



Commission for Aviation Regulation/Passenger Advisory Group

Meeting Minutes

Thursday 22nd November 2018 @10am

The Fitzwilliam Hotel

Present

Corona Joyce (Age Action), Emma Byrne and Juan Bueso (European Consumer Centre), Alan Dempsey (IBEC), James Farrell (IDA), Leona Murphy (Chambers Ireland), Mark Rowlette (Failte Ireland), Tara Matthews (Irish Society for Autism), Michael McCabe (National Disability Authority), Cathy Mannion, Maria Baquero, Luke Manning and Ann Doran (Commission for Aviation regulation)

Apologies

Helen Rochford-Brennan (Alzheimer Europe), Niamh Connolly (National Council for the Blind), Raymond O'Rourke (Consumers Association of Ireland)

Summary of Conclusions

This was the first of five meetings and represented an initial discussion of the quality of service measures that the Commission should consider adopting in its next price determination for Dublin Airport. Maria Baquero provided the group with information about the regulatory process that exists for Dublin Airport and the quality of service measures that are currently in place. There was considerable discussion about the existing and possible additional measures and the following points were made.

1. **Outcomes of Quality of Service** - The most important objectives are that airport operations are reliable, efficient and punctual, passengers get the right care, passengers get the right information and passengers can use the facilities they need.

2. **Measures of Quality of Service** – Are existing measures still appropriate or outdated? What should be the (a) priority of current and new measures; and (b) appropriate targets for all measures. There should be some comparison made with service measures in place at other airports.

3. **New Measures** – There should be measures that capture the whole passenger experience from (a) getting to the airport to departing; and (b) from landing to leaving the airport. For example, passengers may be interested in information about the time taken to go through immigration, collect bags and finding ground transport on leaving the terminal. The group recognised that some of the measures are outside the control of Dublin Airport and may not be used in any adjustment to the price cap. Suggestions were made about new measures that could be used.
 - a. *Availability of seating at gates and more charge points being integrated into seating.*

 - b. *Availability of staff* - (in addition to staff helpfulness and politeness). This is especially important where there has been a disruption in services. In addition, the elderly and non-English speaking passengers may need more assistance due to increased automation of airport services such as check-in or immigration.

 - c. *Specific satisfaction measures for People with Reduced Mobility (PRM) and with disabilities* - For example, the Commission could monitor the satisfaction of PRMs, including the quality of service for people with hidden disabilities. Staff assisting PRM or people with disabilities should be available at any point of the airport journey. In relation to signage, thought could be given to the height of the screens for PRM and the visually impaired. The Commission should ensure that the signage follows relevant guidelines. Universal visual symbols may be required as more non-English speaking passengers travel through the airport.

- d. *Audio announcements* - These are important for the visually impaired, the elderly or those unable to read.
- e. *Walking distance* - The Commission should monitor passenger satisfaction with walking distance within the terminals. This is particularly important for the elderly. Travellators are not the solution for all passengers.
- f. *Immigration* - The Commission should consider monitoring the time taken to go through immigration. The group acknowledges that this is not within the control of the airport. Currently, passengers that receive the PRM service get priority at immigration. Consideration should be given to extending this to other passengers not using the PRM service. Examples are passengers with certain, potentially hidden, disabilities, the elderly or passengers travelling with small infants. There should also be visible airport staff to assist people with special needs. For example, autistic passengers who need to avoid crowds or the elderly who are unable to stand for long periods.
- g. *Satisfaction of transfer passengers* - The Commission should monitor the satisfaction of transfer passengers separately to the satisfaction of departing/ arriving passengers as the proportion of transfer passengers at Dublin Airport has been rapidly increasing. In addition, the viability of some transatlantic routes depends on the satisfaction of transfer passengers.
- h. *Baggage Reclaim* - The Commission should monitor the baggage belt availability of arriving passengers.
- i. *Ground transport* – The Commission should explore the possibility of monitoring the wait times for taxi service and the information provided to passengers about their transportation options on exiting the airport.
- j. *Taxi times of aircraft*

4. Other Areas for Consideration – Potentially Outside of Monitoring of Quality of Service

Process of embarking of PRMs

In the past, PRMs had the opportunity to embark before other passengers and should have the opportunity to do so again. Now, because of time constraints, PRMs sometimes board with the general public.

Accessible Information for blind or visually impaired passengers

Websites and apps, written information, flight information screens, signage (wayfinding systems) and airport maps should comply with accessibility standards for blind or visually impaired passengers. The complaints system should be accessible for these passengers. The Commission should monitor the accessibility of each means of information provided for these passengers.

Awareness and Training for Staff that care for PRMs

The Commission should assess if staff who care for PRMs are adequately trained. The Commission should consider assessing the protocol for training of staff, the frequency of refresher courses and the internal monitoring of staff that is carried out by the airport. In addition, the Commission could assess staff awareness of the aged, visually impaired and passengers with sensory needs. Finally, there should be a contingency plan to optimise the care and assistance required in case of a major disruption.

Public Awareness about Passenger Rights

Consideration needs to be given to increasing passenger awareness of their rights. Also, some people with disabilities or reduced mobility tend not to complain in relation to their passenger rights.

Procurement Process at Dublin Airport

Accessibility standards for passengers with disabilities, including blind or visually impaired passengers, should be a key element of the procurement process when purchasing facilities such as

lifts and self-service check-in kiosks. The Commission should monitor the accessibility of facilities for passengers with disabilities.

5. Action Points

- (1) Some members of the group intend to survey their members about quality of service standards and will share results with the Commission.
- (2) The representatives from Age Action and Autism Ireland will share with the Commission more detailed information regarding non-visible disabilities.
- (3) The Commission will invite Dublin Airport to the next meeting to discuss quality of service measures.

6. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be at 10am on 7 February 2019, at the same location. The theme for the next meeting is an overview of the proposal from Dublin Airport on infrastructure projects about which the Passenger Advisory Group may give feedback about. For example, pier extensions, security and immigration facilities, IT (information and technology) projects, lifts, escalators, travellers, airbridges, and so on.