

**DPTAC**  
Access for all

**Disabled Persons  
Transport Advisory Committee**



# **Access to air travel**

**Guidance for disabled and less mobile passengers**

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## Guidance for disabled and less mobile passengers

### Section 1 Introduction

If you are planning a flight or a foreign holiday, you need to know that the whole journey is accessible before you set out. A problem on one stage of the journey, such as not being able to find help on arrival at the airport, or not knowing where to go because you can not read the information screens, could ruin the whole experience or even stop you from travelling altogether.

The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) have produced this simple guide to help make flying an easier and more positive experience. It follows a step by step journey from planning your flight to getting to your destination. It explains why airports and airlines need information about disabled and less mobile passengers and also what you can expect them to provide to make your journey easier.

Very often access needs are not obvious to other people, so make sure you explain your particular requirements clearly. Never assume that people will automatically know or understand your needs.

One of the main messages of this guide is to **be prepared, let people know if you might need assistance and make arrangements** in advance. This helps airlines and airports provide a better service.

## **Section 2      Background**

A journey by air is a two-way contract between the provider and the traveller, and there are rights and responsibilities for both. As a passenger, you can do a great deal to help airlines and airports (the aviation industry) to assist you and to give excellent levels of customer service.

This guide complements the Department for Transport (DfT) 'Access to Air Travel for Disabled People - Code of Practice', which is aimed at helping the aviation industry improve services.

The Government has worked with disabled people and the organisations involved in all stages of a journey by air, including travel agents, airport operators and airlines to produce the Code. It covers all aspects of air travel - from accessing information through to arriving at the final destination. It also covers the design of airports and planes with over 30 seats.

The Code sets out the good practice necessary to make sure disabled and less mobile passengers enjoy trouble-free journeys by air. However, it will take a while for these standards to be achieved everywhere.

The Code includes relevant information for airport operators who are legally bound by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA). It also advises airlines on how to provide better services to disabled people on a voluntary basis.

The Code sets out minimum standards that the aviation industry should provide but encourages them to provide higher levels of service and facilities.

At present, it is a voluntary code for UK companies only, but it is hoped that it will be adopted by international airlines operating into UK airports and at international airports. The Code will be monitored by the industry, by disability organisations and by the Government. If necessary, it will become part of UK law.

It is important to remember that not all the services and facilities will be available straight away at every airport and on every plane.

**If you need a particular service or facility, always check that it is available before booking.**

Travelling by air is not yet covered by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA). Because air travel is very largely an international industry it was felt to be more helpful to try and agree standards for accessibility at an international level so that disabled travellers could be confident about services and facilities at both ends of their journey.

There are now international codes of practice in place and there is likely to be European legislation soon to reinforce them. This should help to make sure that all airport operators and airlines have to work to the same standards. It should help disabled and less mobile passengers know what services and facilities they can expect, wherever they were travelling in Europe.

However, the DDA does apply to the use of booking systems and airport facilities and services. This means that, for example, shops and check-in facilities in the airport are covered but in-flight services and entertainment on the plane are not.

The Government and the majority of airlines and airports have agreed that the cost of providing any additional assistance for disabled people should not be passed directly on to the disabled or less mobile passenger. They are working on different ways of managing those costs.

## Section 3 Staff training

All the staff you meet during the journey, in the travel agents, at the airport or on board the plane should have had disability awareness training.

Some staff, who provide specialist services like driving buggies, handling mobility equipment such as wheelchairs, or guiding disabled people, will have had extra training to make sure they have the necessary skills.

Remember, this does not mean they are experts in all types of disability. Give advice and explain your personal requirements clearly if necessary.



## **Section 4      Pre-journey**

### **4.1   Where to find information**

It is important to be well prepared. Make sure you have all the information you need before you book your ticket. There are many sources of information available. A list of useful publications and organisations can be found in Annex 1 and 2

Information produced by travel agents, tour operators, airports and airlines should be clear and simple to use. They should also take reasonable steps to make sure that information is available in accessible formats, such as Braille, large print, using easy to follow pictures, on cassette, on computer disk or on an accessible internet site. This applies to general information as well as specific information about services or arrangements for disabled and less mobile people.

Most airports publish a booklet about facilities at the airport, including those for disabled and less mobile people. You can often get maps of airport terminal buildings, car parks and public transport station layouts from bus, coach and train companies.

It is important that you check with airlines if you need a particular service before booking as services provided can vary between airlines.

You should also check and book facilities and services, not only at the departure airport, but also at your destination and any other stops in-between.

## **4.2 Information and papers you might need to give**

### 4.2.1 Passports and Visa

You will need a passport to travel abroad. If you do not have a passport, you will not be allowed to board the plane. When flying with some airlines you might have to show your passport even if you are only travelling within the UK.

You can get a passport application form from the Post Office. Do not leave it until the last minute to apply for a passport – at busy times of year it may take some time to be processed.

You will need a Visa to visit some countries. Sometimes you will need to wait a long time for a Visa, so you should always make plans and apply well in advance of when you want to travel.

The travel agent or airline will be able to tell you if need a Visa, they will also be able to tell you where to go to get it.

### 4.2.2 Proof of need

Some airlines may ask you to prove why you need some facilities or services, such as additional seats at a reduced fare or more legroom. This helps make sure airlines can give priority to those people who really need these facilities, as there are often limited numbers.

Different airlines have different policies, the airline or travel agent will tell you when you book what information you will need to show. This could be a letter from your doctor, a Blue Badge for parking, a Disabled Persons Railcard or some other concessionary travel card.

### 4.2.3 Airline forms

If you are in any doubt about whether flying could affect your health, check with your doctor. Most people are able to fly without any difficulty, but sometimes you may need to take extra care because of the pressurised cabin. Even if your doctor says you are fit to fly, you should contact the airline as they may have their own rules and

requirements or forms that you have to fill in. Many airlines have a medical unit or an advice unit for disabled passengers.

If you need any assistance you will probably have to fill in an Incapacitated Passengers Handling Advice form (INCAD). You can get this form from the airline or some travel agents. It will tell the airline about any services, facilities or assistance that you will need during the flight.

Airlines should only ask for a medical certificate if they think that the passenger's safety and well being, or the safety and well being of other passengers could be affected.

Most people will not need a note from their doctor to say that they can fly. This includes people who have a disability which is permanent and stable -this means something that you always have that doesn't change,- but it is still important to check when you book what, if any, medical information you will need to give.

If you have a medical condition or illness, rather than a disability you may need to complete a MEDIF (Standard Medical Form), which is available from the airline. The MEDIF is divided into two parts:

- Part One lists any specific requirements that you have so that the airline knows what aids, equipment, services or facilities to provide
- Part Two must be filled in by your doctor if the airline insists on medical clearance.

A MEDIF only lasts for one journey and can only be used on the flights and dates shown on your ticket. If you change your journey in anyway, you will need to get another MEDIF.

If your are a frequent traveler it might be a good idea to get a Frequent Traveler Medical Card (FREMEC). This is available from many airlines. It gives the airline a permanent record of your specific needs, so you do not have to fill in a form and make special arrangements every time you travel.

