



International Civil Aviation Organization

WORKING PAPER

A42-WP/526

EX/242

1/9/25

(Information paper)

English only

ASSEMBLY — 42ND SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 12: Facilitation Programmes

AVIATION ACCESSIBILITY TASK AND FINISH GROUP

(Presented by the United Kingdom)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aviation sector plays a vital role in global mobility and must be accessible to all. Despite improvements to aviation accessibility in recent years, disabled passengers continue to face persistent barriers when travelling by air.

This Information Paper presents the work of the Aviation Accessibility Task and Finish Group (AATFG), established by the United Kingdom's Department for Transport (DfT) in 2024. AATFG brought together industry stakeholders, consumer advocates and people with lived experience of disability to co-develop practical, industry-led recommendations for improving accessibility across the entire passenger journey.

AATFG demonstrates how coordinated, cross-sector engagement can deliver meaningful improvements. Its inclusive and collaborative approach offers a framework other States could adopt to advance accessibility within their own aviation sectors.

<i>Strategic Goals:</i>	This information paper relates to Strategic Goal <i>Aviation Delivers Seamless, Accessible and Reliable Mobility for All</i> .
<i>Financial implications:</i>	None
<i>References:</i>	Aviation Accessibility Task and Finish Group Report ¹ Airport Accessibility Performance Report 2024/2025 ² CAA Aviation Consumer Survey – Wave 13 ³

¹ [Aviation Accessibility Task and Finish Group report - GOV.UK](#)

² [CAP 3117 Airport Accessibility Performance Report 2024/2025](#)

³ [CAA Aviation Consumer Survey - October 2024 \(Wave 13\)](#)

1. THE AVIATION ACCESSIBILITY TASK AND FINISH GROUP

1.1 The Aviation Accessibility Task and Finish Group (AATFG) was established by the United Kingdom's Department for Transport (DfT) in November 2024 to enhance aviation accessibility across the entire consumer journey. Chaired by Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson, a former Paralympian and prominent disability rights advocate, AATFG was the United Kingdom's first dedicated cross-sector forum focused on this issue.

1.2 The Group brought together a diverse range of stakeholders, including airlines, airports, assistance providers, trade bodies, consumer rights organizations, disabled passengers and the United Kingdom Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). This diverse membership ensured a balanced perspective, merging operational expertise with lived experience.

1.3 Over a nine-month period, the Group developed practical, industry-led, pan-disability recommendations aimed at creating meaningful and lasting change. Each recommendation is designed to improve real-world outcomes for disabled passengers, enabling everyone to travel with dignity and ease.

2. RATIONALE BEHIND AATFG

2.1 AATFG was established in response to long-standing concerns about accessibility in aviation. Despite recent improvements, disabled passengers still face unacceptable barriers that undermine their dignity and independence when flying.

2.2 Demand for assistance is increasing. In 2024, 5.5 million passengers requested assistance at United Kingdom airports, representing approximately 1.9 per cent of total passengers⁴. CAA consumer survey⁵ data highlights that disabled and older passengers report lower satisfaction with their air travel experience compared to non-disabled and younger passengers.

2.3 Previous efforts to improve accessibility were often fragmented, with organizations working in isolation. AATFG provided a structured forum for shared learning and honest dialogue, while keeping the needs and experiences of disabled passengers at its core. The Group's work highlights that collaborative, cross-industry engagement is essential to delivering long-lasting change.

3. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 AATFG focused on five key areas: training; passenger information and communication; non-visible impairments; mobility aid design and handling; and tailored support and delivery. The Group's independent report⁶, published on 16 July 2025, sets out 19 key recommendations aligned with these themes.

3.2 The recommendations are intended for industry implementation, requiring leadership and commitment from across the sector, including airlines, airports, assistance providers, ground services and travel agents. A summary is provided below:

⁴ [CAP 3117 Airport Accessibility Performance Report 2024/2025](#)

⁵ [CAA Aviation Consumer Survey - October 2024 \(Wave 13\)](#)

⁶ [Aviation Accessibility Task and Finish Group report - GOV.UK](#)

- a) Training – Disability training in aviation is often inconsistent and lacks input from people with lived experience. This results in gaps in staff knowledge and unmet passenger needs. To improve service quality, all staff should receive baseline disability training that is co-designed and delivered with disabled people, includes lived-experience trainers, and is regularly updated.
- b) Passenger Information and Communication – Assistance information is often unclear. Airlines and airports should provide clear details on the support available to passengers before and during their journey in multiple ways, including digitally inclusive formats. Complaints processes must be simplified and made more transparent.
- c) Non-visible Impairments – Limited awareness of non-visible impairments can result in unintentional exclusion and inconsistent, undignified treatment. Airports should conduct targeted accessibility reviews to ensure facilities meet these specific needs. Industry-wide awareness campaigns to reduce stigma, build passenger confidence and educate staff and the public should also be considered.
- d) Mobility Aid Design and Handling – The mishandling of mobility aids can cause significant physical and emotional harm. Ground handlers and assistance providers should clearly communicate procedures, and passengers must provide accurate information. A dedicated working group should be established to explore issues such as mobility aid and battery standardization, drawing on expertise from across the sector, including manufacturers.
- e) Tailored Support and Delivery – Rising demand, inaccurate information, and poor resource management are limiting the effectiveness of personalised support. Systems for capturing and sharing passengers’ accessibility needs should be improved to increase accuracy, and equipment and vehicles used for assistance must be purpose-built, well maintained and used appropriately.
- f) The CAA – The CAA should strengthen its existing oversight of accessibility by creating a self-assessment matrix for industry to ensure compliance with CAA accessibility standards, updating its airport accessibility framework, regularly reviewing guidance on key areas such as fit-to-fly forms, mobility aid damage data, and inclusive design for airports and aircraft.

3.3 There are no recommendations for government in this report. The group agreed that meaningful improvements could be better achieved through industry-led action and accountability, offering a more sustainable and effective route to lasting change. However, AATFG did consider that there are areas of legislation that could be reviewed by DfT in the future.

3.4 These recommendations support ICAO Annex 9 — *Facilitation* by driving accessible air travel through improved training, communication, use of appropriate equipment and stronger regulatory oversight. The AATFG’s cross-sector cooperation exemplifies Annex 9’s call for coordinated stakeholder engagement, ensuring all passengers experience consistent, accessible and dignified air travel.

4. **NEXT STEPS**

4.1 Building on the collaborative efforts of all members and the success of the report, the group will continue its work under a new name: the Aviation Accessibility Implementation Group (AAIG). Recognizing the challenge of maintaining momentum, AAIG, led by a new chair, will champion the recommendations and support their implementation. The group will report annually to DfT to showcase progress against each recommendation.

4.2 The Assembly is invited to take note of this Information Paper and to consider AATFG as a potential model for other Member States seeking to improve aviation accessibility through coordinated, stakeholder-led approaches.

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