Aviation Accessibility Implementation Group

Update Report 2026

Background – who are we?

The Department for Transport (DfT) set up the Aviation Accessibility Task and Finish Group (the Task and Finish Group), chaired by Baroness Tanni Grey Thompson, in October 2024 to identify key barriers to accessible air travel and to make recommendations to tackle them. Read the Aviation Accessibility Task and Finish Group report and recommendations.

The Aviation Accessibility Implementation Group (the Group) has taken on the role of further developing and implementing those recommendations.

We are an independent group, led by industry and guided by accessibility professionals. Members include representatives of airlines, airports, industry trade bodies, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and accessibility experts. Membership of the Group is at Annex B. All members of the Group are giving their time and expertise on a voluntary basis.

The DfT provides the secretariat for the Group and attends all meetings, and the Group is enormously grateful for their support, without which we would be unable to function effectively.

The Group and this report uses terminology and language following the principles of the Social Model of Disability.

Context – setting the scene

The number of air passengers needing assistance has risen consistently over recent years. See data from the CAA's Airport Accessibility Performance Report published on 4 August 2026.

"*Demand for assistance continues to grow faster than overall passenger numbers. In 2025, 5.99 million passengers used the assistance services at UK airports, compared to 5.48 million in 2024 and 4.6 million in 2023. Whilst passengers using assistance services increased by 9.4% between 2024 and 2025 overall passenger numbers only increased by 3.3%. High volumes continue to present resilience challenges at peak times, particularly at larger airports. Looking at the long-term trend between 2015 and 2025, the number of*

disabled and less mobile passengers using assistance services increased by 116.3%, compared with a 22.7% increase in overall passenger numbers.

The proportion of passengers receiving assistance compared with total passengers averaged 2.01% in 2025, although this varied considerably between airports, ranging from 0.6% to 3.4%. Since 2015, the average proportion has increased by 81.3%. Demand for accessible travel continues to grow faster than wider demand, increasing the importance of resilient assistance services."

The rise in numbers has brought greater challenges for airports, airlines, ground services, assistance providers and many others. The common goal across the aviation industry is to provide services that enable disabled and older people to travel with confidence and dignity. This isn't just about meeting legal minimum standards, vital though that is, it is also about delivering best practice and constantly striving to improve on that best practice. In other words, the legal requirements are a floor, not a ceiling. And of course, as the CAA figures clearly show there is a strong economic imperative to provide an effective service to this large and growing market sector.

Against this background, the CAA also monitors customer satisfaction levels among passengers requesting assistance, see wave 14 of the CAA Aviation Consumer Survey. Key results show that:

- 88% of passengers surveyed overall were satisfied with their air travel experience (slightly higher than found in previous years)
- Satisfaction among passengers with accessibility or disability needs surveyed was lower than passengers overall, at 82%
- 58% of disabled consumers surveyed reported difficulty accessing or using airports and flying, with the most common needs relating to walking, standing, or carrying luggage

The topics addressed by the Group are set out below. They are targeted specifically at identifying, developing and delivering improvements to every aspect of travel from the earliest stages of journey planning through to successful conclusion of a trip.

Key to this process is consistency in the way that services are delivered between airports, airlines and service providers, not just in the UK but internationally. The anxiety that many disabled and older passengers face can only effectively be removed if everyone is working together with a common understanding of what needs to be done and a common approach to delivery.

We are already seeing improvements in understanding and practices from the work of the Group, not least driven by the key industry representatives who are leading it. There is still a long way to go but buy-in from those who are in a position to make it happen is already very clearly established.

Purpose – what do we do?

The Group has set up 4 separate working groups to tackle each of the broad series of recommendations from the Task and Finish Group. These are:

- Training

- Information
- Tailored passenger experience
- Mobility aids

A separate cross-cutting theme looking at non-visible impairments has also been set up to review and contribute to each of the other work streams.

The role of the Group is not to duplicate or replace regulatory and policy work undertaken by the DfT and the CAA but rather to focus on implementing the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group and on what industry collectively can do on a voluntary basis to address some of the key issues facing disabled air passengers. Read the Group's Terms of Reference.

The Group notes that the Civil Aviation (Consumer Protection and Regulatory Reform) Bill currently before Parliament includes provisions for additional enforcement powers for the CAA and sets up a framework for future amendments to air passenger rights. We also note, however, that any legislative change would take time.

While changes to the law are pending, we are focussed on what can be achieved on a voluntary basis with industry-wide agreement to raise standards and tackle key concerns, putting industry in the best possible position before any future changes are considered.

It is clear that the development and delivery of good practice, based on an understanding of passenger needs, can lead to significant improvements.

Given the global nature of air transport, the Group recognises the importance of aligning voluntary initiatives with international standards and industry practices wherever possible.

In parallel, the CAA continues to play a key role in monitoring and enforcing best practice in delivering accessibility through its annual reviews of airports (Guidance on Quality Standards Under Regulation 1107/2006 (CAP1228)) and similar scheme for airlines (Airline Accessibility Guidance (CAP 2990)). Monitoring and enforcement of existing rules can make a significant impact on service standards. The CAA's response to the recommendations made by the Task and Finish Group to the CAA is included in this report.

In addition to the 4 working groups, the Group has held a number of workshops with wider industry and other interests to share the direction of travel and seek reactions and inputs. These workshops have comprised:

- UK and global airlines serving the UK
- UK airports
- Ground Services
- Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) member travel agents
- Chairs of Airport Accessibility Forums

The workshops have helped us to focus on the wide range of stakeholders involved in the delivery of accessible air travel, including travel agents who may be the first point of contact for passengers, as well as airline contact centres and airport and airline personnel on the ground and in the air.

We have also built on the extensive consultation with disabled air passengers which took place under the Task and Finish Group.