If you are going to fly with an airline that did not issue your FREMEC card, you should check that you can still use it.



## **4.3 Booking arrangements**

### 4.3.1 Advance notice

It is essential to give airlines as much notice as possible if you or anyone in the party will need assistance. This information is necessary to make sure that the airlines are able to plan ahead and have the right staff and /or equipment at the right place at the right time.

Travelling by air may mean that even if you are normally independent you will need assistance. For example, if you are an independent wheelchair user and can make your own way to the plane, you will need to transfer from your personal wheelchair to an on-board wheelchair and then into the plane seat. The layout at many airports requires you to walk a long distance between the check-in desk and the plane so if this would be difficult you may need to book assistance. In all these situations, the airline or its handling agent will need to have staff and equipment in the right place at the right time. To do this they need advance warning.

It is usually necessary to give at least 48 hours notice because the information is passed from the reservation system to the check-in system 36 hours before the plane departs.

If it is not possible to give 48 hours notice, for example when booking a 'last minute deal' or when flights are changed at short notice, the airport and airline should do all that is reasonably possible to meet your requests for assistance.

### 4.3.2 Making a booking

When making a booking, travel agents, tour operators and airline staff should always ask if there will be anyone in the party who may require assistance at the airport and/or during the flight. They may use the standard ABTA checklist to ensure that all relevant issues are covered so that the right level of help is provided. A copy of the ABTA checklist can be found in Annex 3.

You may be asked to agree to those details being passed on to others or put onto a computer. This may sound confusing or worrying, but under the Data Protection Act the information will only be used to help make sure you get the right assistance.

The information provided will be recorded and only sent to those who will need it. The travel agent and airlines will use the internationally agreed IATA codes to pass on the information. A copy of The IATA codes can be found in Annex 3.

Check and book facilities and services not only at the departure airport but also at your destination and any other stops in-between.

However you book, you should also ask for the ticket or itinerary to **confirm** your requests, rather than simply acknowledging them. An acknowledgement alone does not guarantee that your request will be met, or that you will get compensation if things go wrong.

Very often, a disability is not obvious to other people, so make sure you explain your particular requirements clearly, never assume that staff will automatically know or understand your needs. This is particularly important when booking by phone, post or on the Internet.

### 4.3.3 In person

Travel agents offices and shops, that are open to the public will become increasingly accessible to disabled people. The travel agent or booking agent are covered by the DDA and should make reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of anyone who wants to use their services. They may also be required to make adjustments to their premises from October 2004 to make them easier to use.

### 4.3.4 By phone

When booking by phone you may find that companies do not automatically ask questions about assistance or disability, unless you prompt them.

Travel agents should have textphone facilities and staff should be trained in how to use them.

### 4.3.5 By Internet

This is a rapidly developing area, which makes finding out information and booking a flight or holiday more convenient, accessible and easy for many people.

However, when booking on the Internet you may find that companies do not automatically ask questions about assistance or disability. You may still be required to phone to book any assistance.

The travel agent, tour operator or airline should make sure that their website is accessible to disabled people. Information on how to request assistance should be clearly explained and where necessary the site should have easy-to-use links to pages about services and facilities for disabled and less mobile passengers.

If you get confirmation by email or from the website, print it out and take it with you when you travel.

## **4.4 Services and Facilities**

### 4.4.1 Services available on request

It is important that you check if you need a particular service before booking as services provided can vary between operators.

Some of the services which airlines and airports can provide on request include:

- assistance to reach check-in
- assistance with registration at check-in
- assistance to reach the gate
- assistance boarding and disembarking the plane
- assistance with stowing and retrieving baggage on the plane
- providing an on-board wheelchair
- assistance moving to and from the plane toilet;
- assistance transferring between a mobility aid and passenger seat
- providing limited assistance with meals
- briefing disabled passengers and any escort or companion on emergency procedures and the layout of the cabin.
- assistance to the general public area or to a representative of another operator
- assistance to passengers in transit.
- assistance to point of onward travel

#### 4.4.2 Self-sufficiency

An airline is entitled to demand that a passenger travels with a companion if the passenger is not self-sufficient. To travel alone a passenger must be capable of:

- **breathing** - the passenger should not be reliant on supplementary oxygen.
- **feeding** - the passenger should be capable of feeding themselves (although cabin crew will open packaging or describe layouts to blind passengers)

- **lifting** - the passenger should be capable of moving from a passenger seat to an on-board wheelchair, as cabin crew are not permitted for Health and Safety reasons to lift passengers in and out of seats.
- **communicating** - the passenger should be able to communicate with cabin crew and understand their advice and instructions
- **toileting** - the passenger should be capable of using the toilet facilities unaided as food-handling regulations do not allow cabin crew to assist with toileting arrangements, however they can assist in pushing an on-board wheelchair, where one is available.
- **medicating** - the passenger should be capable of administering their own medicines and medical procedures.

Never claim that you are self-sufficient if you are not. You may cause yourself and the airline serious problems because they will be unable to meet your basic needs.

#### 4.4.3 Additional Seats

If you need to travel with a companion, the airline may be able to offer a reduced fare for the second ticket. This will usually be a reduction against the full fare. There may be a limit on the number of reduced fares they can offer on one flight, especially if it is a holiday package or a charter flight. Ask your travel agent or the airline.

The same restriction may apply in cases where the disabled traveller needs to occupy two seats for a reason related to their disability.

To qualify for this reduction, you may need to provide proof of your need for two seats. You can find more information about this in section 4.2.2.

#### 4.4.4 Seat Reservations

If you want to reserve a seat with more legroom because of a disability, such as a stiff leg or severe arthritis, you will need to talk to the airline.

You should be able to pre-book a certain seat, but you might have to show proof that you need the extra legroom. You can find more information about this in section 4.2.2.

Different airlines will have different policies and some airlines may charge for pre-booking, whether or not you are disabled. The airline or travel agent will be able to tell you when you book.

It is unlikely that you will be seated in an emergency exit row because of the very strict safety requirements. The airline staff will be able to give you advice about which are the best seats for you.

Seats with extra legroom are very popular. They are usually allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis. If several disabled or less mobile passengers request these seats, the airline staff may have to make a decision on who needs them most. You should always check your seat booking with the staff at check-in.

Even if you have pre-booked a seat, this might be changed at the last minute, if for example a different type of plane is used. If this happens, the airline staff will do all they can to get the best seat for you.

#### 4.4.5 Seat belts

In some cases, such as autism in children, it is difficult or impossible to keep the seat belt fastened. This could cause delay since the captain will not take off unless all safety measures are in place and have been checked. However, alternative restraints are available, by prior arrangement - tell the airline in advance if you think this could be a problem.

#### 4.4.6 Meet and assist

Airports are often large and confusing places. If you feel that you may not be able to find your own way to the plane, ask for the airline to "meet and assist" you - this is often done for older passengers or partially sighted travellers as well as unaccompanied young flyers. It is essential to give the airline as much notice as possible if you or

anyone in the party will require them to meet and assist you. You need to tell them exactly what assistance will be required.

