

Independent Gatwick Accessibility Panel (IGAP)

13 December 2024 – Online Only

Attendees

IGAP

Ann Frye (AF)
Ross Hovey (RH)
Robert Morgan (RM)
Sophie Grand (SG)
Geraldine Lundy (GL)
Neil Betteridge (NB)
Libby Herbert (LH)
Sue Sharp (SS)
Daniel Cadey (DC)

Gatwick Airport Ltd (GAL)

Pete Coombes (PC)
Nick Williams (NW)
Lauren McDaniel (LM)

Passenger Advisory Group (PAG)

Samantha Williams (SW)

Apologies

Anna-Ruth Cockerham (ARC)

Minutes

General update – PC

- LinkedIn issue with negative posts from individual. Request for people not to engage. AF noted IGAP members have been called out personally too, regarding frequency of meetings and competence of IGAP members.
- Gatwick to manage response internally and will update the group.

WeASSIST

- Not progressing work with WeAssist – WeAssist not in a position to start a trial until February.
- Looking at options for products, looked at Good Maps. WayMap solution shared with PC. Will link in with the panel in the New Year. AF noted reservations the group had on WeAssist, including the user needing to hold their phone out (theft risk) and the location of guide (Turkey).
- SS noted previous connection with WayMap (previous boss and link to charity) and requested not to be involved in the assessment of product suitability.
- AF the group look forward to seeing what Gatwick look at next and asked PC to involve IGAP in the review process.

Autonomous Wheelchairs

- Innovation team to bring the latest product into Gatwick in mid-January (as per slides)
- Opportunity to link demos with IGAP onsite meeting.

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- Short discussion on who the product is for - not for fulltime wheelchair users or older, more frail passengers. AF can see a potential use for passengers that could benefit from short term use, who don't want to utilise the full assistance service, NB sees an opportunity for a larger number of people, frail but not necessarily older people.
- PC noted that proof of concept is the element we are trying to navigate through at the moment.
- SS found using the product a lot less scary than previously assumed. Could work for individuals who use a mobility scooter outside of the airport. Have other airports using this type of product been identified?
- PC advised Gatwick Innovation team getting some data from Schiphol where a similar product has been used airside. Need to get data from airports with similar demographic of passenger to Gatwick.
- Panel members agreed that Schiphol is a good example, that the look of the item is important (shouldn't look too medical or like a traditional wheelchair) and it needs to be useful but also look cool to use.
- RH recommended a video of the product in use in Schiphol
https://www.instagram.com/reel/C_sgckiqy6m/?igsh=ZDZ2Nmd3Mm9ucDNs

Project update

- Furniture for NT assistance lounge ordered (as per slides) due to arrive w/c 20th Jan.
- Maintenance schedule will be in place.
- ST assistance lounge to be refurbished (as per slides), panel members opinions sought on the height of the panels around the area, noting that wayfinding panels will be reduced to 2.1m, other panels are 1.5 – 1.8m height, current panels are 1.1m.
- Range of views from members, on all aspects of the area.
- RH noted that personally as a wheelchair user he'd feel the area feels like being segregated.
- Ideal would be to have a mixture of heights so allow for individual preference and select area based on use requirement, a combination of heights would support that. Full white colour scheme could be overwhelming, mixed with bright lights, and white feels very clinical or medical.
- DC suggested making the area more flexible, not defaulting to blocking out the entire area, NW said Gatwick will explore the opportunity to have clear perimeter lines, with height and transparent materials. AF likes the mix of seating. SS if this was a VIP lounge it would have walls all around, part of the issue is that this has barriers not fixed walls, higher walls should be retained at the Wetherspoons end.



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- PC noted comments and confirmed the area can't currently be enclosed due to fire safety requirements, however when the IDL expansion project commences this can be considered as part of the lounge location.
- NW agreed with SS comment that the space is currently a challenge, the white walls will definitely be looked at to help with connectivity to the rest of the terminal. AF referenced positive comments from passengers regarding the connection and visibility to the rest of the terminal and noted the different schools of thought and a mix of quieter areas and more open spaces. NW asked if the group would support an open end and zoning areas. GL suggested connection to nature or references to greenery, supported by DC.
- AF noted this has been a really useful discussion and that you can't please everyone but use of zones can help.
- Update on changing places as per slides. RH suggested social media coverage regarding changing places. PC noted no locations landside currently. GL noted it's great that Gatwick has locations and is expanding and asked for clarity on the access on both journey routes. PC have clunky processes for access post security but nothing landside.
- RH recommended landside facilities would be useful and that pressure on arrival journey may mean passengers would prefer to use landside facilities before they leave the airport but after they have completed the arrival journey. AF congratulated Gatwick on the number of facilities due to be put in.
- Assistance call points update as per slides. PC to set up session with IGAP subgroup in the New Year and noted this is an opportunity to do something transformational. NB agree, absolutely superb but shouldn't be seen as the only way to enable passengers to request assistance and should be combined with digital solutions. PC keen to integrate the Purple Door / app solution.
- Call Point Group: Ann, Libby, Sheila (PAG), Sophie
- Hearing Loops – PC updated as per slides. RH provided update on newer technology Auracast that is coming, might be worth speaking to someone at the company or RNID.
- RM advised that a video call system could be much more suitable for an airport and doesn't think hearing loops are enough, needs to be for BSL users not just users and signers/non signers. Would like to add this as a priority, not just a sideline issue, we must meet BSL users needs. ARC has been looking at BSL video interpretation. This is being reviewed for the assistance call points. RM noted that so far it doesn't feel this has been looked at, and is more than happy to be involved



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General 2025 discussion

- AF asked the panel if there are other things that Gatwick should be doing next year? Already an extensive list and clear Gatwick is listening.
 - GL noted the accessibility panel sessions with CAA in January
 - RH – low check-in counters are needed. PC noted that this is part of the check in development thinking
 - NB – things not in train should be based on feedback from current users but could be enhanced by structured consultation with all user or non user groups. Opportunity to engage extra groups. The work being planned deserves the best feedback and evaluation.
 - SS – would find it helpful if we engaged with other transport providers around the airport, i.e. rail, to make sure improvements match with their focuses or things they could learn. Coaches etc as well.
 - AF would be good to address the non-accessible taxi fleet. PC this will be part of the tender for future contract.

Any Other Business

- SS question – have other people seen Trunki are looking at automating them. Has anyone else picked up on this? This is concerning. PC noted not seen but will keep an eye out for information on this.
- SG – dates for IGAP next year? AF agreed these aren't in place for 2025, monthly online and quarterly in person and 1:1 on specific topics as required works well.
- AF - Busy agenda for 2025 and lots of good stuff coming from PC and colleagues in 2025.
- AF – any questions on Assistance? GL noted good performance on assistance service.
- AF closed the meeting