

<p>PEOPLE WITH REDUCED MOBILITY</p>
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What this paper is about

To update members on the changing framework within which airports operate in providing assistance for people with reduced mobility (PRMs) when travelling by air including:

- European Regulation (EC) 1107/2006 - Rights of persons with reduced mobility when travelling by air – para. 1
- Code of Practice: *Access to Air Travel for Disabled People* – DfT Consultation – para. 5
- Comments by member Committees – para. 8

Points for Discussion

Member committees have been asked to share any comments they might have on the revised draft code and on the implementation of the European Regulation at their airports. The comments received to date are outlined in the Annex to this paper. Any further comments received will be included in a late paper which will be tabled at or just before the meeting. It may be that members will wish to discuss some of the comments received.

Points for Possible Action

Members will wish to decide whether to submit any collective comments on the revised draft Code of Practice.

European Regulation (EC) 1107/2006 - Rights of persons with reduced mobility when travelling by air

1. This Regulation¹ was promulgated on 26th July 2006. It has two essential goals:
 - a) preventing unfair treatment, that is refusal of carriage on the basis of reduced mobility and,
 - b) guaranteeing the provision, free of charge, of the assistance that passengers with reduced mobility (PRMs) need to have for air travel.
2. The Regulation takes effect on 26 July 2008, except for Articles 3 and 4, which took effect on 26 July 2007 - Article 3 makes it illegal to refuse carriage on grounds of disability except on the grounds specified in Article 4. In August 2007 the CAA issued guidance for UK carriers (*CAA Document FODCOM 18/07*)² on the circumstance in which they might refuse carriage for a PRM pursuant to Article 4(1) of this Regulation, e.g. on safety grounds.
3. The Regulation provides that the managing bodies of airports should have the overall responsibility for providing assistance to PRMs. At many airports this has meant a considerable change when compared to earlier practice which normally involved the provision of such services by the airlines. By now airports should have made the required changes. It is hoped that members will come to the meeting ready to confirm that the Regulation has been implemented at their airports and to share any problems which might have been encountered.
4. On 3rd July 2007 the Department made the *Civil Aviation (Access to Air Travel for Disabled Persons and Persons with Reduced Mobility) Regulations 2007*(SI 2007/1895)³ which provide for the enforcement of the EC Regulation in the UK by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) with complaints handling by the *Commission for Equality and Human Rights* (CEHR).

Code of Practice: Access to Air Travel for Disabled People

5. In the first half of 2007 the DfT said it was setting up a Working Group to review the 2003 Code of Practice *Access to Air Travel for Disabled People* in the light of recent changes in European law. At the Annual Meeting at Stansted last year it was agreed to tell the Department that the Liaison Group would like the opportunity to be represented on the Working Group and anyway that it would welcome involvement at an early stage in the Review process so that the Working Group can consider the Liaison Group's views. Although it was sent both by e-mail and by surface mail the Department claim that the Liaison Group's letter was not received. A follow up was sent later but there was no response.
6. On 1st April 2008 the DfT launched a consultation on a revised version of the Code which has been updated to reflect the new European Regulation. The consultation closes on 23 June 2008. A copy of the full consultation document and the draft Code can be seen on the Liaison Group's website⁴.
7. A number of consultative committees have expressed their dismay that the Department chose directly to consult only four Committees on the proposed revision of the Code. The Department was asked for an explanation and they replied as follows:

"Firstly, I formally apologise for not consulting with the other Consultative Committees or Liaison Group. Let me assure you that this was not intentional. We were using a consultation list from a previous consultation and were not aware of the other Committees. You can appreciate that we do not have regular dealing with Airport Consultative Committees and consequently we are not familiar with their work or the number of Committees.

¹ http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l_204/l_20420060726en00010009.pdf

² <http://www.ukaccs.info/fod200718.pdf>

³ http://www.ukaccs.info/uksi_20071895_en.pdf

⁴ <http://www.ukaccs.info/diasabledcodereview.pdf>

“Secondly, I would be pleased to receive either an individual response from each Committee or if you prefer a joint co-ordinated response to the consultation from the Liaison Group.

“Lastly, I would be grateful, if you could send me the contact details for each Committee so that I can update the list, to send them the final published Code of Practice document ready for July 2008.”

Comments by Member Committee

8. Member committees have been asked to comment on the progress being made in implementing the new European Regulation and for any comments they might have on the revised draft code. The comments received to date are outlined in the Annex to this paper. Any further comments received will be included in a late paper which will be tabled at or just before the meeting.

