

PRM CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING



MINUTES

DATE:

03.09.26

TIME:

1030

IN ATTENDANCE

Ian Sheriif - Chair
Leah Byrne – EXT Customer Operations Manager
Claire Chambers – EXT Trainer
Jo Brady – EXT Trainer
Janice Ford – Colostomy UK
Liz Hitchinson – Dementia friendly parishes around the Yealm
Keith Brokenshire - Devon Insight
Justine Darkas – Huntingdon Disease Charity

APOLOGIES

Lee Whitfield – Blind Veterans
Shelley Bennett – Paws for Air
Paul Baldwin – Exmouth Gateway
Alison Warren – Professor of Occupational therapy
Carol King – Mencap

LAST MEETINGS MINUTES & APOLOGIES

IS opened the meeting and welcomed Keith, explaining the history and purpose of the meeting and his background.

IS recapped the minutes from the last meeting, no issues raised.

LH asked about the term PRM and it was explained that this was an internationally known term, but does need changing to encompass every person who needs assistance and not just those with mobility needs.

KB had feedback from Mandy Darling that the virtual tour is still confusing for the visually impaired. LB to contact Neil to make amendments such as 'the desk is at 10 o clock'

IS explained that he had been present at House of Lords debate. Frank Gardner and Tanni Grey-Thomson were concerned after a bad experience with a wheelchair being left at an airport. The focus of the debate was on the service provided by airports for passengers needing assistance. IS wrote to Baroness Crawley to ensure the debate encompassed all passengers who need assistance and not just those with mobility needs. IS asked JD to write a paper explaining the differing needs of those with Huntington's disease so that he can include this when he is next in communication with Baroness Crawley.

AIRPORT UPDATE

LB ran through the increase of PRM figures. September figures had not been collated at the time of the meeting, but the amount of assistance passengers continues to increase. On one day in September alone we had a penetration rate of 4.9%. Staffing numbers have not increased to reflect this raise.

Conversation had around the length of the lead time for being notified of PRM passengers. LB advised this can be as little as 3 hours or even no notice if its and inbound aircraft that haven't sent a passenger load message.

JF asked how the staff cope. LB explained that sometimes it's hard to give the good service that we are known for, but that we continue to update and reflect on our processes and that we are flexible in our ways of working. We ensure that all of our passenger needs are met by having relevant conversations.

JD asked how people with neurological conditions fit in with our service. She explained how people present differently depending on the stage and severity of their condition. LB explained the process works at EXT and the training that our staff have. LB asked if JD can provide training. JD to get in contact with her colleague who does the training and arrange a call with LB to get something in place for the winter.

LB to also arrange a time with JF to come in and speak to security so they will more confident when dealing with people who present with colostomy, ileostomy & urostomy bags.

CAA QUALITY & GRADING

IS officially congratulated the team on retaining the 'Very Good' rating from the CAA for another year. LB read out the categories that we are scored against and IS read out the other airports that have the same rating and some of the others need further improvement.

COMMUNICATION WITH AIRLINE CREW

LB raised the issue of communication with the crews could be better at times. It doesn't appear that PRMs are advised to wait on board until the end of disembarking. Some passengers requiring assistance leave the aircraft with everyone else. LB advised that our staff cannot leave the walkways until they are clear of passengers and this can sometimes mean that PRM passengers cannot have the assistance they need straight away. JD suggested that the crew clearly communicate with the passengers that they need to wait and the reasons behind it, which may relieve a little anxiety that some passenger may feel.

IS suggested LB set up a working group with the airlines (especially TUI) to try and get some working practices in place to improve the communication.

FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRES

LB advised that the CAA have asked airports to get feedback from the consultative groups on how effective the meetings are. LB read through the questionnaire she has devised. No additional questions submitted by the members. IS asked for the word 'Happy' to be changed on q4. LB to change it to 'Satisfied'

QUIET ROOM

Mencap have been in contact and would like to help us develop our Quiet Room. LB asked if the group had any other suggestions on how we can make it better. JD explained that people with Huntington's disease would benefit from a quieter space. CC advised there is a space outside the quiet room which is not enclosed, but is away from the busier environments.

