# **Liverpool Airport Accessibility Consultative Committee - 4th October 2019**

# Summary below collated from the notes taken by the attendees who were divided into 2 groups:

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| **Attendees** | | | |
| **Name** | **Company** | **Name** | **Company** |
| **Andy Wright** | **Chair, BAAF** | **Stephen Joiner** | **Airport volunteer, LJLA** |
| **Paul Staples** | **Director of Operations LJLA** | **George Porter** | **Customer Care Agent, ABM** |
| **Debbie Lacy May** | **Head of Terminal Ops, LJLA** | **Sarah Oldnall** | **The Brain Charity** |
| **Christina Smith** | **Accessibility Executive, LJLA** | **Stephen Cronin** | **SIA** |
| **Andrew Hepworth** | **Health & Safety Manager, LJLA** | **Rebecca Rendell** | **Whizz Kids** |
| **Stephen Frear** | **Airport Duty Manager, LJLA** | **Zoe Foster** | **Guide Dogs** |
| **Leanne McLoughlin** | **easyJet Airport Manager, LJLA** | **Nick Wilkinson** | **Action on Hearing Loss** |
| **Robin Tudor** | **Head of PR & Communications, LJLA** | **Julie Simpson** | **Autism Adventures** |
| **Apologies** | | | |
| **John Walsh** | **Stomawise** | **Pat Broster** | **Dementia Action Alliance** |

# Arrival at the airport

* On-site parking
* Public transport: Bus ( links to Liverpool South Parkway Mainline & Merseyrail services )
* Drop off
* Taxi
* Car hire

# Car Park and terminal routes

Suggestion:

* Adding ‘wheelchair only bay’ markings to a small number of bays will assist wheelchair users who cannot use a regular space to access their vehicle. Courtesy signage/bay markings to be considered. A traveller with disabilities not using a wheelchair may not need a larger space. LCC are adopting this at the Stanley Dock car park development. Development and car park management are looking at options ongoing at 22/01/2020
* Addition of tactile information on call points . As above.

Observation:

* We do not have a hearing loop in the car park office for those seeking walk up assistance. Purchase of loop to be confirmed w/c 4th Feb
* There is no requirement to change call points to incorporate hearing loops

Zebra crossings are in place from on-site car parks to the terminals

Observations/suggestions:

* Tactile paving routes from car park to terminal available in some but not all areas. Shared with development for future works
* Stainless steel pavement bollards at the edge of the central zebra crossing do not have contrasting toppers to assist visually impaired users. Shared with development for future works
* White security bollards will be more visible if contrasting colour is added . Shared with development for future works
* Crossing paint markings are faded. Crossings are due to be repainted shortly 22/02/2020
* Reviewing rotunda door flooring or offering an alternative entrance will assist visually impaired users. Dark blocked carpet areas can appear as a hole to some with visual impairments and sensory processing disorders. Shared with development for review

# Landside Terminal areas

Observations:

* Entering the terminal from the taxi rotunda ( arrivals ) , directional signage is lacking. Shared with signage and wayfinding project team
* Directional signage near to Subway faces the central rotunda and cannot be seen if coming from the taxi rotunda. Signage and wayfinding review has identified this as an issue

Suggestions:

* Phase 2 signage review of landside. As above
* Consider the addition of ‘you are here’ easy to follow terminal maps. As above

# Assistance Check in

Suggestions:

* Review directional signage to the Assistance desk as there is insufficient indication for first time user. Signage and wayfinding review
* Review signage on back wall which has Omniserv written large. Rebrand of welcome desk planned
* Remove Omniserv Assistance desk signage above unit facing easyJet check in as this confuses first time users who may think the assistance service is closed. Referred to facilities
* Review High level blue signage above Assistance desk which is above eye level and is missed often. Identified under signage and wayfinding review
* Review the ‘Departures’ route signage as it is not visible when entering the arrival rotunda and central rotunda as it is not visible due to pillars and mezzanine level. Identified under signage and wayfinding review
* Review Departures signage which is obscured by pillars at check in . Identified under signage and wayfinding review
* Review directional signage to toilets which is missed and not visible to Starbucks users. Identified under signage and wayfinding review