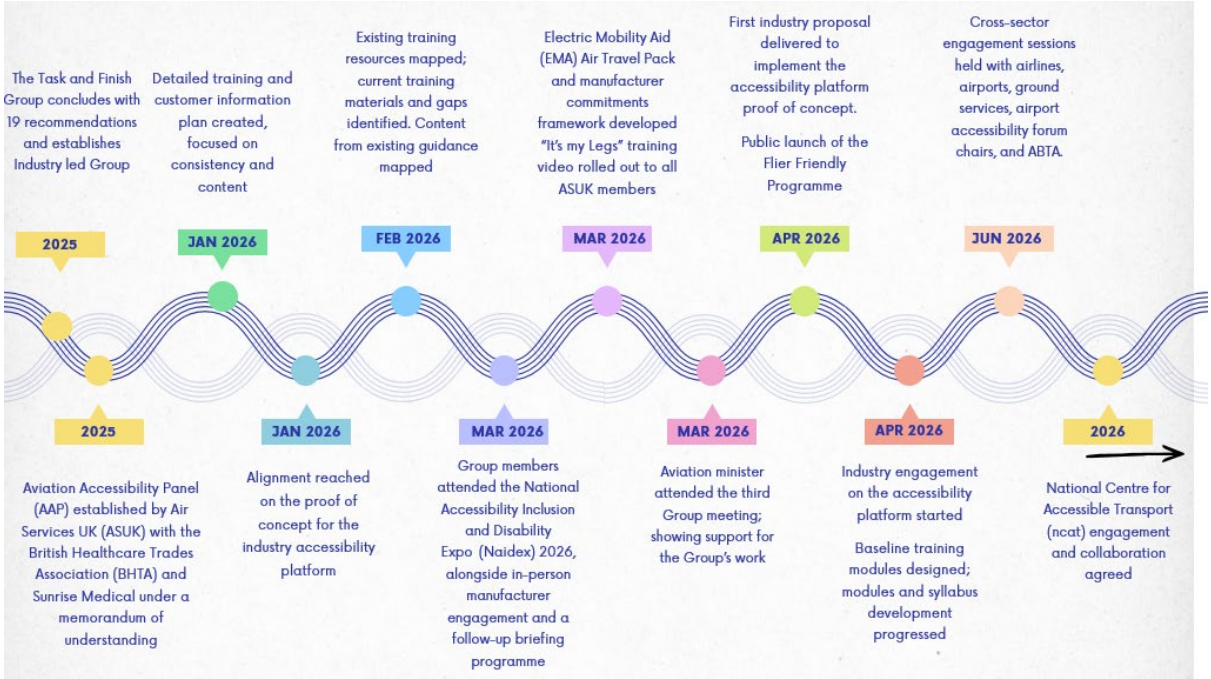
Progress

The Group recognises that not all the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group can be implemented quickly. We have therefore divided this progress report into the short-term wins, some of which have already been delivered, and those that are medium or longer term and on which we will continue to work over the coming year with a clear focus on implementation.

Future progress should be demonstrated through measurable improvements in passenger outcomes alongside evidence of completed implementation.

The following sections set out progress and barriers against each of the recommendations in each of the key working group areas.

The graphic below sets out the timeline and milestones for the Group's work.



Training

Why is it important?

Staff training is absolutely at the heart of good customer service for all passengers. For disabled people it is fundamental to being able to travel with confidence and dignity.

Different levels of training are clearly required for those working in different capacities in airports and airlines, but for all levels of seniority everyone, including the chief executive and those serving in cafes or facilities management, disability awareness training is equally important as a minimum and non-negotiable requirement. Training is not just for assistance staff, it is for everyone!

Key recommendations from the Task and Finish Group

- Mandate baseline disability and accessibility awareness training
- Co-develop training materials with people with lived experience
- Increase the availability of skilled trainers
- Improve and standardise training content
- Ensure continuous improvement of training

What have we achieved?

In this first year, the working group has delivered a foundation for enhanced accessibility training across aviation. This includes completing a review of the enhanced Baseline, Intermediate and Advanced training module content, ensuring alignment with the recommendations from the Task and Finish Group as well as relevant legislative and regulatory frameworks, including UK and EU Regulation 1107/2006 and the European Civil Aviation Conference guidance (ECAC Doc 30).

The working group also reviewed training needs in detail, helping to clarify the required call to action and identify the roles associated with each training module group for enhanced training. This work has supported a more structured and targeted approach to training design, ensuring that future materials can be tailored to the responsibilities of different staff groups while maintaining consistency in core outcomes.

A key delivery in Year 1 was securing collaboration with ncat, including support to help develop evidence-based training approaches and resources.

This is an important milestone, as it provides both external expertise and practical support to strengthen the quality, relevance, and credibility of the Group's work.

Overall, the working group has delivered the early design, partnership-building and strategic groundwork needed to move into co-creation and implementation in Year 2.

What comes next?

In Year 2, the working group will move from review and planning into development, co-creation and implementation. A key priority will be building and deepening collaboration with ncat.

The working group will prioritise the co-creation of a training syllabus that is fully aligned with the law and regulation while also enhancing the overall curriculum. The working group will look at a range of learning formats and delivery methods, such as graphics, films and other engaging learning tools, to ensure consistency and impact across the sector.

A further area of focus will be continued collaboration with trainers with lived experience and with experience in aviation, as well as with the CAA, ncat and other relevant partners, to ensure that the materials developed are informed by operational realities, legal standards and the experiences of disabled passengers and those requiring assistance.

The working group will also identify opportunities for shared industry training materials and trainer development, including the identification and involvement of trainers with lived

experience. This will help build a stronger, more sustainable model for sector-wide training and support the recommendation to increase the role and pool of trainers with lived experience in future delivery.

The development of shared training materials should complement, rather than replace, existing operator training programmes and should be adaptable to different operational environments.

What are the barriers and challenges?

One of the main challenges in Year 1 was some initial apprehension from businesses about the scope and implications of enhanced training. The working group tackled this through workshops, stakeholder engagement and discussion with relevant representatives, which helped build understanding and support for the work.

The working group responded by agreeing a phased approach, including distinguishing between customer-facing roles and back-of-house functions. This helped create a clear and practical pathway forward and enabled the working group to continue progressing the work while recognising operational concerns and business readiness.

This challenge also highlighted the importance of continued engagement, communication, and collaboration across industry to ensure that enhanced training is both effective and deliverable.

