

London Southend Airport (LSA)

Meeting Notes from PRM Committee Meeting

3rd April 2024 at 10am at the London Southend Jet Centre

(Teams online link available)

Invited

LSA		
Head of Security	Siobhan Walters	Attended
Duty Manager	Richard Hodgson	Apologies
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	
Hearing Loss	Aaron Coles	Apologies
Age Concern	Mike Nicolson	Attended
Older People's Community Mental Health, Dementia & Frailty	Spencer Dinnage Nancy Smith	Attended
Dementia (early onset)	Charlotte Curran – Peaceful Place	
Autism/ADHD (children)	Mikaela Clements – Little Heroes ASD Support	Attended
Autism (adult)	Dawn Avery – parent/author Keith Avery - parent Aston Avery – adult with autism	Attended Attended Attended
Anxiety	Anxiety Society	
Mental Health	Catherine Weir – SECE Mind	Apologies
Guide Dogs	Clive Wood	Apologies
Sunflower – Hidden Disabilities	Ruth Rabet	Attended
Passenger – wheelchair user	Zec Richardson Donna Richardson	Attended Attended
Essex Therapy Dogs	Tina Jullings Silvie	Attended Attended
Whizz-Kidz – young wheelchair users	Andrew Granger	Apologies
Garon Park Wellbeing	Caroline Reynolds	Attended
Airport Consultative Committee	Les Sawyer	Attended
Sophia Untersteggaber	CAA	Declined
Emily Kilby	CAA	

Welcome and introductions.

Jo Marchetti welcomed everyone to the meeting, and invited everyone to introduce themselves and explain who they were representing.

It was good to see new members from Age Concern, Garon Park CIC and Older People’s Community Mental Health, Dementia & Frailty. Nancy Smith had previously worked with LSA to achieve the ‘First Dementia Friendly Airport in the UK’ almost 10 years ago.

Update on actions from previous meeting 31 October 2023

1	Walk through video – Zec offered to assist. 03/04/24 Spencer Dinnage offered to assist with 360 camera and editing.	Outstanding To be actioned when resources available
2	JM to email Catherine for contacts at Age Concern and a representative for Dementia. Also suggested contacting Garon Wellbeing.	Actioned
3	Airport to provide paper towel holders in disabled toilets	Holders purchased – awaiting installation
4	LSA to ensure that Tanoy announcements are clear and easy to understand.	Hearing Loops checked daily – 2 more recently delivered

PRM Improvements – Siobhan Walters

All CAA recommended improvements have been completed:

- New signage – using ‘assisted travel’ phrase. Website also being updated.
- Additional reserved seating for PRMs by ticket desk and in departures and baggage hall.

LSA awaiting yearly CAA audit and will report results back to PRM Committee.

Additional E-Vac chairs for fire exits purchased. Training to be provided.

PRM assistance is to be provided by handling agents – external company to provide training.

New airport owners, Carlyle have used mystery shoppers to evaluate customer service and their findings were very positive especially for PRM passengers.

General Airport Update – Jo Marchetti

London Southend is offered its biggest winter programme of routes since 2019 with airline partner, [easyJet](#). The attractive destinations, which include Alicante, Amsterdam, Paris CDG, Geneva and Grenoble, offer passengers a great mix of winter sunshine, city breaks and ski holidays.

Summer 24 flights, with easyJet, are on sale to Malaga, Faro, Alicante, Paris, Amsterdam, Palma de Mallorca (now up to 8 x per week).

UK tour operator Mann Link Travel is offering four-night holidays to [Sønderborg](#), Denmark from August 2024.

Travel agents from Hays Travel Southend, easyJet holidays, Balkan Holidays, Disney and more stood side-by-side at the Holiday Inn Southend at our brand-new Travel Show this January. Over 300 members of the public attended to purchase discounted holiday tickets to a variety of our destinations.

Global investment firms Carlyle (NASDAQ: CG) and Cyrus Capital Partners, key financial stakeholders of London Southend Airport, have agreed to recapitalise the Airport, and once completed, will provide up to £32m of new funding. Carlyle and Cyrus both have extensive experience across the

aviation industry and deep knowledge of LSA and their commitment to the Airport's future, delivers both certainty and stability and will enable the Airport to accelerate its growth plans with their considerable investment capability and operational expertise.

LSA's multi-year deal with easyJet continues as does positive talks with new airlines. We hope to be able to announce further new routes for S24 and beyond shortly.

In readiness for June 24 regulatory changes and pax growth, we have some layout changes underway in central search that will ensure that we continue to deliver optimal efficiency and compliance in our search area. A second C3 security scanner will be live in London Southend before June 24 which will further enhance our airports' ability to detect prohibited items and with greater convenience for passengers.

Siobhan further explained how PRM passengers may be impacted by the changes which will require all passengers to be body screened. LSA staff are trained to identify passengers that may need extra help or need to be screened privately. Passengers with hidden disabilities or anxiety will be offered to go to the front of the queue to reduce their waiting times.

Post meeting update: 04/04/24 [Airports granted extensions to install cutting-edge security technology](#) it is not yet clear which airports will have their deadline extended but it is likely to apply to the larger airports that require more infrastructure changes.

Samdex shoe scanners will be installed to assist PRM and elderly passengers who struggle to remove shoes. This should also help speed up the screening process.

Tina added that the Therapy Dogs offer great assistance to nervous and anxious passengers.

The Pub in Departures is due to reopen from May 2024. Alcohol consumption is limited, and signage is displayed. Any passengers displaying drunk or unwanted behavior are prevented from boarding their flights.

