



Airport Accessibility Compliance Report 2023

CORK AIRPORT





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1. Executive Summary

The IAA is the single civil aviation regulator for Ireland. We are responsible for the regulation of safety, security and consumer interests. The Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) is the National Enforcement Body in Ireland for *Regulation (EC) No. 1107/2006 concerning the rights of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility when travelling by air* (hereafter referred to as ‘the Regulation’). The IAA investigates complaints and conducts inspections of airports situated in Ireland in order to ensure compliance with the Regulation. The purpose of the Regulation is to enable persons with reduced mobility (PRM) and persons with disabilities to have equal opportunities for air travel comparable to those of persons without reduced mobility or a disability. In line with the IAA’s responsibilities as the National Enforcement Body for the Regulation, the IAA conducted an inspection of Cork Airport to ensure compliance with the obligations set out therein.

The information gathered pre-inspection pertains to statistics on Persons with Reduced Mobility (PRMs),¹ as well as training information and the type/quantity of mobility equipment. As the data in Figure 1 shows, Cork Airport had a total of 26,619 PRMs in 2023 indicating that PRMs represent 0.95% of the total passenger number. The airport confirmed that the PRM numbers are monitored and counted by their PRM service provider and are provided to the airport management body on a monthly basis.

Table 1: All Passenger and PRM numbers from all Irish Airports²

Airport	Total Passenger	Total PRM	PRM % of Total Pax
Dublin	33,262,941	391,719	1.18%
Cork	2,798,024	26,619	0.95%
Shannon	1,897,599	22,045	1.16%
Ireland West	813,266	12,602	1.55%
Kerry	414,571	3,322	0.80%
Donegal	19,230	382	1.99%

The IAA conducted the inspection of Cork Airport in June 2023 and made one finding. This recommendation (in relation to signage) was implemented in 2024. Cork Airport continues

¹ This report will use the acronym ‘PRM’ to refer to both persons with reduced mobility and persons with disabilities in line with industry practises.

² Passenger numbers refer to commercial passengers only. The passenger numbers are all available from the Central Statistics Office. Donegal Airport passenger number is from the airport, not the CSO. Further information can be downloaded from the CSO here:

https://ws.cso.ie/public/api.restful/PxStat.Data.Cube_API.ReadDataset/TAM08/XLSX/2007/en. The PRM numbers are provided by the airports.



to improve its services, including a phased plan to remove all baby changing facilities from its accessible bathrooms and installing a sensory pod.

2. Overview

2.1. Definition of Person with Reduced Mobility and Disabled Person

The definition of ‘disabled person’ or ‘person with reduced mobility’ is taken directly from (EC) 1107/2006 Article 2(a):

“Any person whose mobility when using transport is reduced due to any physical disability (sensory or locomotor, permanent or temporary), intellectual disability or impairment, or any other cause of disability, or age, and whose situation needs appropriate attention and the adaptation to his or her particular needs of the service made available to all passengers.”³

It is important to note that there is no distinction between short-term/long-term or, as used in the above definition, “permanent/temporary” for the purposes of having reduced mobility or a disability. There has also been an international movement to recognise those with hidden disabilities and how these passengers can experience barriers to air travel. Persons with disabilities (hidden or otherwise) or with reduced mobility can request the assistance set out in the Regulation without having to disclose their disability or reason for reduced mobility.

2.2. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to provide a comprehensive overview of the accessibility of Cork Airport within the scope of IAA’s enforcement remit of Regulation (EC) 1107/2006. The report addresses Cork Airport’s compliance with the obligations prespecified in the Regulation and determines, from the physical inspection, complaints submitted to the IAA, and the pre-inspection questionnaire whether the airport has met its obligations. The reports sections will briefly summarise the relevant Article and the airport’s compliance, as well as the IAA’s commentary from the inspection. The IAA has issued findings with timeframes for the implementation of any necessary changes to comply with the Regulation. The report will also highlight positive innovations undertaken by the airport and upgrades since the previous inspection. Finally, the report will provide the IAA’s findings and a Conclusion.

³ Regulation (EC) 1107/2006 Article 2.



2.3. Airport Inspection

The airport inspection follows the format provided for in Annex I of Regulation (EC) 1107/2006. Annex I outlines the “assistance under the responsibility of the managing bodies of airports.”, the inspection starts at the outside boundary where it is expected a passenger would enter the airport, i.e. from the car park or from the ‘drop off zone’ at the front doors. The inspection encompasses the PRM experience, up to the point of embarking on the aircraft.

2.4. Inspection Methodology

2.4.1. Notice of Inspection

The IAA issues a Notice of Inspection to the airport which will include a proposal for times and dates for the inspection. The Notice of Inspection also briefly outlines the role of the IAA as the National Enforcement Body charged with ensuring compliance with Regulation (EC) 1107/2006.

2.4.2. Preliminary Questionnaire

The Notice of Inspection also includes a preliminary questionnaire in advance of the inspection. The airports have 20 business days to submit a response to the questionnaire.

