

London Southend Airport (LSA)

Meeting Notes from PRM Committee Meeting

31 October 2023 at 9:30am

Invited

LSA		
Head of Security	Siobhan Walters	Attended
Duty Manager	Richard Hodgson	Attended
CSR Manager	Jo Marchetti	Attended
Quality and Compliance	Leanne Dubovie	Attended
Surface Access	Joe Carpenter	Apologies
PRM representatives		
Blind/Impaired sight	Jill Allen-King OBE	Apologies
Hearing Loss	Aaron Coles	Apologies
Age Concern		
Dementia	Jessica St John - DAA	
Dementia (early onset)	Charlotte Curran – Peaceful Place	Apologies
Autism/ADHD (children)	Mikaela Clements – Little Heroes ASD Support	Attended
Autism (adult)	Dawn Avery – parent/author Keith Avery - parent Aston Avery – adult with autism	Apologies
Anxiety	Anxiety Society	
Mental Health	Catherine Weir – SECE Mind	Attended
Guide Dogs	Chris Theobald	Apologies
Essex Therapy Dogs	Sylvia & Bobby	Attended
Sunflower – Hidden Disabilities	Ruth Rabet	Apologies
Passenger – wheelchair user	Zec Richardson Donna Richardson	Attended Attended
Whizz-Kidz – young wheelchair users	Andrew Granger	Apologies
Airport Consultative Committee	Les Sawyer	Attended

Welcome and introductions.

Jo Marchetti welcomed everyone to the meeting, ensuring all parties were formally introduced and explained the purpose of the committee. Siobhan advised that the airport would be welcoming a new Airport Duty Manager, Wayne Powell who would be supporting Richard to provide the best airport experience for passenger.

Action – JM to email Catherine for contacts at Age Concern and a representative for Dementia. Also suggested contacting Garon Wellbeing.

The meeting took place in the landside café by the arrival's hall.

Update on actions from previous meeting 29 March 2023

1	Ruth suggested (and members agreed) that it would be helpful for passengers using colostomy bags to have a shelf	Completed
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	fitted in the disabled toilets, so they have somewhere safe and clean to put their new bags when changing.	
2	Sanitary bins should also be made available in the disabled and men's toilets for the disposal of used colostomy bags.	Completed
3	It would be helpful to have adult changing facilities for arriving passengers. A hoist would be great, but a quick fix could be a clean plastic mattress that could be put down on the floor to provide a safe, clean and comfortable changing area. Other option could be a cushioned folding table.	Disposable adult changing mats ordered and will be delivered 6/11
4	Action for LSA to ensure cleaners are reminded to check the emergency cords to ensure they are freely hanging at all times.	Completed Checked daily. Passenger journey audit implemented.
5	LSA to ensure that Tanoy announcements are clear and easy to understand.	Completed Tanoy's being checked daily. One has been replaced and the other will be replaced soon. Hearing Loops checked daily – 2 more on order.
6	Walk through video – Zec offered to assist.	Outstanding To be actioned when resources available

Catherine noted that the airport website needs to be updated to reflect the actions completed and for airport colleagues to understand the reason why changes have been made.

Jo confirmed that LSA was in the process of updating PRM information on the website.

The committee commented that only hand dryers were available in the disabled toilet. Some hidden disability passengers may have sensory problems therefore paper towel options should be provided.

Action – airport to provide paper towel holders in disabled toilets.

Airport Update

This summer has marked significant growth in our partnership with easyJet. From three routes last summer we now have eight including the most recent announcement of the return of the highly favoured Alicante route. And with a very optimistic outlook towards Summer '24 and the future, we anticipate even more expansion.

Additionally, we've introduced two new routes available for booking through our partnering tour operators: Balkan holidays offering flights to Bourgas on Bulgaria's Golden coast from June to September '24, and Inghams, taking festive travellers to Santa's Lapland in December '24.

Flight to Paris and Alicante started 29 October. Geneva on 16 Dec and Grenoble 14 Jan.

Our passenger demand has consistently shown strength throughout the summer. As of mid-July, we've seen an average load factor of 86% with upcoming late summer bookings continuing this positive trend. Furthermore, our new winter flights - destinations including Paris, Geneva, Amsterdam, and Alicante - are also receiving an enthusiastic booking response, indicating robust demand from our catchment.