Community Relations

- The SECE Mind Mental Elf event, which was held on Saturday 2 December 2023 in Belfairs Woods raised an amazing £11,154, of which £5,000 was match funding from LSA.
- Total fundraising for SECE Mind for the FYE 24 is now at £12,322.70 – the airport has renewed its partnership with SECE Mind for 2025 and will continue to fundraise/raise awareness for mental health.
- Total volunteering hours donated by LSA colleagues for FYE 24 is 110.
- The airport has committed to sponsoring several local events including Essex & Herts Air Ambulance 'Strictly Air Ambulance', Southend Rugby Club 'ladies match for breast cancer', Havens Hospice Southend Half Marathon, World Cup-on-Sea for Great Ormand Street Hospital and Leigh Regatta.

Customer Service Ambassador (CSA) – 'A day in the life' presentation

Sandra Brown explained her typical day as an LSA CSA. The airport CSAs commonly come from a caring background, such as working in the NHS or care homes, or may have close relatives with disabilities which provides them with valuable insight into the needs of PRM passengers.

The CSAs are available at the ticket desk and can assist passengers from the moment they arrive at the airport to when they board the aircraft. Assistance may be provided to the PRM or to their traveling partner if help with luggage is needed. The CSAs like to go above and beyond to make a

PRMs airport experience as easy and positive as possible. One example given was when a wheelchair PRM arrived on an inbound flight during the winter (bad weather) and needed to get to the Holiday Inn (10 min walk from the terminal). The taxi driver refused to take the PRM the short distance, so the CSA decided to leave her post at the airport and assist the PRM to the hotel in the rain.

Action: Siobhan Walters to make a complaint to the Taxi provider for refusing to transport the PRM.

Jo Marchetti to invite the taxi provider to future PRM meetings.

Passenger PRM feedback since last meeting (Winter 2023/4)

No complaints received.

CAA guidance for PRM committees – airports over 150ppa

PRM Committee meetings to be held twice a year. Spring and Autumn, in preparation for Summer and Winter schedules.

CAA representatives to be invited to PRM Committee meetings – should attend one per year.

AOB

Aaron Coles from RNID was unable to attend the meeting but emailed the following information:

If you'd like to arrange a separate call about how to improve access to RNID's communities who are deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus, please do feel free to send over your availability.

From our standpoint, we' be looking for all staff to be trained in deaf awareness, and we have several options to support you with this process such as remote training, eLearning and/or bespoke.

[Training for businesses and organisations - RNID](#)

I note that hearing loops are onsite, two more are on order and checked twice a day which is great, annual maintenance and audits may also be in your plans and suggested if not.

[Hearing loops - RNID](#)

Providing communication support where required, [Communication support - RNID](#)

Supporting any staff with lived experience via [Workplace assessments - RNID](#)

Other useful pages:

- [Become a corporate partner - RNID](#)
- [Communicating with staff and customers who are deaf or have hearing loss - RNID](#)
- [Help your staff check their hearing with our online test - RNID](#)
- [Supporting deaf staff and staff with hearing loss - RNID](#)
- [Deaf awareness at work - RNID](#)
- [The impact of hearing loss at work - RNID](#)
- [Making recruitment accessible - RNID](#)
- [Deaf awareness training - RNID](#)
- [British Sign Language \(BSL\) training - RNID](#)

Jo Marchetti advised that there was a BSL Sign language 5-week course at Leigh Community Centre in June (cost £35) – details had been shared with all LSA staff.

Tina asked if the Therapy Dogs team could have blue bands to hand out to nervous passengers.

Action: Siobhan to provide.

Mike Nicolson from Age Concern asked for support from PRM Committee members in regard of securing funding to purchase the Havens building in Hamlet Court Road that houses its community hub.

Action: Jo Marchetti to share link to members post meeting. **ACTIONED.**

Mike also advised that Age Concern had recently held a Coffee & Conversation event and asked attendees their thoughts on London Southend Airport. See results below:

Making Southend Airport More User Friendly for Those with Disabilities/Health Issues

Age Concern Southend – Coffee & Conversation Attendees

Thoughts on their toilets

- All OK (5)
- Very good when I've been there
- Great
- Fine
- Fine, but I don't have a disability so can't really comment
- Good quality and regularly cleaned
- The toilets were very good

Have you experienced any issues using them? (only 1 comment all others said "no")

- Yes, my wife was a wheelchair user and after using the toilets there was no staff in the baggage reclaim area to assist (this was pre-Covid)

Are you aware of their Blue Band scheme?

- 11 of 15 responders said "no"
- Yes and particularly like use of assistance dogs for helping to calm nervous flyers
- Yes, using dogs to help relax nervous flyers. Very good idea

Colleagues are trained to recognise and assist passengers with disabilities wearing sunflower lanyards

- The use of trained people to assist passengers is a great idea

Is there anything you would like to see improved at the airport regarding accessibility?

- No problem with accessibility
- No, all good
- Free drop off
- Buses don't stop at/in the airport. You have to walk back from the bus stop
- Yes, mor clarity regarding the short term and long term parking, regarding £10 fines
- More rapid response to help get from the car park (pre-Covid)

Mikaela from Little Heroes also said she has received lots of positive feedback from their families about travelling through London Southend Airport with children with autism. Mikaela will share feedback with LSA so this can be passed onto staff.

Tina from Therapy Dogs also said she was happy to share passenger feedback and requested that LSA do the same about their service.

All members agreed that LSA offered a great PRM services and was popular amongst their communities as an airport of choice for passengers wanted assisted travel. All were looking forward to LSA offering more routes and better flight times.

Meeting ended at 11:37am.