

Minutes Norwich Airport Accessibility Forum (NAAF)

Wednesday 10th September 2025, Main Terminal, Landside Flour and Bean Café, 11:30 am

Attendees	
Kat Wilby (KW) - PRM & Ground Handling (NWI)	Amanda Farmer (AF) – Dispatch
Dan Bean (DB) – Ground Handling/Health & Safety Manager (NWI)	Chris Armes (CA) - Apron Supervisor
Jon London (JL) - Dispatch/Trainer/PRM (NWI)	Penny Whitby (PW) - Vision Norfolk
Neil Symonds (NS) - Ground Operations Co-ordinator (NWI)	Sophie Allen (SA) - Vision Norfolk
Mark Wilcox (MW) - Flight Operations Co-ordinator (NWI)	Nina Scarfe (NC) - Stepping Stones
Mel Grey (MG) – Terminal/Customer Services Manager (NWI)	Carol Noble (CN) - Stepping Stones
Ioana Ursescu (IU) – Airport Security Manager (NWI)	Andrew Daniels (AD) - Stepping Stones
Alex Riches (AR) PRM Assistant (NWI)	Daniel Long (DL) - Stepping Stones
Ant Hase (AH) – AGS Cleaning (NWI)	Nick Thurlow (NT) - Stepping Stones
Cherry Schamp (CS) - UK Border Force	Tony white (TW) - Passenger
Tony Carragher (TC) - UK Border Force	Connie White (CW) - Passenger
Craig Burrell (CB) - PRM & Ground Handling (NWI)	James Kearns (JK) – The BUILD Charity, Chief Executive
Steve Cole (SC) - PRM & Ground Handling (NWI)	Brad Chettleburgh (BC) – The BUILD Charity
Denise Streeter (DS) - PRM & Ground Handling (NWI)	Denise Troughton (DT) - Age UK Policy and Campaign Lead
Mark Whiskin (MW) - PRM & Ground Handling (NWI)	Matthew Talbot (MT) - Deaf Connections CEO
Todd Banbury (TB) - PRM & Ground Handling (NWI)	Loraine White (LW) - Deaf Connections BSL Interpreter
Sarah Watson (SW) - PRM & Ground Handling (NWI)	John Copsey (JC) - PRM & Ground Handling (NWI)
Pauline Taylor (PT) – ATSO Volunteer	Russell Eglon (RE) - PRM & Ground Handling (NWI)
Apologies	
Adrian Pickering - Access to words	Carol Goodbody – The BUILD Charity
Trudy James - Security (NWI)	

Welcome

The meeting began with a welcome from the **DB**, who introduced himself and key attendees. He confirmed that everyone had received copies of the previous meeting's minutes.

DB then explained the purpose of the meeting and thanked everyone for attending, expressing appreciation for the strong turnout.

DB reviewed the action points from the previous minutes and revisited the Terms of Reference.

DB provided an update on Norwich Airport's ranking in the CAA Accessibility Report 2024/2025. He highlighted the airport's improvements, which resulted in a "Good" rating, attributed in part to holding meetings every six months. Norwich Airport aims to further enhance its performance by appointing an external chairperson or chairpersons.

On behalf of **AP** from Access to Words—who introduced his company at the last meeting—**DB** reported progress on trialling the company's system. While not yet a finished product, the system is live on the Airport website via QR codes, which are displayed in key locations around the terminal. Development of the system is ongoing.

DB also discussed the rebranding of the Assisted Travel team. The process is underway, with some elements still to be completed. The signage concept involves moving from the current black-on-yellow design to white-on-purple, to clearly distinguish Assisted Travel help points from other signage in the terminal. The rebranding is budgeted and expected to be completed by the next meeting.

Collaboration with Norwich City Council was reviewed concerning the issue of white canes getting caught under the sides of the Aviramp. Although no solution has yet been found, Aviramp is investigating this new concern.

DB mentioned that **JK** from The BUILD Charity and his team have provided disability awareness training to the Assisted Travel staff. It is hoped to extend this training to more Airport employees in the future.

Attendees, charities, and organisations were invited by **DB** to offer any training courses or materials that could support ongoing staff development.