2.4.3. Post Inspection & Report Publication

After the physical inspection has been conducted, the IAA creates a report outlining the IAA’s findings and airport’s compliance with the Regulation. The IAA liaises with the airport regarding the deadlines for implementation of the recommendations made. These timeframes are outlined in the published report.

3. Inspection Findings (2023)

On the 29 June 2023, the Irish Aviation Authority conducted an inspection of Cork Airport to assess the airport’s compliance with Regulation (EC) 1107/2006.

In accordance with Regulation 1107/2006 Cork Airport, which is owned and operated by the daa Group, is obliged to provide services to passengers travelling with reduced mobility. As permitted under Article 8, the airport management body has contracted the provision of the assistance service to OCS (One Complete Solution) however, the airport infrastructure remains the responsibility of the daa.

The inspection commenced on arrival to the car park where there were signs clearly indicating disabled parking. On arrival at ground level, it was noted that the PRM ‘Designated Arrival Point’ was clearly visible and provided good shelter for awaiting



passengers in a brightly lit and seated area. The call point was in good working order and the inspection team's call was answered on the day of the inspection.

The walkway to the terminal is covered and is level, making it fully accessible. The passenger then enters the terminal building via the 'Arrivals' door. This is the first door on approach from the car park and is therefore a natural entrance for passengers. The team observed that for visually impaired passengers, a pathway variance may be of use to indicate where the automatic doors are.

On entering the terminal through the 'Arrivals' entrance, it was noted that the direction sign for indicating the location of the PRM desk was not clearly visible and mostly hidden on a pillar structure. This was advised to the airport on the day.

Other than the signage, the terminal building is bright and spacious with eating areas that are accessible. The accessible toilets are clearly identified in the centre of the terminal.

Our inspection continued through to the security area, as per the system noted in previous inspections, assisted passengers are given priority and the security staff have procedures in place for screening passengers in wheelchairs.

The airside area of the terminal is again bright and spacious, with gate numbers easily identifiable. The eating areas also appeared to be accessible.

Previous inspections noted that the accessible toilets in the airport also had the baby changing facilities. Cork Airport implemented the recommendation from the 2022 report, and it now has a fully dedicated accessible toilet, with the baby changing facility separate.

The airport confirmed that, as of January 2024, the airport has implemented a phased plan to ensure accessible bathrooms in the airport no longer have baby changing facilities in them.

The inspection team also welcome the installation of the 'Sensory Pod.' This addition to the departure area is a progressive and dynamic in its use of space. Also, Cork Airport has shown further innovation in terms of how passengers travelling with additional needs are considered with the availability of guidebooks for young persons with autism.

4. Recommendation(s)

The IAA recommends that Cork Airport makes the PRM desk more visible as it was noted during the inspection, the direction sign for the PRM desk is not clearly visible and is indeed largely obstructed by another structure. This was observed proceeding into the terminal through the 'Arrivals' door. This was advised to the airport on the day; however, it is recommended that the airport address this particular sign without delay. This is due to the fact that while the 'Arrivals' door would not be considered the main entrance, it is the first entrance when arriving from the car park. It is recommended that Cork Airport relocate the sign for PRM services located by the 'Arrivals' entrance.

Since the inspection, Cork Airport confirmed that the recommendations issued by the IAA have been implemented. See Figure 2 below.

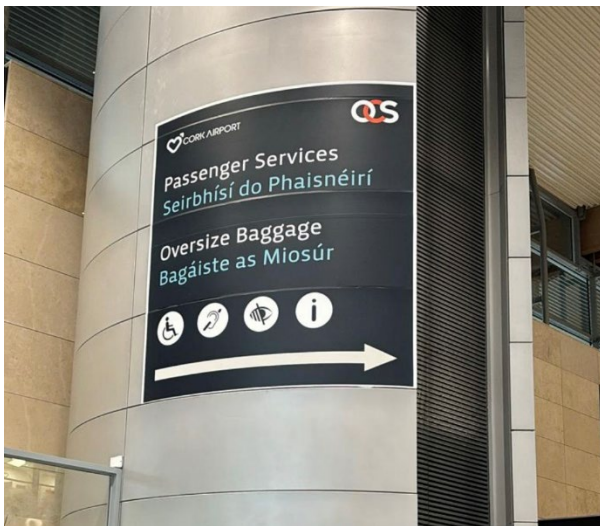


Figure 1: Navy and white sign for Passenger Services (OCS)

5. Conclusion

Cork Airport continues to innovate, whilst also welcoming observations from the IAA inspection team. The airport has introduced a sensory pod for neurodivergent passengers or those seeking a quiet enclosed space, separate from the main area of the airport. Also, Cork Airport has shown further innovation in terms of how passengers travelling with additional needs are considered with the availability of guidebooks for young persons with autism.

As noted above, the airport has an ongoing project for removing baby/infant changing tables from the accessible bathrooms. The changing facilities have/will instead be given their own individual space or placed in the general bathrooms. The airport recognises the Hidden Disability Sunflower as an identifier for neurodivergent passengers. The Irish Aviation Authority confirms that Cork Airport has complied with its obligations under Regulation (EC) 1107/2006.

