East Midlands Airport Accessibility Forum Notes

12th February 2026

PRESENT

Meeting Chair – Christiane Link, Ortegalink (CL)

Consumer Policy & Enforcement Advisor, CAA - Emily Kilby (EK)*
Accessibility and Inclusion – Sarah Rennie (SREN)*
Independent Consultant – Martha Foulds (MF)*
Derby City Council Equality Lead – Ann Webster (AW)*

Jet2.com and Jet2holidays – Steve Wilson, Assisted Travel and Medical Manager (Co-Chair DfT Implementation Group) (SW)

East Midlands Airport – Craig Holland, Customer Service Duty Manager (CH)
East Midlands Airport – Nikoleta Kiano, Customer Service Admin Officer (NK)

*Attended via Microsoft Teams

APOLOGIES

East Midlands Airport – Chris Drury, Customer Services Manager (CD)
British Deaf Association – Mhairi Simpson (MS)
Spinal Injuries Association – Danny Byrne (DB)
Guide Dogs - Jessica Luke (JL)

LOCATION

EMA Pathfinder House / Microsoft Teams (Online)

1. **Welcomes and Introductions**

CL opened the forum by thanking all members for attending.

2. East Midlands Airport Update

CH took members through the agenda for the forum and then the Customer Service Department structure.

CH states that the growth in customer numbers has plateaued and we're looking to refocus the management team, support out Journey Makers and establish full operational oversight of both the Assisted Travel and Terminal Operations departments, while growing a more resilient and highly engaged team. This means that certain Terminal Operations colleagues are under consultation for a change of role. The roles under consultation are the 'Customer Service Terminal Operations Manager', 'Customer Service Ambassador Lead' and 'Lost Property Assistant'.

The department structure changes include;

- Moving to 24/7 Customer Service Duty Manager cover
- Increase in the Operation Supervisor population, taking it from 5 to 6 to allow for more capacity and productivity
- Removal of the Customer Service Terminal Operations Manager role and the creation of a float Customer Service Duty Manager
- Assisted Travel Drivers are not affected by any of these changes
- Assisted Travel Agents, Customer Support Agents and Customer Service Ambassadors will all merge into one new role being, 'Customer Support Ambassador', this will allow multiskilled agents to bring synergy and flexibility to the whole operation. All the previous roles in the new structure will carry out both Assisted Travel and Terminal Operations duties. CH reassures the forum that all colleagues will receive the same high-level training.

AW voiced a slight concern over the new job title, Customer Support Ambassador. From a passenger confidence point of view, colleagues having 'Assisted Travel' in their job title feels as though they have a higher-level knowledge of how to assist a passenger. CH reassures AW and the forum that the 'Customer Support Ambassador' is an internal title only, colleagues will continue to wear that noticeable and memorable pink Assisted Travel branding.

SREN shared her concern of multiskilled agents, as in this sort of environment and job role there are qualities and personal specifications required to be able to successfully carry out certain duties. CH responds that a lot of thought has been put into this to make sure that all colleagues are comfortable and confident in their role, and that slight additional training will be taking place.

3. **CAA - Emily Kilby – Consumer Policy & Enforcement Advisor**

EK starts off by stating that the only CAA update since the last forum for EMA is that the CAP1228 (Quality Standard Rating) is currently with the higher-level management who are reviewing it and there are planned consultations to take place this summer with airports, airlines and stakeholders. It has incorporated certain inspection elements that CAA conduct on airports into it and additional guidance on auditing is also included in the CAP1228 review. The aim is to have all information on a single document.

In regards to the Airline Accessibility Review, CAA have given airlines till the end of February to make any changes to any of their policies that would affect their rating. 45 airlines have been assessed and 40 of those airlines have had their ratings confirmed. All the information is planned to be published at the end of March 2026.

CL thanks EK for the updates.

4. **East Midlands Airport General Updates**

CH gave members the following general updates:

- Immigration Assisted Travel Companion waiting area now installed
- Assisted Travel airside waiting area – Coffee vending machine to be installed by the end of February 2026.
- The new restaurant that is going in next to the Assisted Travel waiting area, to offer QR codes in the area, so Assisted Travel passengers can order and it comes directly to them
- Refurb of current wheelchair stock to take place through February
- Sensory Pod & New Quiet Room to be opened imminently
- Updated Assisted Travel Desk layout to include improved storage for Wheelchairs and Scooters
- Toilet refurbishments ongoing throughout winter, including Check-In Hall and Landside Arrivals Hall
- Resurfacing of Short Stay 1 car park, including an increased number of blue badge parking bays, and an increase in the size of these bays. New blue badge bays have been installed in Jet Parks 2 also for the first time
- Meet & Greet refurb completed with new Self-Service Kiosks, ready for summer 2026
- Transport Focus tour of EMA Assisted Travel offering plus and a tour with a Nottingham Trent University product design student researching improved aisle chair design
- MAG Accessibility and Inclusive Airport Standard being reviewed, currently in early stages. Forum member input is welcomed

CL asks if the QR codes going into the Assisted Travel waiting area could be made accessible for blind passengers. CL believe that development of a system were blind passengers could put in an order independently. There is systems such as 'NaviLens', that create accessible QR codes.