#### 4.4.7 Walking distances

Airports are often large buildings and planes can be a long distance from check-in, some times a 10-15 minute brisk walk for someone without a disability.

If you are in any doubt about being able to walk to your departure gate, ask if you could use an airport wheelchair or take a ride on an accessible buggy. To make sure that the wheelchair or buggy is available you should always book before you arrive at the airport.

#### 4.4.8 Assistance dogs

Now that dogs are allowed to travel more freely to some countries under the Pet Travel Scheme (commonly called the 'Pet Passport' Scheme), it may be possible for you to take your guide, hearing or assistance dog with you. However, it can be a complicated process so you should always contact your vet and the relevant training organisation, such as Guide Dogs for the Blind, before you make a decision.

Different countries have different rules about dogs entering their country. Before you travel, you will need to make sure that you have all the papers to prove that your dog has had all the necessary injections and vaccinations.

Not all airlines are taking part in the Pet Travel Scheme, so you will need to check. You should also check if your assistance dog can travel in the cabin with you. On some airlines, assistance dogs have to travel in the hold of the plane. There may also be a limit on the number of assistance dogs carried on one flight.

If your assistance dog is allowed to travel in the cabin with you, it will usually be at your feet. Sometimes an airline will keep the seat next to you empty to give the dog more room, but this might not be possible if the plane is fully booked.



You should not have to pay for your assistance dog to travel in the cabin with you, but the airline will probably ask for proof that your assistance dog has been trained by a recognised organisation. If the dog travels in the hold, you may have to pay for a special crate.

You should also check what facilities are available for your assistance dog at the airport. You can find more information about the facilities for looking after your assistance dog at the airport in section 6.3.6.

The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association is developing a code of practice on the welfare of assistance dogs while they are travelling. This code is expected in 2003.

#### 4.4.9 Insurance

There are many different types of travel insurance available. You will need to decide what type of cover you require and check thoroughly that the policy you choose suits your needs.

Some things to check when choosing an insurance policy are whether it will cover you:



- for any medical costs that arise from your disability - as many policies do not cover claims arising from 'pre-existing medical conditions';
- for the cost of return by air ambulance in case you are too ill to return on a commercial flight; and
- if an airline is unable to carry you for any reason, e.g. a change of plane type to one that is not accessible.

**If you need to take expensive disability equipment with you, make sure that it is adequately insured for loss or damage.**

Mobility aids are unlikely to be covered by standard travel insurance policies. This is particularly important for wheelchairs, as compensation is currently based on weight not value. Sometimes your household insurance may provide cover for these items but most insurers will quote separately.

#### 4.4.10 Medication

If you are taking medication or medical equipment with you, make sure that you have enough for your whole stay. It is a good idea to take a few days extra supply in case of flight delays or emergencies.

Current security restrictions mean you can not take syringes on planes. You should discuss any requirements with the airline in advance.

Always ensure that medicines and tablets are clearly labelled on the outside of the containers. It is a good idea to get a letter from your doctor to say that you need the medication and keep a list of all of your medication in case you lose them or need to get more during your stay.

You may also need to check with the Embassy or High Commission of the country you are visiting in case they have any restrictions on taking your medication into the country.

It is important to make sure that most, if not all, of your medication is packed in your hand-baggage and not checked-in. If that is not

possible you may wish to carry at least four days' supply in your hand-baggage, in case your checked baggage gets lost or delayed.

If it is necessary to keep medication cool, you might wish to use a cool-bag or vacuum flask, as it's not usually possible for the cabin crew to refrigerate medication.

You can get more details of health care and advice for travellers abroad from a free booklet "Health Advice for Travellers" from the Post Office. This leaflet also contains an E111 application form, which will entitle you to emergency treatment in European Union Countries.

The Department of Health also publish Advice Leaflet T6 'Health Advice for Travellers'.

#### 4.4.11 Medical Equipment

If you need to use or carry any medical equipment on the plane, you will need to check in advance with the airline. Different airlines will have their own rules for different equipment.

If you need to use a respirator or an automatic ventilator to monitor and maintain breathing, you will need to check that you will be able to use a power supply on the plane. Many machines are battery operated and can usually be carried.

Portable kidney machines can be carried by most airlines. If you use the CAPD method of dialysis, you will not usually need to get additional medical clearance.

#### 4.4.12 Oxygen

If you need extra oxygen on the flight, you must let the airline know when you book. The airline will usually need a letter from your doctor saying that you are fit to fly.

However, not all airlines will be able to offer supplementary oxygen except in emergencies and you should always check at the time of booking.

Normal domestic or NHS cylinders are not allowed on board a pressurised plane, but you may be able to take an empty one in the hold to refill at your destination.

If you need a **continuous** supply of oxygen throughout the flight, the airline will need to obtain special supplies. These cylinders are very expensive, so the airline will probably make a charge. Always check when booking as companies have different policies and charges.

If you do not need a continuous supply of oxygen, but feel that you **may** need additional oxygen during the flight, this might be possible using the on-board emergency oxygen. This service will probably be free but you must let the airline know when you book. Remember that this is an emergency supply and might not last for the whole flight.

Further information is available from:

- Holiday Care "Use of Oxygen on Holiday"
- British Lung Foundation "Air Travel with a Lung Condition"

#### 4.4.13 Dietary requirements

If you need to have a special diet on the plane make sure that this is requested when you make your booking.

#### 4.4.14 Weight restrictions

Check if there are any weight restrictions on the plane which might cause problems with your hand baggage or mobility equipment. Airlines are happy to carry wheelchairs but may be unable to take a scooter or buggy.

You can find more information about wheelchairs and scooters in section 6.4.8.

## Section 5 Getting to the airport

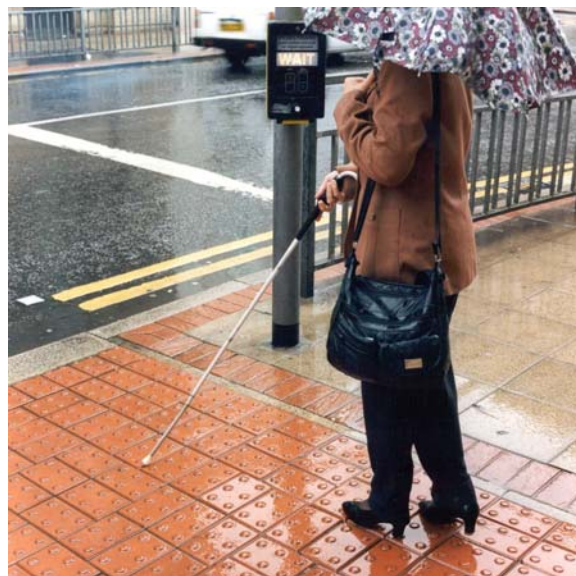
However you intend to get to the airport, make sure the airline knows if you will need assistance getting from the car park, station or taxi set-down point to the check-in desk.