The working group recognises that this will continue to be a challenge as we take this work forward and we believe that our continued commitment to industry wide engagement will be the most effective way of securing understanding and buy in on this key topic.

Information

Why is it important?

Clear, accessible information helps passengers prepare for air travel with greater confidence, particularly when they are travelling through unfamiliar environments or working to tight timetables. For disabled passengers, reliable pre-travel information can make a significant difference by setting clear expectations about the support available, the steps involved in the journey, and the facilities they may encounter at the airport and on board. Providing this information early, from the booking and planning stages onwards, helps passengers make informed choices, plan their journey more effectively, and feel reassured at every stage of travel.

Passengers should, where reasonably possible, provide accurate and up-to-date information regarding their needs, including mobility aid. Industry should ensure that appropriate systems, trained personnel and handling procedures are in place to enable assistance to be delivered safely, consistently and with dignity.

Key Recommendation from the Task and Finish Group

- Improve access to standardised accessibility information
- Create airport accessibility guides

- Ensure digital accessibility
- Enhance access to assistance throughout the airport journey
- Ensure clear passenger rights and complaints procedures
- Develop awareness campaigns to increase confidence to fly

What have we achieved?

During Year 1, the working group reviewed the current regulatory framework to understand what information airports and airlines are expected to publish to help passengers prepare for travel. The working group found that Regulation 1107/2006 and ECAC Doc 30 provide important content requirements, while also identifying opportunities for further detail to better support the broad range of passenger needs.

The working group then carried out a detailed review of airport and airline website pages to assess how effectively this information was being made available to consumers. Airlines generally provided a good standard and breadth of information to help passengers prepare for their journey. Airport assistance information showed greater variation, highlighting opportunities to improve consistency, detail and accessibility for passengers.

The working group worked with industry and consumer stakeholders to develop a more comprehensive outline of the accessibility information airports should provide. The working group also encouraged airlines to adopt the One-Click framework previously showcased, which was later incorporated into ECAC Document 30 Annex 5-J guidance from February 2026.

Across all areas, the working group agreed that assistance information should be accessible within one click of the main homepage and, where possible and practicable, presented on a single, easy-to-navigate page.

The working group identified key areas for improvement and developed airport-focused content that reflects and builds on existing regulatory requirements.

Stakeholder meetings demonstrated strong support across industry and consumer groups for this additional level of detail, reinforcing the value of a consistent, practical and passenger-focused approach.

What comes next?

The working group will continue to champion the recommendations for improved pre-travel information and seek opportunities for recognised best practice to be reflected in regulatory guidance. The working group will also work with airports and airlines to support wider engagement and implementation.

The working group plans to broaden its focus to include travel agents, recognising their important role in supporting consumers and in gathering and providing information that can shape the overall customer experience. The working group will also extend its focus to include the availability of information within airports and on the day of travel.

In addition, the working group will continue to review opportunities to improve complaints handling so that airports, airlines and assistance providers have clearer shared visibility of

customer issues. This will support simpler processes for customers, improve coordination between organisations and help identify opportunities to strengthen service quality and consistency. We note that this must be done in the context of the law which states that the "legal entity" should handle complaints. The CAA ask that the assistance provider should not communicate directly with the passenger about a complaint, rather these should be handled by the airport or airline.

What are the barriers and challenges?

The breadth of ambition and ideas generated by the working group has created both opportunities and challenges. Stakeholders offered a wide range of valuable suggestions about what passengers would ideally like to see. The working group has therefore focused on prioritising actions that are realistic and deliverable within existing resources and current regulatory framework, while keeping longer-term opportunities in view.

Tailored passenger experience

Why is it important?

Too often in air travel, assumptions are made about what disabled passengers need or want without listening to them and understanding their particular needs. The classic example, repeated on a daily basis around the world, is to assume that a blind person needs to sit in a wheelchair to move through an airport. Sometimes that is for the convenience of the assistance staff, but it is never for the comfort and dignity of the passenger. Diversification of assistance service, in addition to training of service providers, plays a key role in addressing these problems but there are also operational and other issues which contribute to poor passenger experience.

As in many other areas, one size does not fit all, and the starting point must always be to tailor the support that is given to the needs of the individual. And that can only be done through effective engagement with the passenger.

A tailored service should be understood as assistance that is proportionate to an individual's specific needs, preferences and circumstances, supporting dignity, independence and informed choice throughout the passenger journey.

Key Recommendations from the Task and Finish Group

- Develop improved means of capturing passenger needs
- Ensure appropriate equipment is used
- Include pan-impairment requirements in airport accessibility reviews

What have we achieved?

Technology has a major role to play in delivering a more personalised approach to information, enabling each individual to focus on their particular requirements and preferences. However, the working group recognises that technology is an assistive tool, not a total solution, and that above all the key is giving the individual confidence that their request for assistance has been received and understood and that it will be delivered in a

timely and appropriate way. This shouldn't be difficult to achieve, and yet, we know that in the context of a big and busy airport, stress and anxiety can build and people can feel unsupported.

Much can be done to improve the quality of assistance services through better training, not just of assistance staff but of all customer-facing staff. In particular, it is important for staff in every role to be able to put themselves in the passenger's shoes and empathise with their confusion or anxiety, so that the support they offer is directly addressing their needs.

In the same way, the Group's work on information and communication, and also on mobility aids, is supporting the goal of a more tailored service. The easier the passenger finds the wayfinding and communication they encounter at an airport, the less anxious they will feel and the more confident they will be in their ability to navigate a challenging environment.

Recognising the importance of using the right equipment for assistance from kerbside to the aircraft door and ensuring that the staff using it have been properly trained, has also been picked up by the training and mobility aids working groups and they will continue to focus on those key points in parallel with the working group. Of course, in air travel, as in other modes of transport, last minute changes or problems occur. Gate changes, cancellations and delays all cause additional stress to many disabled people, including many who are neurodivergent. Again, this feeds into the work on information provision and how to ensure that stress is minimised by giving the passenger reassurance that their needs have been recognised and that they have not been forgotten.