TW inquired about the possibility of training some staff members in British Sign Language (BSL). **MT** kindly offered assistance and guidance in this area.

CW asked for an update regarding the use of white canes by visually impaired passengers passing through security scanners.

IU shared that a trial is underway with a makeshift adjustable cane, which can be swapped out while passengers go through security screening.

PW raised the need for clearer communication regarding when passengers should surrender their white canes before passing through the security scanner. She also emphasized that there should be personnel available to guide individuals through the process.

DB proposed arranging training sessions for security staff, to which **IU** agreed.

MT shared his experience going through security at Stansted Airport. He was taken aside by security officers into a separate room for questioning. Unfortunately, he was not provided with access to a BSL interpreter or a family member to assist with communication, which made the situation feel more like an interrogation.

IU reassured attendees that such an experience would not occur at Norwich Airport and proceeded to describe the security process.

IU further confirmed that, should someone require an interpreter or family member to assist, Norwich Airport would facilitate this.

BREAK 1250

Norwich Airport Accessibility Forum

DB introduced **KW** to present the slide pack.

KW expanded on the areas previously discussed by **DB** while going through the slides.

The Norwich Airport terminal map and waiting area were reviewed. The new waiting area is now in use, with new signage planned as **DB** explained.

KW explained the Assisted Travel equipment that is available at Norwich Airport to the audience.

KW Discussed Hidden Disabilities, alternatives to the Suzie and Sammy books are still being sought.

KW Stated that staff training is required before the hearing loop system can be fully implemented.

MT clarified that hearing loops primarily benefit those who are hard of hearing, rather than individuals with cochlear implants.

DB mentioned that during the break, Deaf Connections offered to provide training for staff.

KW discussed the Summer 2024 ECAC times data, noting that targets are being met but there remains room for improvement. Although the data collection methods are traditional, they are CAA approved. Some newer technology might be available, but the current collation process meets regulatory standards.

KW emphasized efforts to record data as accurately as possible, though this can be challenging during busy periods.

The number of passengers requiring assistance follows predictable trends—declining in August but increasing significantly in September.

Pre-booked assistance numbers have risen as a result of increased flights and overall passenger volume. During winter, the number of passengers requiring assistance typically decreases, corresponding with the reduced passenger numbers overall.

Requesting Assistance

MT asked whether passengers need to provide proof of disability when booking the assistance service. **KW** explained that currently, no proof is required.

The group then discussed the known issue of some people booking assistance as a way to bypass queues.

MT raised a concern that this could pose a health and safety risk on board the aircraft if crew members are unaware of a passenger's disabilities.

JL clarified that it is the passenger's responsibility to notify the airline of any disabilities or assistance needs at the time of booking their flight.

KW added that the booking system is designed to prevent passengers from selecting emergency exit rows if they require assistance.

DB invited attendees to arrange familiarisation visits to observe the Assisted Travel process in action.

PW asked if there is a way to know or specify what type of assistance each passenger requires during booking.

KW explained that many bookings use incorrect IATA codes because passengers often do not fully understand them. For example, the code WCHC indicates a passenger needs assistance to the seat but may not require an aisle chair.

Feedback

KW reviewed some of the feedback received via social media, noting that feedback cards had limited responses. **KW** and **DB** requested that PRM staff encourage passengers to provide feedback using these channels.

CB raised a concern that the age demographic of Assisted Travel passengers may make it difficult for some to use QR codes or website links to submit feedback.

Rebranding

The rebranding was displayed for everyone to view, highlighting the improved area and enhanced visibility for both staff and passengers through the use of new colours and updated workwear.

DB explained that the rebranding of the PRM team has commenced, with some areas still pending completion. The colour scheme has shifted from black on yellow to white on purple. This project is within budget and is expected to be completed by the next meeting.

Volunteers

KW explained that volunteers have been recruited and are proving to be invaluable contributors.

