Manchester Airport Accessibility Forum Minutes

Date/Time: 10th June 2026

Venue: Radisson BLU, Manchester Airport

Attendees

Charles Van Berckel – Chairperson
Ed Kibblewhite – PRM Contract Manager – MAG
Matt Austin – Assisted Travel Manager – MAG
Christina Smith – Assisted Travel Services & Standards Coordinator - MAG
Anwar Hussain – Contract Manager – ABM
Jon O'Brien – Training Manager – ABM
Jake Hewitt – Senior Ops Manager - ABM
Brian Cadwallader – DSN
Lisa Birtles – DSN
Bethan Hughes – BSL Interpreter
Rachael Zimbler – Manchester Sight Loss Council
Stephen Rigby – Airport User
Chris Bright – JDRF
Adam Rigby – Airport User
Kelly Barton – Pocklington Trust

Minutes

1. Opening & Previous Actions

- Welcome and introductions
- Further training options with DSN and Sight Loss Council members, planned with dates for several Enhance the UK to be finalised with terminal and security teams
- New escalator warning signage in place being monitored.
- CVB sent out a survey questionnaire for wider forum members to feed into the tender process
- Internship contacts discussions underway with uptake from ABM
- Review low level FID screen options for baggage reclaim to include feedback from forum members.
- Review high-definition visuals on self-service check in kiosks is with the developers
- Feedback re new coloured graphics at security search area is undergoing an ongoing from Try the Airport Experience visitors and passengers.

- Further BSL training took place in April for ABM colleagues
- Mystery Shopper feedback from forum members continues to feed back user experience

2. Performance March – May 2026

- The volume of passengers requiring assistance has grown to match peak September levels and exceeds overall passenger growth year on year. While middle and far easter traffic has been affected by the situation in the middle east, PRM levels have remained high due to a growth market closer to home.
- Invisible disability lanyard requests increase during peak travel periods. The airport is now
- Prenotification rates remain consistent with around 25% of assistance requests booked within 36 hours of travel.
- Arrival standards for prenotified and non prenotified passengers remain consistent. Prenotified passengers met within 20 minutes and no prenotified passengers met within 45 minutes.
- Negative customer feedback is down by 30% on prior year.

ABM Updates

- Introduction to the Alba robot trials.
- Emobby fleet development.
- Recycling initiatives now in place with ABM's uniform supplier to reduce Wastage.
- Aerozone collaboration with MAG
- Pure Innovations and accessible employment update
- Training update – Autism Awareness, BSL and Enhance the UK sessions. Regulatory training to assist passengers travelling with assistance dogs and sighted guidance training from persons with lived experience planned with forum members
- Customer Feedback discussion with forum members re their own and service user feedback.

CONTRACT TENDER UPDATE

- Timeline and process shared with forum members
- Discussion on future ways of working
- Discussion on views and opinions

AOB

- Previous quarterly regulatory performance data review – March to May 2026
- Survey feedback volume and scores – 1.1% of all PRMs responded providing an overall score of 4.36 out of 5
- Hidden disability security initiative – Hidden disability lanyard wearers are invited to use all lanes in addition to the Assisted travel route following the successful implementation of the next generation security facilities. Security colleagues receive invisible disability awareness training to assist at any point during the security process. It was noted that Spanish airports no longer recognise the sunflower lanyard, asking for passengers to register with the airports directly prior to travel.

Next Steps / Actions

- The Chair will send out a questionnaire to all forum members to consider what the priorities should be for the year ahead.
- Coffee mornings to be scheduled with BSL, ABM and MAG colleagues
- Follow up re training opportunities including BSL with security colleagues