### 5.1 Routes to the terminal

However you have arrived at the airport, you should be able to identify easily and quickly where you need to go and how to get there. All pedestrian routes between drop-off points and the terminal should be well signed and fully accessible to disabled people.

Guidance to airport operators is provided in “Inclusive Mobility – A guide to best practice on access to pedestrian and transport infrastructure”, which is published by the Department for Transport.

By following this guidance, airport operators will make sure that the signs and all the different routes are clear and obvious. Tactile paving will be used where roads need to be crossed, to help visually impaired passengers, and the crossing points will have either dropped kerbs or raised roadways between pavements, to assist people with impaired mobility. Fully accessible help points should be positioned on terminal forecourts or the pavement.



## 5.2 By car

A Blue Badge will not entitle you to park on airport forecourts. It is often possible to stop and set down passengers in front of the terminal building but there are security problems if a car is left unattended and vehicles are often towed away.

If you need to be accompanied into the terminal, you will have to park the car first. The position and height of car park entry machines should allow disabled drivers to pull a ticket or to push an easily operated button to get help, without leaving their vehicle.

Accessible parking spaces should be well signed from the car park entrance. In short-stay car parks, they will be found close to the terminal building or alongside pedestrian bridges.



In long-stay or off site car parks, which are usually further away, the spaces should be near to accessible bus stops which are served by accessible buses or vehicles.

There should be highly visible help points in all of these parking areas. Although these help points often use a telephone system, they should all have facilities for deaf and hearing impaired people.

These help points can be used to get help in an emergency and also to get help with baggage or if you need assistance to get to the terminal. Staff will be able to help with lifting baggage or mobility equipment out of a car, but they can not lift a disabled person out of their car.

To use these spaces you will need to display your 'Blue Badge' so that the parking attendants can check that the spaces are not being used by people who do not need them.

You may want to use your Blue Badge abroad and need to take it with you. You will need to find out how to do this before you arrive at the airport and let the airport or car park operator know, so that they can make the arrangements for you to park in the reserved areas.

### 5.3 By taxi

Taxi ranks should be well signed and should allow disabled passengers to get out on the nearside (pavement side) or rear. If the taxi rank is not staffed full time, there should be a fully accessible help point so that people can call for assistance.

If the airport has a contract with a taxi firm, they must make sure that some of these taxis are wheelchair accessible.



Airport operators should use 'Inclusive Mobility' as a guide to ensure that there is unobstructed, step free access to and from the terminal

building. For example, if you have to cross a road to get to or from the terminal building, there should be either a dropped kerb or a raised carriage way to make sure that the footpath is level and step free. There should also be tactile paving laid in accordance with DfT guidelines to assist visually impaired people.

#### 5.4 By hire car

If you want to arrive or leave the airport in a hire car, you will need to make arrangements in advance. You will need to make sure that they have a suitable accessible vehicle for your requirements. You will also need to check that there are accessible pick-up and drop off points.

The offices of hire car company will be increasingly accessible to disabled people. They should also make sure that there is an accessible shuttle service to and from their office to the airport. If this is not available, they should make arrangements for you to drop off close to the terminal. At some major airports, adapted hire cars may be available.

#### 5.5 By bus or train

Bus and train staff should contact the airport operator or airline, depending on local arrangements, to make sure staff will provide assistance from the drop off point to the check-in desk.

There should also be fully accessible help points at the entrance and exits of bus and train stations, and on train platforms at the airport, so that disabled people can request assistance themselves if necessary.



## **Section 6      Access to and facilities within the terminal building**

### **6.1 General**

The services and facilities within airports are covered by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Part III of this Act gives disabled people a 'right of access' to goods, facilities, services and premises. It is unlawful to treat disabled people less favourably than other people for a reason related to their disability. Service providers should have also taken reasonable steps to make it easier for disabled people to use services, provide auxiliary aids or provide the service by a reasonable alternative method.

From October 2004, airports – like other service providers - may have to alter the physical features of existing premises if the service is impossible or unreasonably difficult for a disabled person to use. They will have to make "reasonable adjustments" so that disabled people can use the building and its services. When new premises are constructed access and facilities for disabled people should be included as a matter of course.

Advice and guidance on how to improve access for disabled people to premises is given in "Inclusive Mobility – A guide to best practice on access to pedestrian and transport infrastructure". The Code expects this guidance, and other relevant standards, to be followed in any new development or refurbishment to existing premises. It will also help airport operators comply with the law.

For more information on your rights under the DDA contact the Disability Rights Commission helpline on 08457 622 633.



## 6.2 The terminal building

Airports are split into 2 separate areas;

- **Landside:** this is the general area where you will find the check-in desk, shops, restaurants and bars. These areas are open to anyone whether you have a ticket or not.
- **Airside:** This is the secure area where you wait to board the plane. You can only get to this area if you have a ticket, as you need to go through strict security checks.

The standard of services and facilities should be the same on both sides, with all public areas and services being accessible to disabled passengers. If, for any reason, you are unable to use a service or facility, the airport operator or airline should make other arrangements so that you are able to take full advantage of what the airport has to offer.



## 6.3 Landside

When you first enter the terminal building, you should be able to see clearly how to get to the check-in or information desk.

All signs within the airport should be clear and unambiguous. Some signs, such as those on toilet doors, should be embossed (raised) or in Braille. Pictures or pictograms should also be used as often as possible.



Staff at the information desk will be able to tell you where to find accessible facilities such as text-phones, low-level telephones, and accessible toilets. These facilities should be well signed and easy to find.

All areas and services in the terminal building, that are open to the public, should be accessible to disabled people. For example, toilets, showers, restaurants and shops, business centres, executive lounges, leisure facilities, viewing galleries and places for prayer.

All equipment for passengers to use should also be fully accessible. For example, all public telephones should have amplification,

inductive couplers and facilities for blind and partially sighted people. In a group of public telephones, there should be a text-phone and at least one should be at a height that is accessible to a wheelchair user. These facilities should be clearly signed.



If, for any reason, any of these facilities are not fully accessible yet, the staff should make a reasonable adjustment to make sure that you are able to use it. For example, if the check-in desk is not easily accessible for a wheelchair user, the staff could provide a clipboard so that you can sign any forms.

All staff who deal with passengers at the airport should have had disability awareness training. Some staff, such as those who work at the check-in or information desks or those who provide assistance to disabled people should, have had more specialist and detailed training.

### 6.3.1 Information

Airport operators and airlines will have considered how passengers with visual or hearing impairments or learning disabilities can access information about flight times and locations.

At busy airports there is so much information that it would be impossible to give it all by announcements. It would also make the airport very loud and confusing.

Information screens should be placed where they can be seen clearly and read easily. There will also be alternative arrangements for people who can not use these screens.



There should be an easy to find information desk where staff will be able to give you the information that you need. Once you let the staff know where you are and what information you need, they should make sure that you are kept up-to-date and informed with information about your flight.

Wherever the 'ear' symbol and a letter 'T' is displayed, there is an induction loop which amplifies sound for people with a 'T' switch on their hearing aids. The public address system and most telephones also have this facility. The 'ear' symbol alone shows that the staff are trained to communicate with deaf and hearing impaired passengers.