MF supports CL comments and agrees that 'NaviLens' would be a very good option to go with and a great solution. However, the creation and use of a tactile QR code or the use of a system such as 'NaviLens', isn't the difficult part, it is, as a blind passenger, knowing that they are there and available. MF suggest possibly publishing, somewhere, the link that navigates you to the ordering page. CL adds by stating that training the team to proactively letting blind passengers know that they can order.

CL likes the concept of this and believes it would make the airport experience for all Assisted Travel passengers much more enjoyable.

MF agrees and then mentions that she was very interested to hear about the new vending machine that is being placed in the Assisted Travel waiting area and was wondering how accessible what would be for blind people. MF has encountered that were vending machines are not accessible, you may find that staff have been briefed that Health and Safety regulations prohibits them from helping you use those certain types of products. MF asks if there is an agreed stance on if colleagues will be able to assist passengers with those vending machines?

CH – Confirms that members of the team will not be restricted in helping passengers with their vending options

CL adds that there are systems that you can place your vending machine order on your mobile phone and then all you have to do is press start on your phone and your coffee gets made for you. I think that makes the process more accessible.

CH thanks all members for their input on this. All points will be taken away and worked on.

AW asks if there are any gender-neutral toilets being put into place with the refurbishments taking place. CH responds that not to his knowledge.

SREN continues by stating that forum would be happy to help with the MAG Accessible and Inclusive Airport Standard but has requested that the current standard is shared with the forum.

Action *- CH to share the MAG Accessible and Inclusive Airport Standard with the forum.*

5. Commercial Updates

CH – Following the last forum that the new Commercial Director attended, a lot of points were taken away and have since been implemented in the airports commercial sector.

Updates include:

- New F&B offering Terracotta and Pork & Pickle include accessible seating options
- Terracotta to have a mixture of accessible tables (central stand and 4 leg tables)
- QR code ordering option at Alembic & Castle Rock
- Starbucks offer remote ordering via the Starbucks App
- Terracotta is currently reviewing their QR code ordering offer
- Avolta working with teams on Disability Equality Training
- Next Forum – Commercial Director is currently in conversation around access to Terracotta and for members of Avolta management to attend the tour

MF adds that making sure that the F&B website is updated for screen readers to be accessible for the QR code ordering process.

CL and all members of the forum are delighted that the forum has influenced such positive changes.

CH thanks all members for their support and guidance on all completed and on-going projects that are taking place at East Midlands Airport.

6. **Steve Wilson – Jet2 & Jet2Holidays Assisted Travel and Medical Manager & Co-Chair of the DfT Implementation Group**

CH introduces to the forum Steve Wilson. Forum members are guided through individual introductions.

SW is pleased to meet everyone and thanks all members for the opportunity and invitation to the forum.

SW begins talking about the DfT Implementation Group. SW says that as part of that Task & Finish group, they have produced a series of recommendations to enhance, improve the industry. They have produced a series of recommendations under a multitude of different kind of headings, these being Customer Information and Communications, Mobility Aid Design and Handling, Tailored Passenger Experience, primarily for the in-airport journey, Training, and Non-Visible Disabilities. This working group was less about reinventing the wheel and more about actionable, tangible change. Some of these recommendations require more time, more investment and some budget, but a lot of the recommendations are about enhancing what's already in existence or enhancing the understanding of industry around the legislation, guidance and driving best practise and working collaboratively across the industry. The group have spent the last few months breaking down the recommendations into subgroups. There are subgroup leads who are focused on driving the concept of the implementation and formulating a structure about understanding the gap analysis between where we are now as an industry and where we need to get to.

SW rounds up by thanking all forum members for the opportunity to meet everyone and speak to all today.

7. Accessibility Forum Members Discussion

CH asks members if they have any points they would like to raise.

CL starts by requesting that an Actions are noted down within the minutes of the forum.

NK takes that onboard and will implement into the February 2026 Accessibility Forum meeting notes.

CH will confirm the next tour date with the forum and will reach out to attendees closer to the time for information required for the airside tour.

CD thanks all members for their contributions.

8. Closing Remarks & AOB

CH will confirm the next tour date with the forum, possibly the 23rd of April 2026, waiting for confirmation from the commercial team, and will reach out to attendees closer to the time for information required for the airside tour. Forum to take place after the tour.

CL showed her appreciation and thanked all members of the forum for their attendance and praised the great work being completed by all.

Meeting Closed.