There is currently no air conditioning in this room and only a small window. It does have a fan, but LB to look into getting an AC unit in preparation for the summer.

MISUSE OF SERVICE

LB wanted to see if the group had any ideas on how we can combat the misuse of the service. TUI are now selling accessible holidays which includes many benefits as well as a taxi from the airport direct to the hotel. IS suggested that this is a much wider topic of conversation that will be a nationwide problem. IS suggested that we 'go back to source' and set up a meeting with the CAA (James Freemantle) to discuss further.

OPEN DISCUSSION

JF asked if it was ok for the charities to advertise that they are involved with the PRM consultative committee. LB advised it was and we would welcome any mentions or promotions on social media sites. JF shared the recent newsletter that she was featured in.

LH liked the dementia friendly signage on the toilets, LB explained that this was a direct result of these meetings.

JD suggested if staff could be more visible so that any PRMs who need help or guidance know who to come and ask. LB to investigate.

KB suggested it might be nice to have specialist staff who can they be available to passengers. They would have additional training. LB advised we wouldn't be able to ensure that they were on shift & available all the time, but that it is a good idea and one that could be looked into.

JF asked why the security screening at BRS is different than here. LB advised that as BRS have over 1 million passengers, they are required to have a higher screening level so have body scanners. We have the walk through metal detectors which will incorporate a hand search if they alarm.

IS asked if we were affected by the extra heat of the summer and if it had changed some of our processes. It was explained that extra water and suncream were available for staff and that they were mindful of passengers waiting on a hot apron to board flights. Air conditioning units were fixed quickly.

JD found the meeting very informative and answered all of the questions she had. She will liaise with LB to come for a tour.

AOB

KB fed back from Mandy Darling that the booking process on the airport website is much easier than BRS. The BRS site is very long winded and difficult to navigate for someone who is visually impaired.

TERMINAL WALK AROUND

As JD was only able to make the meeting online, the terminal walk around will be arranged for a date in the future. LB to contact members of the group and arrange for the group to come in.

ACTIONS

1. LB contact Nikki at TUI to set up working group to improve communication with crews
2. LB contact Neil to update the Virtual Tour
3. LB change Q4 on feedback questionnaire
4. JD write to IS with paper explaining Huntington Disease and the needs of travellers.
5. JD was invited for a terminal walk around LB to arrange date with JD for NOV 26

NEXT MEETING

LB to organise next meeting for February/March 2027.

FEEDBACK SUMMARY FROM QUESTIONNAIRES

Q1. Do you feel the meetings are useful?

Yes-good opportunity to discuss update on issues for PRMs & how we can provide a better experience.

Very useful to understand the accessibility needs but not only mobility issues

Very – not only to help improve PRM access to EXT, but also trying to improve CAA and other airports. Some good issues for CAA to think about.

Q2. Do you think the timings are satisfactory?

Yes

Yes – very relaxed no pressure & was able to say what I needed

Yes – comprehensive agenda, everyone has opportunity to contribute & reflect

Q3. Do you think your comments/opinions are listened to?

Yes & acted on

Yes with comments documents in the minutes

Absolutely not only listened to but opinions and comments were discussed, debated & improved

Q4. Are you happy that all actions are completed?

Totally – IS is a very good chair and constantly made sure what actions people had, especially himself.

I am satisfied if I propose something it is carried out.

Yes – there is always an update which is very helpful and often raises other issues.

Q5. Is there anything you would like changed/amended to the meeting format?

No thank you – the agenda is comprehensive & contributions well proposed in explaining issues well when looking for evidence/feedback

No as timings are about right

More access to water, other than that not at present.