# Check in Concourse

Suggestions:

* Review height and size of screens to assist visually impaired and wheelchair users. IT to action
* Remove the Information point cube or provide additional wayfinding information to support it.Facilities to remove
* Review blue high-level wayfinding to assist passenger approaching from either end of the terminal. Signage and wayfinding project
* Check in screens are a great improvement and easier to see. Look at options to use the screens for passenger advise between adverts to provide effective communication Options to go live when chroma project is complete Feb 2020

Observations:

* easyJet assistance check in is clearly identifiable at the Speedy boarding check in.
* Ryanair screens show no accessible check in offering. Awaiting Chroma completion
* Swissport colleagues advise that travellers in wheelchairs are called across to Priority check in desk as standard but those who are not so easily identified may be missed.

Suggestions :

* Review PRM check in with the airlines & Swissport. Ongoing
* Review screen imagery. Is ‘Special Assistance’ acceptable as a term ? Should this be changed to ‘Assistance’ and the wheelchair logo? Discussion ongoing with airlines
* Issue information re hearing loop use to ground handling agents to be shared with agents, with follow up reviews. Issued and reiewed on an ad hoc basis
* Monthly check of equipment to check working order, charged and spot check agent knowledge. Spot checks working well.

# Route to Security

Suggestions:

* Consider visual signage to encourage use, outside or inside open lifts. Signage and wayfinding review
* Review lighting levels on stairs and add highly visible first and last step indications. Signage and wayfinding review
* Tactile edges on steps assists visually impaired users to use stairs. Referred to development
* Review if we need to add decals to glass side panels on stairs and contrast on stainless steel rails. Costings requested
* Review options with lift provider to reassure users who have pressed the emergency button in the event of a list stoppage. They may be independent travellers with audio, visual or sensory impairment. Process confirmed with supplier
* Review internal lift signage all lifts as information on what is on each floor is lacking. Signage and wayfinding
* Review if additional directional information is needed on level 2 of departure route. Travellers with sensory processing disorders would be reassured to know that it is down to check in and up to departures. Signage and wayfinding

# Boarding Card Check

Automated boarding card check with manned assistance lane, also used by families with strollers.

Observations:

* There is no indication as to what those needing help, with wheelchairs or strollers should do. The agent is behind a screen. Add WCHR and stroller imagery to gate
* There is no hearing loop. Hearing loop due Feb 2020
* Security signage prior to boarding card check has too much information to assimilate, is too big and is not easily seen. Signage and wayfinding review

Suggestions:

* Review helpful signage. Ongoing
* Consider a hearing loop .Purchase in progress

# Security Search

Security search route divides into a separate Fast Track entrance and main entrance.

Fast Track entry is accessed by bar code on a prepaid pdf or vending machine ticket.

Do we have any indication of Fast Track uptake by independent users with disabilities? No indication

Observation:

* There is no lower option table for liquid prep. Height assessed independently and judged suitable
* Vending can be accessed from wheelchair height.
* Accessible route is easily missed. Trail due Feb 2020
* Why isn’t there something like the family archway instead of a tiny sign?
* There is a small hearing loop sign on the wall at the end of the accessible route, but the loop is not at this location. Review on going with security team

Suggestions:

* Add a lower level prep table which could include graphics to help with advice on carrying medication and medical devices
* Those with sensory processing disorders (ASD or dementia ) may become anxious at the prospect of removing outer clothing, shoes, iPads etc. The addition of a table with familiar pictogram information to help with the prep will help. 2 locations suggested – 1 Where screens are stored lane 7 . – 2 Next to agent directing passengers at the head of the accessible lane. No progress as yet
* Consider accessible route floor decals at this and other areas. Deemed to be more confusing for other passengers

# Security Search continued

Trays for hand luggage and personal effects are large. Security colleagues are trained to recognise the Sunflower Hidden Disability lanyard to assist users to prepare.

Observations:

* The hand luggage x-ray and passenger screening process is noisy. The airport recognises this with a view to reviewing noise suppression options as and when equipment is replaced.
* Assistance from security colleagues to lift a tray from the tray return onto the x-ray feed rollers is needed and should be offered as required to passengers.
* First time travellers need clear, concise, friendly and polite instructions

Passenger search is carried out with the use of Archway metal detectors, body scanners, handheld devices and hand searches.