One key area is the sharing of information in times of disruption. The impact of disrupted travel plans, including delays and cancellations, is much greater on many disabled passengers with concerns about access to medication, availability of toilets, time constraints on personal assistants and accessible accommodation. Co-ordination of clear, helpful and timely information for the individual passenger in these circumstances is vital and is a clear focus of our work.

The working group has also been focusing on the development of a proof of concept of a new digital platform to support the exchange of more detailed insights into customer access needs so that these can be properly handled before and during the passenger journey.

The working group identified that the core challenge in providing tailored passenger support is that there is insufficient information shared between stakeholders (booking agents, airline, airport personnel) to respond to the full range of passenger needs.

There is ongoing work at global level to address this issue across a complex international operating environment. The group identified an opportunity to complement that work through an accelerated roll out of a UK-based proof of concept, capable of integrating with global industry standards, to support improved communication of passenger needs. Industry can only meet passengers' individual needs more effectively when they have a better mechanism for collecting and remembering them.

Recognising that UK industry operates within a global ecosystem, any platform would need to integrate with existing industry standards through open interfaces. To this end, a UK solution should use existing passenger service system capabilities where possible and should ensure airlines are not required to build unique UK-only system integrations.

The working group has identified a proposed model for a new digital platform and has engaged industry to help develop the proposal and create a pathway to implementation through engagement with key service providers both of technology and operational expertise.

What comes next?

The working group will continue with the priorities outlined, linking with the training, mobility aids, and information working groups to ensure that the tailored element of the journey is recognised and built into service delivery.

For Year 2, the focus will also be to further advance work on the proof of concept to the digital platform, working in partnership with technical experts across industry to deliver and test whether it works and can deliver a tailored passenger experience in an aviation setting.

The plan is to develop the proof-of-concept project which has been scoped with industry, with a view to deploying the first roll out in a live aviation setting. At this stage it is not possible to predict the pace of change in this complex area, but the working group will work to make progress as rapidly as possible.

The purpose of the proof of concept is to demonstrate the functionality and effectiveness of such a system with an initial group of stakeholders and to demonstrate potential for a broader application across the whole UK industry.

The working group will have a clear focus on ensuring that any future digital solutions or information standards work alongside existing industry systems and processes and do not create additional complexity either for the industry or for passengers.

In addition, the working group will look to identify available equipment across UK airports to help set out next steps for ensuring the right equipment is available and being used correctly.

What are the barriers and challenges?

The working group's biggest challenge is very often simply the nature of air travel which brings with it so many uncertainties for the infrequent traveller. Work is needed to better understand how to design the stress out of air travel though a range of initiatives including more intuitive wayfinding and a communications package which is tailored to the individuals' needs and filters out all the extraneous information overload with which we are all familiar when we fly.

On the proof of concept, challenges have included identifying an appropriate delivery and funding model for a new industry platform, highlighting that there is no natural organisation to own such a platform which represents airports, airlines and delivery partners, the three critical parties which we expect to realise such a project.

The working group see opportunity to mitigate this challenge by commissioning the proof of concept with a single airport, airline and service provider, however with a core design principle that such a digital solution would need to be applicable to the entire UK aviation industry. A further challenge is the wide diversity of technology that already exists across the aviation world.

Through discussion the working group has identified a number of possible funding models and approaches which need to be further developed.

Mobility aids

Why is it important?

One of the greatest fears for any passenger who uses a wheelchair or other mobility aid is that it will be lost or damaged during a journey – whether at the airport or on-board. There are many stories from around the world of highly specialised and customised powered wheelchairs arriving in an unworkable state. For the passenger, it is not just an inconvenience, it can mean the end of a trip before it has begun and sometimes months of waiting (relying on an unsuitable replacement wheelchair that may cause health issues) while repairs are made or the chair is replaced. The working group recognises that these fears are real and that things do go wrong. At the same time, important positive work is taking place internationally, including the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) work on the certification and safety standards for mobility aids and the International Air Transport Association (IATA) work on practical guidance, information sharing and handling processes. The aim of our work is to recognise the seriousness of the risk while helping to align UK activity with these emerging international efforts and support safer, more consistent journeys for passengers.

The risk is not only to the passenger's journey but to flight safety. In September 2008 an electric mobility aid being unloaded at Manchester Airport caught fire and was destroyed after its electrical circuit had been left unprotected against inadvertent operation during the flight. The CAA's Safety Notice SN-2012/003 subsequently recorded more than 70 further reports of electric mobility aids where the requirements of the ICAO Technical Instructions had not been complied with. This evidence is now dated, but it establishes the safety case for our work and points to the value of accurate device identification and consistent, well-informed handling.

The working group is pleased to note that IATA is undertaking a review of mobility aid handling practices with a view to identifying opportunities to improve consistency and passenger experience globally. The working group will continue to engage with this work and seek alignment with emerging international guidance wherever appropriate. We have already had the opportunity to feed into the early stages of the IATA work, and in particular to stress the importance of a seamless approach across all airlines, whether or not they are IATA members.

The working group looks forward to continuing to work with them. The issue of Lithium battery safety is a key concern across the industry, and one which IATA will continue to address in collaboration with the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA).

Key Recommendations from the Task and Finish Group

- Ensure clear communication with passengers about mobility aids
- Establish a working group on mobility aid design and handling

What have we achieved?

In Year 1, the working group has established the operational vehicle for its work, launched practical tools that are already in use, and built a wide stakeholder coalition spanning passengers, mobility aid manufacturers, airlines, airports, ground handlers, the healthcare sector, regulators, and government.

Central to this has been the establishment of the AAP in September 2025, a first-of-its-kind collaboration in the UK between the aviation sector and mobility aid manufacturers. The AAP was established in July 2025 by ASUK. Its members include the BHTA, the not-for-profit trade association representing the UK healthcare and assistive technologies sector, and Sunrise Medical, one of the world's leading mobility aid manufacturers. The AAP provides the Group with an operational forum in which all relevant stakeholders work together on practical change. Read about the Aviation Accessibility Panel.

