and thanked all present for their continued support of the forum throughout the year.

Q & A

The meeting opened with an extended Q&A session, organised to encourage wider engagement between airport staff and SAFE forum members. Staff from a variety of departments visited the meeting space to seek advice, deepen their understanding of accessibility barriers, and explore opportunities for more inclusive practice. This informal format proved highly beneficial, giving employees valuable first-hand insight into the challenges faced by passengers requiring assistance and strengthening cross-departmental collaboration. Members commented that these direct conversations helped staff better appreciate lived experience and the importance of thoughtful, consistent support.

Performance & customer feedback update & Spinning Chair Product Review

Stephanie delivered a detailed performance overview, highlighting continued growth in passenger numbers and noting that October had been one of the busiest months of the year. Members discussed possible contributing factors such as school holidays. **Anne** asked how accurately the data reflected the true number of passengers requiring assistance. **Stephanie** explained that some passengers who collected a lanyard without using ABM services were not included, prompting a wider discussion about improving visibility of hidden disability needs. The group then discussed assisted boarding practices. **Anne** expressed concerns about passengers being boarded first or last without clear explanation, which could impact dignity and comfort. Several members described variation across airlines, noting that some provided supportive processes whilst others led to long waiting times. **Amy** suggested trialling first boarding to measure its impact. Members agreed that inviting an airline representative to a future meeting would be valuable. Stephanie also summarised recent customer feedback trends. Members discussed toilet accessibility, including the removal of Radar locks which, while improving access, also led to misuse. **Anne** suggested an intercom system for controlled access. **Stephanie** confirmed that the landside Changing Places facility already operated with a keypad system. A recent incident involving a hard-of-hearing passenger at a car park intercom prompted consideration of communication alternatives. Suggestions included WhatsApp-style messaging, a text-based alert routed to managers, and improved signage. **Mark** proposed downloadable flashcards for passengers to point to common needs, which the group felt would support a broad range of users.

Spinning chair product review

Stephanie sought views on the potential use of spinning chairs designed to support emotional regulation. Whilst members recognised that these can be beneficial in specialist environments, concerns were raised regarding safety, durability, and suitability within a busy airport setting. **Anne** noted that children's balance and sensory thresholds vary widely, increasing the risk of falls. **Libby** added that such equipment could attract interest from other children, making supervision difficult. **Amy** recommended that if such equipment were ever trialled, it should be placed in a controlled, designated space. Members discussed alternative sensory support options, including sensory boards which may offer safer, more universal benefit. **Stephanie** provided an update on plans for a temporary sensory pod ahead of the installation of a permanent sensory room in the airport transformation programme. Members welcomed this development and emphasised the importance of co-designing the room with lived-experience input.

AOB

The meeting concluded with broader reflections on accessibility initiatives within the STP programme. Members discussed ideas for the new lounge and sensory room, and **Mark** requested that the airport share evidence of improvements resulting directly from SAFE forum feedback to demonstrate impact and maintain transparency. **Libby** proposed scheduling one-to-one conversations in the new year to gather personal reflections on the forum and understand expectations for future meetings. **Stephanie** thanked all members for their continued engagement and confirmed that updates on actions discussed would be brought to the next meeting.