### 6.3.2 Accessible toilets

These are usually unisex toilets, to allow carers or partners to assist if necessary. All these toilets will have an emergency alarm cord or button so that you can call for help from a staffed point in an emergency.



### 6.3.3 Check-in facilities

When you check-in, it is important that you confirm any pre-booked assistance. If you have not pre-booked assistance, check-in staff will try to help you as much as they can, but they might not be able to arrange all the services and facilities you need at short notice.

You should always pre-book any services or facilities that you need before you arrive at the airport. You can find more information about pre-booking services in section 4.

Check-in staff will be able to give you advice about things like walking distances and the most accessible plane seats. They will also be able to tell you where to find a relief area for your assistance dog if one is available.



Make sure that you get a baggage tag for any equipment, such as a wheelchair, that has to go in the hold. If your wheelchair needs to be specially packed, you may need to transfer into an airport wheelchair at check-in. You can find more information about travelling with a wheelchair in section 6.4.8.

If you have requested any services, such as an airport wheelchair or buggy or if you need assistance to reach the boarding gate, someone will meet you at check-in.

After check-in, staff from the airline you are travelling with, or their representatives, will provide the assistance you have requested.

#### 6.3.4 Self-service equipment

Many airports now have self-service check-in facilities and ticket machines. There should also be a fully accessible help-point nearby, in case you have any problems.

If you are unable to use these machines for any reason, there will also be a staffed check-in desk, where staff will be able to assist you.

There should be a clear sign on the machine to tell you where you can find the help point or staffed check-in desk.



### 6.3.5 Reserved seating areas

You might find it helpful to reach the departure lounge well before the flight is due to leave. It is not always possible for airline staff to stay with you until it is time to go through the ticket and security checks. Staff will usually leave passengers in an area that is close to a staffed desk or fully accessible help-point as well as accessible toilets and telephones.

You should be able to get flight information whilst waiting in these areas. Information screens should be clearly visible from where you are seated and staff will check back regularly, particularly for visually impaired passengers.

If you want to move around the lounge - to have something to eat or to visit the shops - you should arrange a time and place to meet up with the airline staff, so that you have plenty of time to go through the security checks and get to the departure gate.



### 6.3.6 Assistance dogs

Airports should have a dog relief area or 'dog toilet', however they might not be available at all airports straight away. The Code gives airports operators clear guidance on the facilities that should be

provided, however it may take some time for these to be available at all airports.

These areas will be well signed and should be easy to get to, along flat well lit paths. Airport staff will assist you if you ask them. The area will be secure with a high fence and a simple to operate catch. There should also be a covered waste bin and a supply of plastic bags next to the gate.

If the airport does not have a dog toilet areas especially for assistance dogs, you may be able to use the same area as the airport security dogs or the Customs and Excise 'sniffer' dogs. It is important that you let the airport and airline know that you will be travelling with an assistance dog so that alternative arrangements can be made if necessary.

You can find more information about travelling by air with an assistance dog in sections 4.4.8 and 8.7.



## **6.4 Airside facilities**

Before going through the security checks to the "airside" of the terminal, you will have to say good bye to anyone who has come to see you off but is not flying with you. Once through the security checks you are not allowed to go back the way you have come. However, you will usually find toilets, shops, restaurants, business centres, executive lounges, places for prayer and viewing areas after you have gone through security. Everything should be accessible to disabled people.

### 6.4.1 Security

Security is important to everyone - checks are made on all passengers and baggage. Neither disabled people nor their mobility equipment (e.g. wheelchairs) can be exempt from security searches.

All the facilities should be accessible to disabled people, the aisles and security archways or metal detectors are wide enough to allow wheelchairs to pass through, and staff will lift bags on to the x-ray machines if necessary.

Security staff are trained to conduct searches of disabled and less mobile passengers with sensitivity and care. If you would find a public search embarrassing, you can ask to go into a private search area. Staff should repack bags in a specific order for visually impaired passengers, so that you know where certain essential items are located.

### 6.4.2 Toilets

If you are being accompanied or assisted to the plane by a member of staff, make sure that they allow time for you to visit the toilet before going to the departure gate.

Space on planes is very limited and toilets are often small and more difficult to use. Most people find it easier and more pleasant to use the toilets at the airport.

This is especially important for disabled passengers, as there might not be an accessible toilet on the plane. On larger planes, there may

be accessible toilet you can reach using the on-board wheelchair. You should check the length of the flight and availability of accessible toilets before you fly.

Flying High from the Disabled Living Foundation gives practical hints about personal toilet arrangements on long flights. You can find more information about on-board toilets in section 8.8.

#### 6.4.3 Customs and VAT reclaim

Like all other areas in the airport, this should be fully accessible to disabled passengers. The desks should be accessible to wheelchair users and be suitable for people who are deaf or hearing impaired or have a learning disability.

Staff should have been trained in disability awareness.

#### 6.4.4 Shopping, catering, and other public facilities

As for landside, all areas and services that are available to the public should be accessible to disabled passengers. All staff should have received disability awareness training.

#### 6.4.5 Gate facilities

Staff at the boarding gate should be expecting you if you have pre-booked any assistance. Check-in staff will have contacted colleagues at the boarding gate with information about any passengers with visual or hearing impairment or a learning disability, so that they can keep you up to date on flight information or safety announcements.

If you have a difficulty with steps or stairs, the staff may suggest an alternative route to the plane or summon appropriate assistance.

Sometimes you might need to travel to the plane by bus or in an airport buggy if the plane is a long way from the building. Low floor wheelchair accessible buses are usually used as they are also good for people with heavy bags or suitcases and people with small children.

### 6.4.7 Boarding

Disabled passengers who need assistance are usually asked to board the plane first. This is because it is easier and less stressful to manoeuvre in an empty plane. It also means that you have more time to get comfortably settled before the rest of the passengers board the plane.

If you need to be lifted in a certain way, to avoid pain or injury, make sure that you tell the handling staff clearly. If you are travelling with a companion or specially trained assistant tell the airline if you would prefer to be lifted by that person.

### 6.4.8 Wheelchairs

As a general rule wheelchair users should be able to stay in their own wheelchair until they reach the side of the plane, but will then need to transfer into an on-board chair to get on to the plane.



If the plane is joined to the terminal building by an 'air-bridge' or tunnel, you should be able to stay in your own wheelchair right to the door of the plane, as there will be level entry into the passenger cabin.

If the plane is parked away from the terminal, passengers will have to use a flight of stairs to board. If you are a wheelchair user, you will have to transfer into a boarding chair or on-board wheelchair at the

departure gate, or on the ground outside the plane, or in the vehicle that you travelled to the plane in.

However, it is important to remember that the point at which you will have to transfer, may vary between airports and will depend on what facilities and equipment are available for the staff to take the wheelchair back down to ground level to be loaded into the hold. If a lift or the necessary equipment are not available at the side of the plane, you will have to transfer into an onboard chair at the departure gate.