The Flier Friendly Programme, developed by ASUK through the AAP and launched in March 2026, is among the first practical, operational responses to the Task and Finish Group's recommendations on mobility aid design and handling. The working group recognises that the Flier Friendly Programme is one initiative contributing to improved mobility aid handling and passenger experience. Future work should continue to consider alignment with wider national and international industry initiatives and evolving best practice.

The Flier Friendly Programme is a voluntary, industry-led best practice initiative that encourages better preparation, clearer information sharing and more consistent handling for passengers travelling with electric mobility aids. The Programme brings together airlines, airports, ground handlers, the BHTA and mobility aid manufacturers around a shared set of commitments, supported by practical tools available to passengers and operators. It does not replace airline approval processes or regulatory requirements but provides a common framework that reduces ambiguity and supports smoother journeys.

IATA work on a standard for mobility aid tags, the checklist, and the upcoming review of the IATA guidance on loading mobility aids will complement the Flier Friendly Programme.

The EMA Air Travel Pack, developed by ASUK as the central deliverable of the Flier Friendly Programme. Read about the Air Travel Pack. It comprises:

- a passenger guide
- a structured technical information form passengers can populate and print or save to share with their airline
- clear guidance on UN38.3 battery compliance documentation

A manufacturer commitments framework is in place through the Flier Friendly Programme. Manufacturers joining the Programme commit to making the EMA Air Travel Pack available to their customers to help with:

- ensuring UN38.3 Test Summaries are accessible
- collaborating with the aviation sector on safer handling of complex devices

- adopting more durable battery labelling so Watt-hour ratings and safety markings remain legible throughout the life of the device

Sunrise Medical and eFOLDi are the founding manufacturer signatories.

Direct manufacturer engagement has progressed through ongoing engagement via the BHTA and through the AAP, ASUK's presence at Naidex 2026, and a structured follow-up programme coordinated with the DfT. On 7 May 2026, the AAP convened a dedicated meeting on the Flier Friendly Programme to define next steps and priorities with manufacturers, covering improving device information, labelling and visibility, and handling and design improvements.

Awareness of the Flier Friendly Programme has been built through multiple channels, including trade and consumer media, social media, direct manufacturer engagement at industry events, and through partner organisations.

What comes next?

The working group's priority for Year 2 is further rollout and adoption of the Flier Friendly Programme and the EMA Air Travel Pack; by expanding the manufacturer signatory base, growing visible adoption through manufacturer customer channels, and increasing public awareness so that passengers receive the EMA Air Travel Pack before they reach the airport.

The working group will progress and deepen manufacturer engagement, building on the AAP's established sequence of regular meetings with manufacturers and the BHTA. The group will also progress engagement around the Flier Friendly Programme and design and handling priorities, including routine publication of UN38.3 Test Summaries, design improvements that reduce the risk of damage in transit, and ensuring ground handlers have the information they need to handle increasingly complex devices, including collaborative input into handler training. Design improvement will be a defined aim for Year 2 in its own right. We will start with durable battery labelling, which manufacturers commit to on joining the Flier Friendly Programme, so that Watt-hour ratings and safety markings remain legible throughout the life of the device and build from there towards broader design and testing standards. This responds directly to the ICAO Dangerous Goods Panel's (DGP) conclusion that robust design and testing standards across the product life cycle are the most effective proactive mitigation.

The working group will share learning and best practice internationally. Building on initial ECAC interest, the group will support engagement with international counterparts to share the UK approach and learn from theirs, including the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA) and the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Through ASUK's memorandum of understanding, the group will also engage with the US Airline Service Providers Association (ASPA) and the Aviation Services Association.

The working group will support the Inclusive Flight Planner (iFP). The iFP is a project that under the ncat Scaling Innovation 2026 project. iFP is being developed to help disabled

people travelling with a mobility aid share verified mobility-aid information with the right teams at the right time. External stakeholder activity runs from June 2026 to January 2027. We will contribute through stakeholder workshops, user journey reviews, data and information reviews, and prototype feedback, drawing on the AAP's manufacturer relationships and the experience built through the EMA Air Travel Pack to help bridge the gap between manufacturers and aviation operations. The iFP is complementary to the Flier Friendly Programme. Where the EMA Air Travel Pack gives passengers a practical tool today, the iFP looks at the underlying systems and information flows that will support better practice tomorrow.

The working group will continue to liaise with IATA and colleagues across the aviation ecosystem to identify improvements in systems and processes for mobility aid handling. This will include alignment with IATA's standardised mobility aid tag and associated checklist, and engagement with the forthcoming review of IATA guidance on the safe loading, securing, unloading and return of mobility aids. This work will expand and complement the Flier Friendly Programme by helping to ensure that the practical tools developed in the UK are compatible with international standards, support consistent information sharing between passengers, airlines and handlers, and contribute to the delivery of consistent 'return to gate' labelling.

The working group will continue alignment with regulator and government workstreams, including the developing accessibility framework, so industry effort is coordinated rather than duplicated. The working group will work to deepen its engagement with other government stakeholders, including the Office for Product Safety and Standards.

Separately, the working group will ask the CAA for updated data on occurrences where the requirements of the ICAO Technical Instructions have not been complied with for electric mobility aids, building on the figures first published in its Safety Notice SN-2012/003. This would provide a measurable safety baseline against which to track the impact of training and mobility aid work over time and would help identify why non-compliance occurs and where further training is most needed.

Where additional reporting or monitoring arrangements are considered, the working group will seek to build upon existing reporting mechanisms and available industry data to minimise duplication and unnecessary administrative burden on operators

The working group will bring lived experience further into its work, both directly through the AAP and through participation in the iFP project's lived-experience panels.

The implementation of these recommendations should contribute towards reducing mobility aid damage, improving passenger confidence, maintaining independence following incidents, and promoting greater consistency in handling standards across the aviation sector.

What are the barriers and challenges?

Bringing together a wide range of stakeholders, passengers, manufacturers, airlines, airports, ground handlers, the healthcare sector, regulators and government, and securing

shared buy-in to a single practical approach. This represents a significant opportunity as well as a challenge.

