

## Inverness Airport Accessibility Forum

### MEETING MINUTES

**Date: 29/10/2024**

Location: Hial HQ, Inverness Airport

Attendees:

Cheryl Campbell – HIAL, Airport Services Manager, Inverness Airport

Davie Geddes – HIAL, Terminal Operations Manager, Inverness Airport

Lynette Ross – CBRE, Facilities Supervisor, Inverness Airport

Amanda Rennie – OCS, Station Manager, Inverness Airport

Seamus Mcardle – Representative from the Nairn Access Panel and a regular airport user.

Mark Chambers – Operations Manager, OCS.

Kabie Brook – Representative from the Autism Rights Group.

Wendy – Representative from HPC Sensory Services, Inverness

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#### 1. Welcome

CC welcomed all attendees and thanked them for taking the time to participate in the meeting. She encouraged open discussion and invited attendees to ask questions throughout the agenda.

#### 2. Introductions

CC introduced the airport team present at the meeting and everyone provided a brief introduction of the organisation or group they were here to represent.

#### 3. Special Assistance Service Update

CC confirmed that following a successful tender process, OCS has been appointed as the new special assistance provider. Mark at OCS provided an introduction to OCS, explaining their experience in aviation services and special assistance at Southampton and Glasgow airports.

Mark talked through the Avtech System for feedback through the Civil Aviation Authority survey. Increasing participation in the survey is a key objective for Inverness Airport to achieve the best accessibility rating they can with the CAA.

Seamus expressed that he was unaware of the CAA survey and has only provided local feedback in the past. CC emphasized that increasing awareness and participation in the survey is a priority.

#### 4. Special Assistance Equipment & Procedures

Mark (OCS) provided an update on the equipment in use at Inverness Airport including changes in the use of Avi Ramps. He confirmed that passengers who can walk the up ramp will be offered assistance to do so but that those unable to self-propel will use the Ambulift as this has been assessed as the safest option for both passengers and the team. If the Ambulift is unavailable, a stair climber will be used. Mark confirmed that our airlines have been informed of these changes.

Seamus raised concerns about the stair climber and questioned whether passengers would have to be lifted into an aisle chair before using it.

Mark explained that while self-propelling passengers can still use ramps, those requiring full assistance will use the Ambulift, or if unavailable, the stair climber. Safety is a key concern, as past incidents have occurred with ramps, whereas the stair climber has been deemed safer.

Seamus expressed that he would reconsider flying into Inverness if a ramp were not available.

Mark reassured that efforts are underway to secure a second Ambulift to ensure resilience.

Kabie asked if there was any customer feedback on the stair climber from other airports and Mark confirmed that since 2016 (Glasgow) and 2021 (Southampton), the stair climber has been in use without negative feedback.

CC highlighted that Inverness Airport will closely monitor passenger feedback to ensure quality service.

#### 5. PRM Assist App

OCS introduced the PRM Assist App, which allows passengers to input their assistance requirements when booking flights. The app is still in development, with plans to integrate additional accessibility features.

Kabie asked if accessibility features, such as screen readers, are being considered.

Mark confirmed that development is ongoing, and feedback is welcome.

#### 6. Training & Engagement

OCS has a dedicated training team, audited by the CAA, and employs three national trainers to cover multiple airports and confirmed that regular forums and familiarisation tours are held for passengers with autism or other needs.

#### 7. Equipment & Security Updates

CC provided an update on the security changes that had come into effect in June and confirmed that current processes at Inverness Airport.

CC talked through the new equipment investments: Body scanners (introduced in May) which reduces the need for hand searches. Shoe scanners minimize the need to remove footwear. C2 X-ray machines currently in use require removal of liquids but allow electronics to remain in bags. Plans are in place to upgrade scanners when possible.

Kabie asked whether passengers can still opt out of body scanners.

CC confirmed that passengers can request an alternative enhanced search, which can also be conducted in private where requested or appropriate.

## 8. CAA Quality Standards & Airport Feedback

CC talked through the statistics and advised that these are always published on the HIAL Inverness Airport website if anyone would like to look at previous statistics too. CC confirmed that passenger journey tracking has improved with the addition of beacons to monitor real-time movement through the terminal.

CC spoke about the importance of engagement with the CAA surveys for feedback too.

Kabie asked about accessibility of feedback surveys for visually impaired individuals.

CC confirmed that surveys are not currently available in Braille but that she will take this concern to the communications team for further review.

## Any Other Business

Seamus asked about the car park marking and DG confirmed that a repainting project is planned in the coming months.

Seamus asked about transportation options to the railway station and CC explained that a trial with HiTrans explored an autonomous vehicle to connect the airport and railway, but there are no permanent plans at this time.

## 10. Closing Remarks

CC thanked all attendees for their participation and encouraged them to share any additional feedback or questions after the meeting. She invited anyone interested to reach out via email for further discussions or to join future meetings.