Passengers often ask why their personal wheelchairs cannot be used in the plane cabin, as they are in buses and taxis. This is because it is not possible for wheelchairs to be fixed securely enough to meet the very demanding air safety regulations, particularly in the event of an emergency.

All wheelchairs will need to be stored in the hold. However, other small mobility aids such as crutches, sticks or canes should be stored in the passenger cabin. Personal wheelchairs should be carried free of charge, and should be the last items to be loaded in the hold and the first to be unloaded. They should then be unpacked and returned to their owner as soon as possible.

If your wheelchair has to be specially packed, you may need to transfer into an airport chair at check-in. This often applies to powered wheelchairs or scooters.

Wheelchairs are often wrapped in a heavy-duty polythene cover to protect them and make sure that foot-plates or other parts don't come off and get lost.

Some airlines will expect you to provide your own protective cover for your wheelchair, so you need to check with the airline before you arrive at the airport.

There are strict safety regulations about what can be carried on a plane. If you use a powered wheelchair or scooter you will need to check if the airline will carry it.

Most airlines will usually only carry those with dry-cell batteries. It is unlikely that you will be able to take a chair or scooter that has wet-cell or spillable batteries due to safety regulations. You may be able to hire a powered wheelchair or scooter at your destination. You should also check the voltage of the country you are visiting. If it is different from that used in the UK you will need to take or hire a transformer to recharge your electric wheelchair. You can get more information about travelling abroad with a wheelchair from Tripscope. They will also be able to give you a list of hire companies abroad.

A wheelchair is vital to a wheelchair user and your trip could be ruined if it is lost or damaged during the flight, so staff packing and loading wheelchairs should be specially trained.

It can be helpful to put a note on your wheelchair explaining how it works and which bits can be moved or taken off, to make it easier to move or pack. This is especially important for electric wheelchairs or scooters, as they are not designed to be pushed and can be easily damaged.

Even if you follow all this advice and the staff are careful with your wheelchair, accidents can still happen. Make sure your wheelchair is properly insured. You can find more information about insurance in section 4.4.9.

## **Section 7      Aircraft design**

The European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) has published guidance on making planes more accessible to disabled passengers. It is discussing with plane manufacturers the need to ensure future designs are fully accessible.

Wide-bodied planes, that have more than one aisle, should have an on-board wheelchair specially designed to be used within plane aisles and at least one toilet that is accessible to disabled passengers. Sometimes the airline is able to modify the doors to allow two toilet units to be used as one, if extra space is needed.

The passenger cabin should be equipped with handholds where necessary, colour/tonal contrast, non-slip flooring, non-glare lighting and easily visible signing. On many planes a number of aisle seats will have lifting armrests.



DPTAC will be working with the airline industry and disabled people on a specification for an accessible toilet to be used on new planes.

We will also be working with the industry and disabled people to make recommendations for on-board wheelchairs that are suitable for a wide variety of disabled people.

## **Section 8      On board facilities**

### 8.1    Training

All cabin crew, including the flight crew, should have received disability awareness training. You can find more information about staff training in section 3.

### 8.2    Seat allocation

You should be able to pre-book a seat if you are concerned that you need a specific seat because of your disability. You can find more information about pre-booking seats in sections 4.2.2 and 4.4.4.

If you have not pre-booked a seat, the staff at check-in will have tried to give you the most suitable seat available and let the cabin crew know why you need this seat.

Once you have been given an appropriate seat, you should not have to move except on grounds of safety, for example if you have been given a seat in the emergency aisle.

### 8.3    Cabin crew

The limited space inside a plane cabin makes doing things a lot more difficult. Everyday tasks that are usually quite easy can become impossible without room to move properly.

The cabin crew will be able to assist you with most of these problems, such as stowing and retrieving hand luggage and mobility aids in the overhead lockers.

They should know if you have pre-booked any assistance, and will tell you about any facilities on the plane designed for disabled passengers.

If you are visually impaired, they should also tell you more general information about the plane, its services and facilities.

Do not be afraid to ask if you need assistance. For example, if you are visually impaired they will be able to read the dinner menu or describe what is available from the on-board shopping service.

If you need assistance to reach the toilet, cabin crew can push the on-board wheelchair or offer general support, but they are not allowed to lift passengers or to assist with toileting.

The cabin crew should also check at intervals during the flight, to see whether help is needed.

#### 8.4 Information and emergency instructions

When travelling by air, it is important that you know about safety and what to do if there is an emergency. You will be given lots of information about what you can and can not do - for example, you are not allowed to smoke on most planes.

These instructions may be different on different airlines, but they should all be accessible to people with a visual, hearing or learning disability.

Airlines use lots of different ways to pass on this information

**Safety Cards:** these are usually large print with simple instructions and easy to follow pictures

**Videos:** these should have an audio commentary and subtitles. They will often use a BSL interpreter as well.

**Announcements:** passengers using hearing aids should be able to use the 'T' switch on their hearing aids.

**Staff demonstrations:** if you have a visual, hearing or learning disability, let the cabin crew know where you are so that they can give you a personal briefing and keep you up to date.

If you find it difficult, for any reason, to understand the information given, you should ask a cabin crew member to explain it to you or to provide the information in a different way.



All the safety information should be available in alternative formats such as Braille, large print and with easy to follow pictures for people with learning disabilities.

### 8.5 Entertainment

Most planes have some kind of in-flight entertainment such as radio or videos. You should be able you use the 'T' switch on your hearing aid to listen to these programmes.

As technology improves, you will be able to get subtitles and audio description for films and other programmes on new planes.

### 8.6 Catering

Food on planes must be served in sealed packages because of strict Health and Safety regulations. These packages should be easy to open and 'user-friendly', but in the limited space of a plane seat, they can still be very difficult to open. Cabin crew will open the packaging and help to cut food if asked to do so, but they will not be able to feed anybody.

They will also describe the food and its layout on the tray to visually impaired passengers.

### 8.7 Assistance dogs

Travelling by air will be a new experience for most assistance dogs, so you should think carefully about how they will react.

If the dog is allowed to travel in the cabin with you, it will probably be at your feet. During a long flight, even a well-trained dog may get uncomfortable and restless.

You should always talk to your vet and discuss any concerns with the relevant training organisation, such as Guide Dogs for the Blind, before you make a decision.



You can find more information about travelling by air with an assistance dog in sections 4.4.8 and 6.3.6.

## 8.8 Toilet arrangements

Toilets on planes are difficult to use for everybody as they are very small and cramped and there might be a lot of movement of the plane.

Many planes do not have toilets that are accessible to disabled people, especially wheelchair users and many other ambulant disabled people.

You will need to plan ahead and might need to prepare yourself or make other arrangements. You will know what is the best method for your own needs.

If you are concerned or want more advice, the Disabled Living Foundation have a booklet called 'Flying High' which gives practical hints about personal toilet arrangements on long flights.

Details of other useful publications and organisations are given in Annex 1 and 2.

## 8.9 Oxygen

If you need oxygen on the flight, you must let the airline know when you book, as they will have to make special arrangements.