Responding constructively to the ICAO DGP's work on the safety of lithium battery-powered mobility aids. At its thirtieth meeting (DGP/30, Montreal, 6 to 10 October 2025) the Panel agreed, subject to stakeholder engagement, a proposed amendment to the Technical Instructions that would introduce a 300 Wh limit for batteries remaining installed in a mobility aid unless a higher rating is authorised by the operator, with a view to incorporation into the 2027-2028 Edition by addendum. Longer-term provisions are to be developed through a new inter-panel working group involving the ICAO Facilitation Panel. Our challenge is to ensure a proactive industry response that protects and enhances the experience of passengers travelling with electric mobility aids as this work develops.

Non-visible impairments

Why are they important?

Airports and air travel generally can be stressful for everyone, but for many people with non-visible impairments the environment can become overwhelming, painful and leave passengers in a vulnerable situation. For many with sensory related conditions, bright lights, loud noise, confusing information and crowds can all lead to sensory overload and cause significant distress. Passengers with dementia, mental health conditions, stomas and other non-visible impairments, commonly report aviation processes which have left them distressed, in pain, confused and even ignored and unsupported.

Key recommendations from the Task and Finish Group

- Include pan-impairment requirements in airport accessibility reviews
- Develop awareness campaigns to increase confidence to fly

These two recommendations were made in relation to non-visible impairments. However, due to very strong threads running through all the areas of work linking the needs of people with non-visible impairments to all the priority areas of the Group's work, these were moved under the tailored support and information working groups. We are focussing in this report on drawing those threads across all other areas together to ensure that non-visible impairments is woven into the fabric of thinking and operational delivery to encourage an intersectional perspective without silos based on conditions but based upon access needs.

What have we achieved?

The working group's focus for non-visible impairments is to promote understanding of their layered nature as intersectional. Many people with visible disabilities also have non-visible impairments and vice versa. The working group has been working across each of the working groups to ensure that intersectionality and non-visible impairments remain in front of mind throughout their work. This ensures consideration for non-visible impairments is built in across each workstream from the beginning.

The aim is to promote cultural, religious and trauma-informed understanding and awareness for those with non-visible impairments to ensure they get the accessibility they need, along with discretion, dignity and safeguarding in aviation. The working group has begun development of a tool that could be used to help industry to focus on the barriers and challenges that passengers with non-visible impairments might face at each stage of the journey, and how that might change what people in different aviation roles might need to consider and know. This will help the industry to move towards following the Social Model of Disability by promoting wider understanding and promoting dignity. We will continue to work on this product to ensure it provides a useful guide to anyone working in the sector.

The working group has worked closely with the training working group to support a framework that can help create greater parity and consistency across the aviation industry, while still allowing staff to respond to the individual passenger in a personalised, discreet and dignified way. The aim is to balance standardised access principles with tailored service delivery, so that passengers with non-visible impairments can expect understanding and appropriate support regardless of where, how or with whom they travel.

What comes next?

The Sunflower lanyard is a “must have” for many passengers with a non-visible impairment but should not be viewed as the only way to signal someone has a non-visible impairment. Many people do not wear one for safeguarding, cultural, religious and personal reasons. There needs to be discreet and safe ways to signal an accessibility need for non-visible impairments. There is clearly a need for more staff awareness of the existing identifiers, and how to respond appropriately when someone has signalled a need. There should also be more focus on a needs-based approach, rather than assuming all disabled passengers have the same need. The working group will work across the sector on ways to improve and strengthen knowledge in this area, alongside the training working group. This includes continued development of the tool that will help organisations train their staff to identify barriers and ways to help passengers in the way they need, relevant to different roles.

The working group will also be talking to stakeholders representing often unheard and misunderstood non-visible impairments such as Tourette Syndrome, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). We also plan to run industry attended “lunch and learn” sessions to hear from lived experience voices in accessibility and aviation.

What are the barriers and challenges?

There is an opportunity to build a more consistent global approach to non-visible impairments in aviation, including shared language, clearer definitions and common principles for identifying and responding to access needs. At present, approaches vary across countries, operators and service providers, which means passengers may experience different levels of understanding and support depending on where they travel. Greater international alignment would help create a more predictable and reassuring journey, while still allowing airlines, airports and assistance providers to tailor support to the individual passenger. This work should recognise that visible identifiers, such as the Sunflower lanyard, can be useful voluntary tools for some passengers, but they are not aviation standards and should not be the only way for a passenger to communicate an access need.

A positive global approach should therefore support multiple discreet and trusted channels for passengers to share their needs, supported by staff training, respectful engagement and a presumption of trust.

Training on non-visible impairments should build on a shared global understanding of what non-visible impairments are, how they may affect a passenger's journey, and how access needs can be recognised and supported in a respectful and consistent way. Establishing this common understanding first is important because training will be most effective when it is based on shared language, common principles and a clear commitment to the social model of disability, rather than on condition-by-condition assumptions. Once this foundation is in place, aviation training can then translate that understanding into practical guidance for different roles across the passenger journey, from booking and pre-travel information to airport assistance, disruption management, onboard service and post-journey support.

Civil Aviation Authority

Why is it important?

The CAA is the UK's aviation regulator. A number of recommendations were addressed specifically to the CAA as the regulator with a key role to play in raising standards across industry.

Key recommendations from the Task and Finish Group

- Develop self-assessment tool
- Review and update existing guidance on CAA Airport Performance Framework (CAP1228)
- Regularly review and update existing CAA oversight in priority areas
    - Standardisation of assistance dog relief areas
    - Standardised fit to fly forms
    - Impact of flight disruption on disabled passengers
    - Mobility aid damage data
    - Airport end-to-end journey data
    - Training package audits
    - Increased use of the Airport Accessibility Forums
    - Inclusive design for airports and aircraft

What have we achieved?

The CAA has considered the recommendation to develop a self-assessment tool. Its review of CAP1228 will provide an opportunity for a self-assessment tool to be introduced. This will support businesses to evaluate their current performance and provide a clear roadmap for improvement by providing information for businesses about what to expect from the CAA when it conducts Quality Standards, annual assessments and individual airport 'deep dives'.