Observations:

* Security colleagues training and skills is key, to ensure that all passengers are screened in a compliant way while meeting the passengers’ needs.
* Agents ask permission to carry out a search and inform passengers of what they were doing.

Suggestions:

* Independent travellers may have difficulty retrieving personal effects following screening and if observed, assistance should be offered. WJ teams are tasked with looking out for passengers in need of help at this point
* Review trial repack area for table height. Height found to be workable

Wall graphics have been added at the rear of central search to improve contrast Directional arrows to gates is included.

Observation:

* The wave pattern surrounding the directional arrow is visible as a moving image for her. This is likely to be the same for some with dementia and ASD. Original images referred back to signage and wayfinding project

# Route from CSA to Upper retail

This is a calming area leading to the upper retail zone. Retail, food and beverage and currency exchange options, seating, toilets, baby change, baby feed, scattered seating and flight information screens.

Observation:

* Self service store W H Smith offers accessible wide aisles. Items on high shelves are out of reach for independent travellers using wheelchairs.

Suggestion:

* Consider displaying items like books or confectionary vertically. W H S store management have committed to have a colleague on hand in each store to assist as required.

# Route from Upper retail to departure lounge

Winding route passes through the Duty-Free store, which is brightly lit, with a high gloss, sparkly black tiled route, music and perfumes.

Observation:

* Passenger observed sitting under the 2 wayfinding screens awaiting gate information to be displayed
* The Accessible route which is mentioned on our Accessible travel pages cannot be accessed independently. Some with sensory processing disorders and medical conditions (ASD, Dementia, Asthma, COPD) are unable to pass through the World Duty free store, needing this alternative route.
* Signage to gate pointing towards Duty Free appears to be being missed with several passenger coming back on themselves asking where to go.
* The illuminated arrow into Frankie and Bennies which is decorative appears to be confusing some passengers who head towards the double doors.

Suggestions:

* Consider removing the swipe access to the alternative, which will also permit direct access to Quiet Space Patient Transfer users. Ongoing discussion with Quiet space improvements due Feb 2020
* Replace signage to Prayer room and Quiet Space and carry out cosmetic improvements to the access route shared with F & B. Part of Quiet Space improvement works
* Review directional signage in the upper retail area. Signage and wayfinding on going
* Consider adding distance to the gate information. Signage and wayfinding on going

# Stairs and lift options to reach the departure levels

Stairs have tactile edging, glass and chrome side panels

Observation:

* For visually impaired users there is no indication how many stairs to expect.

Suggestions:

* Identify the top and bottom stair both tactile and visual.
* Consider adding the stair count in tactile and visual format.

# Main Departure Lounge

The departure lounge runs from east to west with 17 gates. Currently numbers 1 – 10 and 30 – 50, with a proposal to change numbering to 1- 17. Project now complete

Gates 1 – 10 are used mainly by easyJet, with Flybe and Wizzair and ad hoc charter additional usage.

Gates 11-17 are used by Ryanair, and all other airlines with the addition of some easyJet flights.

The area is subject to a revised signage proposal currently

There is a airside PRM assembly area with a largely unmanned desk, flight information screen and hearing loop. There is a Red phone point for passengers seeking assistance.

Observation:

* Independent wheelchair users often manage their hand luggage to transit the terminal. They may then be unable to access food and beverage as they cannot access a bar or counter for self service without leaving their personal belongings at a table

Suggestion:

* Add 2 x lockers at the landside assembly area here users can secure their hand luggage while accessing food and beverage. ( Suggestion made back in July by a regular user ). Following review suggestion not carried out. Retail and food and beverage colleagues to assist directly as required.

# Picnic area

Suggestion:

* Include directional signage which also indicates that this is an ideal area for families and those with sensory processing issues. Signage and wayfinding project

**Boarding gates**

**Gates 5-10**

Suggestion:

* Review usability of Pickering’s lift. Lift to remain accessible with airport colleague only

**Gates 11-17**

Gates 11,12 and 13 are prime use gates with boarding bridges. When gate 11 is in use, access to gate beyond and in the lower departure area is restricted by passengers queuing to pass through the gate as well as passengers entering and exiting toilet facilities.