If you suddenly need extra oxygen during the flight, you will be able to use the emergency oxygen supply,

You can find more information about using oxygen on the plane in section 4.4.12.

### 8.10 Artificial limbs

Sitting in a pressurised cabin for a long time can make your ankles, feet and joints swell. If you take off a prosthesis during the flight to be more comfortable, you may find that it is very difficult to get it back on, especially in the limited space of a plane seat.

You should always ask your doctor for advice before you fly.

### 8.11 Circulatory problems

Always ask your doctor for advice if you are concerned that your disability makes you vulnerable to circulation problems or deep vein thrombosis (DVT).

If you are sitting down for a long time, you should flex or move your legs and feet or try to move around the plane if at all possible. Comfortable shoes, support stockings and an aspirin may also help.

## **Section 9 Disembarkation, transfer arrangements and leaving the airport**

Airports outside the UK do not have to provide the same facilities and services as those described in the UK Code, but that does not mean that they will not be accessible. Many countries have their own rules and regulations.

### 9.1 Leaving the plane

Disabled and less mobile passengers who need assistance will usually be asked to wait until last to get off the plane. This is because it is easier and less stressful to manoeuvre in an empty plane. Once the plane is empty, you should be able to leave the plane immediately and should not be left waiting for assistance.

The airport operators will try to make sure that a wheelchair users own wheelchair is returned to them at the plane side as soon as they leave the plane but this is not always possible.

If it is possible to return a wheelchair at the plane, your personal chair should not go to the baggage reclaim hall unless that is what you have asked for.

Some delays may be unavoidable at busy airports, but the airline should make sure that these delays are kept as short as possible.

### 9.2 Transfers to other flights

If your journey means travelling on more than one plane, you will need to pre-book assistance before you start your journey.

The airline (or ground handling) staff should be able to take you straight to the next departure gate or take you to meet the staff of the next airline. They should also arrange suitable accessible transport, such as a wheelchair or accessible buggy, if there is a long distance between the planes.

### 9.3 Baggage retrieval, Immigration and Customs

These areas should be designed so that wheelchairs or airport buggies can move easily through them.

If you will need assistance with getting your bags at the destination airport, you should pre-book this service before you start your journey.

Remember, UK laws, regulations and standards may not apply to the airport at your destination, so you will need to check thoroughly what services and facilities are available.

Staff assisting disabled passengers through the terminal will also be able to assist with collecting and carrying bags.

Immigration and customs staff should have received disability awareness training, so that they can deal effectively and sensitively with disabled passengers.

Visually impaired passengers should ask staff to repack bags in a specific order, so that you know where certain essential items are located.

#### 9.4 Onward travel

You should be able to pre-book assistance between the plane and the next stage of your journey, for example a tour operators coach, car park, bus station or railway station. Make sure that the staff accompanying you informs the next travel operator you are there and will need assistance.

Staff will help to carry luggage to car parks and load the car but they are not allowed to lift people into their cars.

#### 9.5 Return journey

When you book your flights or holiday, make sure that you also check and book facilities and services, not only at the departure airport, but also at your destination and any other stops in-between.

## **Section 10     If things go wrong**

The airport operator or airline should provide all the services and facilities as described in your booking, so that your journey is as easy, comfortable and stress free as possible.

By being well prepared and booking assistance in advance, you will help avoid many problems. However, things do not always go as planned.

If you do have a problem, you should notify the travel agent, tour operator, airline or airport immediately. It may be possible to solve the problem straight away and this will ensure that those responsible know when things do not work so that they can get it right next time.

If the problem is not resolved contact the organisation afterwards and ask for an explanation. If you are still not satisfied with their response, you may wish to contact the Air Transport Users Council.

Most travel agents or tour operators are members of the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) who will be able to deal with complaints against one of their members. However, ABTA would probably not be able to help you if the company is not an ABTA member.

## **Annex 1 – Useful Contacts**

Further copies of this document are available from

Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC)  
Secretariat, Great Minster House  
76 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DR  
Tel: 020 7944 8011  
Fax: 020 7944 6998  
Textphone: 020 7944 3277  
E-mail: [dptac@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:dptac@dft.gsi.gov.uk)  
Web-site: [www.dptac.gov.uk](http://www.dptac.gov.uk)

### **The Access to Air Travel for Disabled People - Code of Practice is available from**

Department for Transport  
PO Box 236  
Wetherby  
West Yorkshire  
LS23 7NB

Tel: 0870 1226 236  
Textphone: 0870 1226 405  
Email: [dft@twoten.press.net](mailto:dft@twoten.press.net)

## **Arthritis Care**

18 Stephenson Way

London

NW1 2HD

Help lines: 080 8800 4050 (Monday to Friday 12pm to 4pm  
freephone)

020 7380 6555 (Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm standard call  
charges)

Tel: 020 7916 500

Fax: 020 7916 505

Web: [www.arthritiscare.org.uk](http://www.arthritiscare.org.uk)

## **Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA)**

68-71 Newman St

London

W1T 3AH

Tel: 020 7637 2444

Fax: 020 7637 0713

E-mail: [information@abta.com](mailto:information@abta.com)

Web: [www.abta.co.uk](http://www.abta.co.uk)

## **Air Transport Users Council (AUC)**

CAA House

Kingsway House,

45-59 Kingsway

London

WC2B 6TE

Tel: 020 7240 6061

Fax: 020 7240 7071

E-mail: [admin@auc.caa.co.uk](mailto:admin@auc.caa.co.uk)

Web: [www.auc.org.uk](http://www.auc.org.uk)



## **Assistance Dogs (UK)**

Lewknor Training Centre  
Hearing Dogs for Deaf People  
Wycombe Road  
Saunderton  
Princes Risborough  
Buckinghamshire  
HP27 9NS

Tel: 01844 348 100 (*Voice and Textphone*)  
Fax: 01844 348 101  
E-mail: [info@hearing-dogs.co.uk](mailto:info@hearing-dogs.co.uk)  
Web-site: [www.hearing-dogs.co.uk](http://www.hearing-dogs.co.uk)

## **British Air Transport Association (BATA)**

Artillery House  
11-19 Artillery Row  
London  
SW1P 1RT

Tel: 020 7222 9494  
Fax: 020 7222 9595  
E-mail: [admin@bata.uk.com](mailto:admin@bata.uk.com)  
Website: [www.bata.uk.com](http://www.bata.uk.com)

## **British Lung Foundation**

Research Charity providing advice on all forms of lung disease

Tel: 020 7831 5831  
Website: [www.lunguk.org](http://www.lunguk.org)

## **BAA plc**

Operators of Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Southampton & Aberdeen airports.