The CAA is currently conducting a review of CAP1228. This is progressing well, and to inform its review, the CAA has:

- Conducted detailed research and analysis of airport performance against the existing framework
- Commissioned an independent market researcher to review the CAA's survey into passengers' experiences of using assistance services
- Engaged with a broad range of consumer and industry stakeholders

Key areas of focus from the review include:

- Assessing current elements of the CAP 1228 framework
    - additional guidance on consulting with disability stakeholders
    - enhancing requirements to survey assistance passengers on customer service
    - waiting times for assistance
- as well as considering the introduction of new elements including
    - training
    - surface access
    - assistance into and out aircraft seats
    - ground handling of mobility aids

In response to the recommendation for the CAA to regularly review and update existing CAA oversight in priority areas set out in the recommendations, all areas will be considered as part of the review of CAP1228 quality standards, including increased use of Airport Accessibility Forums.

In addition, as part of its regular oversight activity, the CAA conducted five 'deep dive' assessments of airports in 2025-26. Through these assessments we identified some issues about

- Assistance dog 'relief' areas and information for passengers about travelling with assistance dogs. All issues have since been rectified.
- Content and delivery of training programmes. Progress has been good, but a small number of issues remain.
- Some issues in regard to design for airports, such as signage, seating, shelter, and lift provision. Progress has been good, but a small number of issues remain.

Read about the CAA Airport Accessibility Performance Reports 2025/26

The CAA requested data from the industry on mobility aid damage. It published the key findings of the data request and consulted on a proposal for publication of data in September. It has been reviewing responses to the consultation and plans to issue a summary of the responses and information on next steps later this year.

The CAA requested information from 45 airlines about medical clearance processes (including information on 'fit to fly' forms') as part of the first Airline Accessibility Report. The CAA engaged with some airlines about some issues about fairness of processes for completing forms and consequently all issues were rectified.

On the recommendation about the impact of flight disruption on disabled passengers. As part of the CAA's compliance programme into whether airlines are meeting their obligations under Regulation 261/2004 when consumers face flight disruption, it wrote to 27 airlines to ask how airlines communicate with, and provide extra support, to disabled and less mobile passengers.

What comes next?

The CAA has a work plan on accessibility including:

- Consulting on proposed updates to CAP1228 quality standardslater this year
- Developing a self-assessment tool to accompany the review of CAP1228
- Overseeing priority areas through CAP1228 and 'deep' dive' inspections. In the 26/27 year, it will assess 8 airports
- The Regulation 261/2004 compliance programme to run for at least 18 months. The CAA will publish updates on progress at relevant points over that period

Next steps

The progress reports and future priorities set out above in each of our key focus areas represent a significant amount of work from all those involved. Progress may seem slow in some areas but given the large number of stakeholders and the complexity of the aviation world, we are pleased with the positive steps already delivered or set up for delivery in a number of areas.

In the next year, as we have set out, the work continues and, wherever possible, moves from concept to delivery, either on a pilot or wider cross-industry basis so that we can start to see real life improvements in the quality of the journey experience for disabled people.

We will develop indicators to monitor implementation progress and report periodically on outcomes achieved across the priority areas.

The DfT's Aviation Council brings together leaders from across the aviation sector to support shared outcomes aligned with governments missions. The Group thinks this would be an excellent opportunity to ensure accessibility remains high profile, and would ideally like to see it as an agenda item. The Group will work with the Aviation Council to share updates, challenges and opportunities to improve accessibility going forward.

Future priorities

There is no absolute deadline for the delivery of all the improvements and recommendations that the Task and Finish Group set out. Some have already come to fruition, others will require a lot more work both on developing technical standards and on ensuring buy-in from all those involved.

What is clear, however, is the commitment and passion of the Group's members to make air travel a better experience for disabled and older people across all aspects of the journey.

While our focus is clearly on the UK, we believe that by establishing new models of best practice, in areas such as training and information for example, we may also be able to influence change internationally. The Group recognises that many accessibility journeys involve multiple carriers and jurisdictions. Future work should therefore seek compatibility with international standards and practices to ensure a seamless experience for passengers throughout the end-to-end journey. We are particularly grateful to IATA for their engagement with our work.

Annex A – Aviation Accessibility Implementation Group Membership

Name	Role in the Group	Role / Organisation	Date
Ann Frye	Co-chair	Independent Mobility Specialist	September 2025 – ongoing
Steve Wilson	Co-chair	Assisted Travel Manager, Jet2.com and Jet2holidays	September 2025 – ongoing
James Fremantle	Member	Senior Manager, Consumer Policy and Enforcement, Civil Aviation Authority	September 2025 – ongoing
Michelle Kelly	Information working group co-lead	Head of Transport Policy, Consumer Council for Northern Ireland	September 2025 – February 2026
Sue Sharp	Member	Interim Chair, Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC)	September 2025 – ongoing
Deborah Persaud	Member	Civil Aviation Authority Consumer Panel	September 2025 – ongoing
Roberto Castiglioni	Member	Rights on Flights Campaign	September 2025 – ongoing
Carly Jones	Non-visible impairment working group lead	Chair of Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) aviation working group	September 2025 – ongoing
Anthony Jennings	Mobility aid working group co-lead	Disability Rights Advocate	September 2025 – ongoing
John Fishwick	Member	Customer Accessibility Manager, Virgin Atlantic; Government Disability and Access Ambassador	September 2025 – ongoing
Lorraine Rothwell	Member	Customer Service Manager, Ryanair	September 2025 – ongoing
Xavier Mascarell	Training working group co-lead	Customer Accessibility Strategy Manager, British Airways	September 2025 – ongoing
Wallis Harvey	Information working group co-lead	Accessibility Specialist, easyJet	September 2025 – ongoing
Calum Glazier	Tailored support working group co-lead	Head of Assistance Services, London Heathrow Airport	September 2025 – ongoing
Ed Kibblewhite	Member	PRM Contract Manager, Manchester Airports Group	September 2025 – ongoing
Denise Hobbs	Member	Accessibility & PRM Manager, London Luton Airport	January 2026 – ongoing
Chris Drury	Member	Customer Services Manager, East Midlands Airport	September 2025 – April 2026
Paul Scott	Member	Terminal Assurance Manager, Glasgow Airport	September 2025 – December 2025
Samantha Saunders	Tailored support working group co-lead	Head of Assisted Services, ABM Aviation UK Ltd	September 2025 – June 2026