# Boarding using the Ambulift

Observation:

* Noted that the Ambulifts at LPL are not up to the standard of other airports in terms of cleanliness and internal upkeep. Not clean, threadbare, and appear not be well-maintained

Suggestion:

* Omniserv to action as soon as possible. Actioned with immediate effect

Note: Omniserv have contacted a service provider to carry out deep clean as soon as possible and have committed to providing an ongoing cleaning regime.

# Arrivals route

Observations:

* Majority of arriving passenger use the staircase . Staircase is narrow and has edging strips and handrails.

Suggestions:

* Review stair tread edging and consider adding tactile options. Ongoing
* Indicate first and last tread. Ongoing
* Add visual and tactile signage to advise how many steps. Signage and wayfinding review

Observation:

* With the arrival of 6 flights in a 5-minute period during the visit the group came to a standstill behind passengers in the corridor( level with the Kissing Gate). Signage to passport control was some way ahead and obscured by queuing passengers so there was no indication on how far there was to go or how long the wait would be. Signage and wayfinding review

Suggestion:

* Review general signage in area as pinch points are stressful for independent travellers with sensory processing disorders. Signage and wayfinding review
* Consider adding wheelchair stations along arrival routes for passengers to assist themselves Planning Feb 2020

# Passport Control

Observations:

This area is under review and was seen at a peak arrival time with 5 of 7 desks manned and 6 flights coming through. Passengers with assistance or using the Sunflower lanyard, are able to access the accessible direct route currently. There is no family lane option . It was noticeable that the area was very warm with a high volume of waiting passengers.

# Baggage reclaim

Observations:

* Baggage carousels are low profile which allows for easily accessing bags.
* There is limited seating for passengers who may be waiting for luggage and not denoted as accessible. Additional seating now in situ
* Carousel signage is poor with small fonts on the overhead screens. Signage and wayfinding review
* Route to exit appears not to be clear when the area is busy. Signage and wayfinding review
* There are no assistance points to call for help if the baggage facilities desk is unmanned Raised with facilities

# Changing Place toilet - Carousel 4

Observations:

* The instructions are for passengers to phone 0151 907 1030 for assistance. There needs to be a phone as we cannot assume that they have a mobile. Review carried out with users who are happy with current option

Suggestion:

* Add a red phone. Not required.

# Signage and wayfinding proposals

Observations:

* Arrow exiting security appears like a wave of colours to a member with a brain injury, and this could also be the case for someone with dementia or ASD.
* The 10 minutes to the gates message exiting the CSA is ambiguous as someone who is on crutches will take much longer than an athlete.
* Yellow text on a white background does not work.
* Yellow is the last colour that can be distinguished when vision is lost.
* Signage needs to have high contrast to be effective. Visual observations shared with signage and wayfinding project
* Stainless steel, chrome and glass are difficult to see for the visual impaired. This can be mitigated with the addition of decals. Examples of where contrast will help are bollards (steel and concrete) on the terminal front; glass side panels on walkways and staircases, which also have stainless steel metal work. Bus stops need attention as contrast is lacking. Referred to development
* Tactile paving from parking to terminal and external airside walkways make a huge difference. A thin strip is all that is needed. Many airports, stations and cities use this concept and it looks like an easy route to push a stroller or pull a suitcase. Referred to development
* Tactile paving also helps assistance dogs to guide users.
* Accessible passenger journey routes - Consider directional symbols along the floor (footprints) for the departure and arrival route. Yellow, teal or magentas as long as it is high contrast. Adapted signage using magenta to be incorporated into wayfinding

General Observations:

* Uniforms - Visually impaired travellers would benefit from a signature colour to add to the PRM uniform. This could be as simple as a yellow neck scarf for the female colleagues and a yellow collar on a coat and polo shirt.
* Sunflower Lanyards - Additional key information can be added to the lanyard on a small laminated card
* Rescue packs - To be held at the Omniserv desk containing a disposable changing mat, wipes, hand sanitiser and nappy bag. Look at sponsorship options