Stuart Innes
May 2008

Bristol

In 2006 Bristol International Airport decided to outsource the provision of services for people with reduced mobility as required under European Regulation EC 1107/2006.

The Airport subsequently established a Working Group comprising representatives of the various interested parties, including the Consultative Committee, to advise on the preparation of the specification.

The tendering process commenced in the Autumn 2007 and OCS were appointed as the Airport's contractor to provide PRM services commencing on 1st July 2008 prior to the EU Directive coming into force on 26th July 2008.

OCS currently provide similar services at Birmingham International Airport.

The Working Group will continue to work with OCS to carry forward PRM services in and around the terminal building.

The contract specification complies with the current UK Government's Code of Practice and the requirements of EC Regulation 1107/2006.

Any changes brought about by the UK's revised Code of Practice for Access to Air Travel for Disabled People will be taken on board.

Bristol International Airport Consultative Committee and Bristol International Airport have no specific comments to make on the UK Government's revised Code of Practice.

Gatwick

In January 2007 minimum service specification levels were set up by BAA Gatwick. Airlines were approached in order to ascertain their future service requirements. This resulted in agreement on an enhanced single service standard for both terminals at Gatwick. During the following months a re-tender process was carried out. By September BAA Gatwick had a shortlist of two potential suppliers from the seven bids received in June. Following mystery shopper investigations and site visits at other airports the contract was awarded to Group Four Securicor (G4S) in November 2007. The contract went 'live' on 1st April 2008.

On 2nd April the our Passenger Services Sub-Committee received a presentation from BAA Gatwick's Head of Solutions on the resources, equipment, and infrastructure put in place for the 1st April launch. The group was given details of the staff training programme for new staff, input on training had been received from European Spinal Injuries, the Royal Association for the Deaf and the Royal National Association for the Blind. So far there has been positive feedback from airlines and passengers.

London City

(Note: This entry was revised on 8th June 2008)

Arrangements of the kind required by the new EU Regulation have operated at London City Airport since August 2004. The costs of the service are recovered from the airlines through airport charges.

Nearly 5,000 passengers pass through the airport each year are either disabled, have reduced mobility, hearing difficulties or visual impairments. For these passengers the Airport provides special services and assistance including:

- Toilets adapted for disabled or incapacitated customer use on the main concourse, in the Departure Lounge and in International Arrivals
- Hearing point

- Lift access from the concourse ground floor to the departures level, and from the departure pier to the apron for passenger boarding

The Airport has a dedicated team to help passengers with reduced mobility from the moment they arrive. The team is fully trained and have the latest equipment to help make the passenger experience as smooth and trouble free as possible. There are dedicated disabled car parking spaces within the Short Stay Car Park close to the terminal. The current information for disabled people on the Airport's website is currently being reviewed.

Stansted

STACC welcomes the Code, as it now makes expectations on airports and airlines clear and gets rid of previous ambiguities (members will recall the Ryanair case a few years ago). Our Passenger Service Group will be looking at this facility on a tour prior to its meeting in July and welcomes the work done by STAL to get in new equipment and to contract all work to one specialist provider. The Group will then hold a watching brief on behalf of the Committee.

Our concern is what happens when the traveller actually gets on board, as the Code does not apply to aircraft, and the feeling that a lot of good work and goodwill will be undone by some inappropriate handling at that stage.

UKACCS Secretariat

These are the comments of a previously active young women who now finds herself permanently in a wheelchair on the draft Code. She continues to be well travelled and is now something of an expert now on handling the transport system as a disabled person:

"What I found odd was the use of "aspirational guide lines" all the points are good, common sense etc, but if it's aspirational it is open to interpretation and will provide differing levels of service – I thought that's what was trying to be removed or have I missed the point?

"Page 29 – Disability awareness training need not be provided by a disabled person, I would have thought this should be.

"Page 52 Taxi ranks – lowered pavements tactile surfaces etc. As we know level access is imperative, so is flat surfacing i.e. NO CAMBER on disabled access track ways.

"Page 57 Temporary replacement of lost mobility aids – not necessarily like for like. Should it be type for type but not necessarily like for like. An attendant wheelchair is a wheelchair but no good for replacing a self propelling wheelchair, nor a motorised wheelchair. Crutches/walking canes are not suitable for a zimmer frame user and visa versa etc.

"Finally just a thought in general. In my experience I would love to arrive at an airport and access a welcome centre for "disabled travellers". I may have had a long journey to reach the airport and want a loo, refreshments and the opportunity to locate all the information I will need will to organise myself prior to commencing the queues at check in. That all in one place would be mint! J

"Hope this is useful, thanks for the opportunity to read and comment, I found it valuable."