Proactive and positive discussions with airlines continue. Our Business Development team successfully represented us at the Routes Europe event in May and has plans to attend Routes World 2023 this October, this seminal aviation event facilitates growth collaborations between global airlines and airports.

LSA welcome Oil Spill Response in August. Operating a B727 which are deployed to environmental disasters around the world. Able to fly as low as 150ft to help control oil spills in the sea.

Being a major local employer, we're proud to report a headcount of 225 this summer with a significant 80% of our workforce residing within the SS postcodes. We're currently hiring for Air Traffic roles and plan to ramp up broader recruitment in anticipation of growth for Summer '24.

We held a Recruitment Event on 24th October where we had over 300 people attend – this was in preparation of our forecast summer flight schedule, of which vacancies will be going live for in November/December. Main areas will be Security, Food and Beverage, and possibly cleaning.

We plan on holding another Recruitment Event in the evening very soon. We are also hoping to hold Neurodiversity friendly recruitment event to make these accessible for everyone, as we know these events can be overwhelming.

The airport has engaged in several community events including.

- The Vulcan Restoration Trust, Music & Beer Festival Event
- The airport welcomed the Red Arrows, Typhoon and Lancaster over the weekend 18-20 August whilst they were performing at Eastbourne airshow.
- LSA colleagues played local charity team Run Free at Garon Park, Southend on Sunday 8 Oct. Over £1100 raised for our charity partner SECE Mind.
- LSA has confirmed support for the SECE Mind Mental Elf event which will take place on Sat 2 December at Belfair's Nature Reserve.
- LSA will be sponsoring the Rochford Parish Council Christmas festival Santas Grotto event Sunday 3 Dec.
- Community Noise Forum – new independent Chair led the August forum and agreed the new ToR/Code of conduct. Next meeting is 14 Nov

Update on Sunflower Scheme

Passengers are able to use the internationally recognised Sunflower Scheme or the airports Blue Band scheme. All colleagues are trained to recognise and assist passengers wearing the sunflower. Lanyards are available on arrival if required.

New CSA Team – Vision going forward.

Nine customer service agents (CSA's) have been employed to assist PRM passengers with more to be added next year. CSAs will be available to assist passengers from the time they arrive through the terminal doors. Terminal signage is being replaced with larger print. We are also actively talking to suppliers to improve the way we currently record PRM data to further improve the customer service offered to passengers.

CAA passenger survey results

90% of departing passengers rated LSA at excellent for the quality of assistance provided from arrival to the airport to boarding the aircraft.

90% of departing passengers rated LSA excellent for the general helpfulness and curtesy of airport staff in meeting assistance needs.

90% of arriving passengers rated LSA excellent for the quality of assistance provided from the arrival gate, through immigration and baggage collection, and out of the airport building.

90% of arriving passengers rated LSA excellent for the general helpfulness and curtesy of airport staff in meeting assistance needs.

Example of passenger feedback comments were shared with the committee and a summary of the survey answers and feedback comments is attached as appendix A

There were two negative comments received. One related to the use of paper surveys and its impact of the environments and the other was a complaint from an arriving passenger which was addressed as a separate agenda item below.

Passenger Feedback

Since the previous PRM meeting in March, the airport had received one PRM complaint from a passenger arriving from Malaga.

Full details of the complaint, investigation and learning were discussed with the committee is attached to these notes as appendix B.

Committee members accepted that the airport had taken the appropriate measure to reduce the risk of injury when assisting passengers seated in Row 1 (the armrest does not retract) by purchasing a ProMove sling.

Catherine added that it was important to use the right response when making the initial reply to passenger complaints and suggested referring to the NHS Duty of Candour.

AOB

- Siobhan advised that as the airport grows past 150k passengers per year, we will once again meet the criteria for CAA audits on PRMs.
- Catherine suggested the airport provides sensory kits, which could include ear defenders/headbands, fidget toys, anxiety information leaflets for passengers with sensory problems. The airport could engage the local community to knit some items which would help raise awareness of the assistance available.

Meeting ended at 11:00am.