DB outlined the role of the volunteers, emphasizing in response to negative social media comments that the Airport has not replaced any paid staff positions with volunteers. He highlighted that these volunteers are wonderful individuals who complement the paid team. Coming from diverse backgrounds, they are motivated by a desire to help the local community and do not expect or require paid roles. However, some volunteers have transitioned into paid positions following staff departures. The Airport continues to welcome new volunteers to support this initiative.

MT mentioned that he can recommend additional candidates for the volunteer roles.

What else has Norwich Airport Achieved?

KW explained that a child-sized wheelchair (WCH) has now been purchased.

KW also discussed a recent visit by some team members to Stepping Stones.

The surface access plan is in place, with **DB** and **NS** continuing to work on it.

Assisted Travel staff and volunteers participated in training provided by The Build Charity.

NS attended a "Wise Up to Ageism" training session.

Norwich Airport participated in its first Age Friendly Transport meeting at the City Council.

Norwich Airport has also begun its Age Friendly Employer journey by signing the pledge.

Discussion took place on how to improve, including introducing the chair and creating slots during meetings for people to contribute.

Proposed action points for the next meeting were discussed.

Performance Monitoring

KW explained that Deputy Supervisors responsible for performance monitoring audit the Assisted Travel staff on their data collection and overall performance.

Training opportunities
<p>KW once again welcomed the offer of any training courses, as previously mentioned by DB.</p> <p>MT volunteered to assist with BSL training.</p>
Chairperson
<p>DB discussed the need for Norwich Airport to assign a chair and co-chair for the Forum. Volunteers for these roles are actively being sought.</p>
A.O.B
<p>Research and Medical Supplies for Hidden Disabilities</p> <p>KW will continue research on medical supplies for hidden disabilities. JL suggested it might be worthwhile to speak with RFFS, as they provide first aid supplies for the airport and may be a useful source. It was proposed to invite RFFS to future meetings as the medical cover provider.</p> <p>Forum Leadership</p> <p>The forum still needs a chair and co-chair. Volunteers for these roles are actively being sought. BUILD may have a candidate, but the forum is open to having a co-chair or deputy.</p> <p>Website Publishing</p> <p>DT inquired about displaying relevant information on the website. DB confirmed that the information must be published and is available on the website, including historical records.</p> <p>Accessibility Concerns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CW noted that, on the landside in the ladies' toilets, only one cubicle has a handle rail, which is invaluable for individuals recovering from hip replacements. - KW mentioned that Assisted Travel passengers have repeatedly requested a variable seat riser for the disabled toilets. <p>Passenger Lifting and Equipment</p> <p>Several points were raised regarding passenger lifting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Aviramp is effective for approximately 95% of passengers but poses challenges for the remaining 5% of passengers. This issue is under review and has been escalated to higher management. - Norwich's powered wheelchair is less effective because the heavy battery and motor. - AF reported that Stansted Airport is trialling a new wheelchair system for PRM (Passengers with Reduced Mobility). <p>Community and Equipment Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DT shared that Age UK recommended contacting Norwich Door to Door for advice on getting people up ramps using pull systems. - MOBBY equipment is being investigated as a potential aid for heavy lifting and moving by Assisted Travel staff.

- **DT** also noted that the Norwich Access Group is relaunching in October as the Inclusive Norwich Access Group, focusing on issues related to health, housing, and transport. The first meeting is scheduled for 9th October at The Phoenix Centre, Norwich. Attendees can raise any accessibility issues they face.

Recent Incident

TW experienced a car battery issue prior to their last flight and was concerned the car wouldn't start. Car parking staff promptly came to assist, providing support as needed. **TW** expressed deep appreciation but did not catch the staff member's name.

Proposed Points of Action

Meeting Structure and Governance

Structure meetings with the chairperson actively holding members accountable.

Forum Leadership

Assign a chair and co-chair for the Forum.

Training Initiatives

Provide BSL (British Sign Language) training.

Research and Development

Explore and research more adult-friendly books that simplify airport travel.

Continue research on MOBBY equipment as a potential aid.

Conduct research into medical supplies for hidden disabilities.

Ongoing Projects

Complete the rebranding project.

Accessibility Improvements

Install or improve toilet rails and variable seat risers in accessible washrooms.

Meeting Closed 1350