Liz Boadella Burton	Training working group co-lead	Head of Product and Passenger Experience, Wilson James	September 2025 – ongoing
Mark Chambers	Member	Operations Director Airport Services, OCS	September 2025 – December 2025
Peter O'Broin	Member	Campaign Manager UK & Ireland, IATA	September 2025 – ongoing
Luke Petherbridge	Member	Director of Public Affairs, ABTA	September 2025 – December 2025
Julia Ogiehor	Member	Policy and Trade Relations Manager, ABTA	January 2026 – ongoing
David Leighton	Mobility-aid working group co-lead	Director, Aviation Services UK	September 2025 – ongoing
	Member	Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Airlines UK	September 2025 – ongoing
Christopher Snelling	Member	Policy Director, AirportsUK	September 2025 – ongoing

Annex B: Glossary of terms

This glossary explains the main terms, abbreviations and organisations referred to in this report. It is intended to support readers who may be less familiar with aviation, accessibility, regulation or disability terminology.

Term	Meaning in this report
ABTA	A UK travel association representing travel agents and tour operators. In this report, ABTA is referred to in relation to stakeholder workshops and engagement with the wider travel sector.
Airport Accessibility Forum	A group convening representatives of disability groups and disabled individuals, to be consulted by airports on assistance service quality standards, facilities and equipment, infrastructure and design, and training.
Assistance service/Assisted travel	A free service provided to passengers by the airport, or assistance service provider, to help disabled passengers to travel through the airport, boarding and disembarking the aircraft.
Assistive technology	Equipment, software or devices that support disabled people to communicate, move, access information or carry out daily activities. In this report, it includes mobility aids and digital tools that support accessible travel.
BHTA	British Healthcare Trades Association. A UK trade association representing healthcare and assistive technology suppliers, including mobility aid manufacturers.
CAA	Civil Aviation Authority. The UK aviation regulator. In this report, the CAA is relevant because it monitors and enforces passenger rights and accessibility requirements, including airport and airline accessibility frameworks.
Guidance on quality standards under Regulation 1107/2006 (CAP1228)	CAA guidance setting out quality standards for assistance at UK airports under Regulation 1107/2006. It supports monitoring of airport assistance performance and continuous improvement.
Airline Accessibility Guidance (CAP2990)	CAA airline accessibility guidance. It explains expectations for airlines in relation to disabled passengers and passengers with reduced mobility across the passenger journey.
DfT	Department for Transport. The UK Government department responsible for transport policy. The DfT provides the secretariat for the Group.

DPTAC	Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee. A statutory advisory body that advises Government on transport accessibility for disabled people.
ECAC	European Civil Aviation Conference. An intergovernmental organisation that supports cooperation and common standards in European civil aviation, including facilitation and assistance for passengers with reduced mobility.
ECAC Doc 30	A European civil aviation policy document covering facilitation matters, including guidance relevant to disabled passengers and passengers with reduced mobility.
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration. The United States aviation regulator. It is mentioned in this report in relation to international engagement and learning on mobility aid handling and safety.
Ground services	Encompasses a variety of essential functions for aircraft operation on the ground, including passenger handling to assist passengers from check-in to boarding, handling baggage and cargo and aircraft maintenance. More information on what this includes can be found at ground handling.
Hidden Disabilities Sunflower	A voluntary symbol, usually shown on a green sunflower-patterned lanyard, that indicates a person may have a non-visible impairment and may need extra time, support or understanding.
IATA	International Air Transport Association. A global airline industry body. In this report, IATA is relevant to international work on mobility aids, dangerous goods rules and consistent airline practice.
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organisation. A United Nations specialised agency that sets international standards and recommended practices for civil aviation.
iFP	Inclusive Flight Planner. A project developing a secure tool to help disabled people share verified mobility aid information with the right aviation teams at the right time.
Intersectionality	The way different aspects of a person's identity or experience can overlap and affect the barriers they face. In this report, it recognises that a person may have both visible and non-visible impairments, as well as cultural, religious or trauma-related needs.

Lived experience	The knowledge and understanding gained from personally going through something. This includes living with impairments and health conditions.
ncat	The National Centre for Accessible Transport (ncat) is an independent national evidence centre, bringing together evidence, lived experience and innovation to support the removal of barriers to accessible transport.
Neurodivergent	A broad term describing people whose brains process information, communication or sensory input differently. This may include autistic people, people with ADHD and others with neurodevelopmental differences.
Non-visible impairment	Impairments that are not immediately obvious, including most health conditions. Examples include mental health conditions, hearing loss, allergies and diabetes.
One-Click standard	Recommended standard of ensuring all information on accessibility is available on a single webpage or pages from a single landing page that is one mouse click from the homepage.
Pre-notification	The process by which a passenger tells an airline, airport or travel provider in advance that they need assistance or will be travelling with specific equipment, such as an electric mobility aid.
PRM	Passenger with Reduced Mobility. A commonly used aviation term for passengers who need assistance because of disability, age, temporary injury, health condition or another mobility-related need.
Regulation 1107/2006	The aviation regulation concerning the rights of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility when travelling by air. It aims to ensure non-discrimination and access to assistance so that disabled passengers have comparable opportunities to travel by air.
Regulation 261/2004	The aviation regulation concerning the rights of passengers in the event of denied boarding, cancellation or long delay of flights.
Social Model of Disability	The social model of disability says that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or condition. Under this model “disabled people” or “disabled person” signifies a collective cultural identity of a shared, disabling experience that people with impairments face in society. The use of “disabled passenger” in this

	report refers to anyone with an impairment or medical condition that is disabled by part of the aviation journey. Whilst this is the model the report and the group follow, it is fully recognised that at a more individual level, some may not relate to, or use, this language.
UN38.3 Test Summary	Documentation showing that a lithium battery has passed required safety tests for transport. For electric mobility aids, this information helps airlines and handlers confirm that batteries can be transported safely.