BAA plc

Corporate Office

130 Wilton Road

London

SW1V 1LQ

Tel: 020 7834 9449

Fax: 020 7834 6699

Website: [www.baa.co.uk](http://www.baa.co.uk) or [www.baa.com](http://www.baa.com)  
for information on all BAA airports

## **Change**

National organisation run for and by people with learning disabilities

Unity Business Centre

Units 19 & 20

26 Roundhay Road

Leeds

LS7 1AB

Tel: 0113 243 0202

Fax: 0113 243 0220

Textphone: 0113 243 2225

Email: [change.north@tesco.net](mailto:change.north@tesco.net)

Website: [www.changepeople.co.uk](http://www.changepeople.co.uk)

## **Disability Rights Commission (DRC)**

Freepost

MID 02164

Stratford upon Avon

CV37 9BR

Tel: 08457 622 633

Fax: 08457 77 88 78

Email: [enquiry@drc-gb.org](mailto:enquiry@drc-gb.org)

Website: [www.drc-gb.org](http://www.drc-gb.org)

## **Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA)**

Noble House  
17 Smith Square  
London  
SW1P 3JR  
Tel: 020 7238 6000  
Fax: 020 7238 6591  
Website: [www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/quarantine](http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/quarantine)  
E-mail: [pets.helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:pets.helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

## **Department for Transport (DfT)**

Mobility and Inclusion Unit  
Room 1/18  
Great Minster House  
76 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DR  
Tel: 020 7944 4914  
Fax: 020 7944 6102  
E-mail: [miu@df.gov.uk](mailto:miu@df.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.mobility-unit.gov.uk](http://www.mobility-unit.gov.uk)  
[www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk)

## **Disabled Living Foundation**

380-384 Harrow Road,  
London  
W9 2HU.  
Tel: 0845 130 9177  
Textphone: 0870 603 9176  
Email: [advice@dlf.org.uk](mailto:advice@dlf.org.uk)  
Website: [www.dlf.org.uk](http://www.dlf.org.uk)

## **Guide Dogs for the Blind Association**

Burghfield Common,  
Reading

RG7 3YG

Tel: 0870 600 2323

E-mail: [guidedogs@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:guidedogs@guidedogs.org.uk)

Website: [www.guidedogs.org.uk](http://www.guidedogs.org.uk)

### **Holiday Care Service**

Provides information fact sheets about travel within the UK and overseas for elderly and disabled people

7<sup>th</sup> Floor

Sunley House,

4 Bedford Park,

Croydon,

CR0 2AP

Tel: 0845 1249 971

Fax: 0845 1249 972

Textphone: 0845 1249 976

E-mail: [holiday.care@virgin.net](mailto:holiday.care@virgin.net)

Website: [www.holidaycare.org.uk](http://www.holidaycare.org.uk)

### **Royal Society for Mentally Handicapped Children & Adults (MENCAP)**

123 Golden Lane

London

EC1Y 0RT

Tel: 020 7454 0454

Fax: 020 77696 5540

E-mail: [information@mencap.org.uk](mailto:information@mencap.org.uk)

Web: [www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)

### **Royal Association for Disability & Rehabilitation (RADAR)**

12 City Forum

250 City Road

London

EC1V 8AF

Tel: 020 7250 3222

Fax: 020 7250 0212

Textphone: 020 7250 4119  
E-mail: [radar@radar.org](mailto:radar@radar.org)  
Web: [www.radar.org.uk](http://www.radar.org.uk)

### **Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB)**

105 Judd Street  
London  
WC1H 9NE  
Tel: 020 7388 1266  
Fax: 020 7388 2034  
E-mail: [resource@rnib.org.uk](mailto:resource@rnib.org.uk)  
Website: [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

### **Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID)**

19-23 Featherstone Street  
London  
EC1Y 8SL  
Tel: 0808 808 0123 (freephone)  
Fax: 0207 296 8199  
Textphone: 0808 808 9000 (freephone)  
E-mail: [informationline@rnid.org.uk](mailto:informationline@rnid.org.uk)  
Website: [www.rnid.org.uk](http://www.rnid.org.uk)

### **SCOPE**

UK Cerebral Palsy (CP) organisation which provides information, education, employment and support.

6 Market Road  
London  
N7 9PW  
Tel: 0808 800 3333  
E-mail: [cphelpline@scope.org.uk](mailto:cphelpline@scope.org.uk)  
Website: [www.scope.org.uk](http://www.scope.org.uk)

### **TRIPSCOPE**

Provides advice and information on travel arrangements and journey planning

The Vassal Centre  
Gill Avenue  
Bristol  
BS16 2QQ

Helpline: 08457 58 56 41 (local rate)  
Fax: 0117 939 7736  
Textphone: 08457 58 56 41 (local rate)  
E-mail: [enquiries@tripscope.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@tripscope.org.uk)  
Website: [www.tripscope.org.uk](http://www.tripscope.org.uk)

## **Annex 2 – Useful Publications**

**“Advice to Guide Dog Owners planning to travel abroad with their guide dogs using the Pet Travel Scheme”**

From Guide Dogs for the Blind Association web-site

**"Air travel with a Lung Condition"**

**“Going on Holiday with a Lung Condition”**

From the British Lung foundation – available on the web-site

**"Door to Door - A Guide to Transport for Disabled People"**

Guide to all types of transport for people with disabilities (6<sup>th</sup> Edition)

From RADAR

**"Flying High – a practical guide to air travel for elderly people and people with disabilities"** From the Disabled Living Foundation.

**"Flight Plan"**

From the Air Transport Users Council

**"Inclusive mobility - a guide to best practice on access to pedestrian and transport infrastructure"**

From the Department for Transport.

**"Information for people with special needs"** booklet

From BAA Heathrow Tel 020 8745 7127

or Design, Heathrow Point West, 234 Bath Road, Hayes, UB3 5AP

**"The Pet Travel Scheme for European Countries"** leaflet

**"The Pet Travel Scheme for Long Haul Countries"** leaflet

From the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs available on web-site

**“Travelcare and Tripscope - Together we are making travel easier”** Information pack  
From Travelcare and Tripscope

**“Use of Oxygen on Holiday”** which includes suppliers of oxygen  
and advice on travelling with oxygen  
From Holiday Care



## **Annex 3 - Travel agent checklist and airline codes.**

### **ABTA CHECKLIST FOR TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES**

We want everyone to enjoy completely successful travel arrangements. We therefore ask that this checklist be completed before confirming a booking for any customer who has a disability or medical condition requiring special travel, accommodation or dietary arrangements. The questions may seem intrusive but they are necessary to ensure disabled customers receive a quality service tailored to their particular needs.

This information will be used to check the suitability of the accommodation, transport and facilities in the destination. This form should also be used to give information regarding specific needs for equipment and / or medication.

#### **A. Booking Details**

**Lead name:**

**Name of customer with special requirements:**

**Departure date:**

**Booking ref:**

**Outbound flight number:**

**Inbound flight number:**

**Contact phone number or e-mail:**

#### **B. General**

##### **1. How would you describe your disability?**

It may also be helpful to give the medical term for the disability

Please circle Yes or No as appropriate

**C. Mobility**

**1. Do you have any kind of mobility difficulty?**

**Yes / No**

If No please go to Section D. If Yes please give details...

**2. Can you walk or travel on your own without assistance in an unfamiliar place?**

**Yes / No**

For example:

although you may not need assistance all the time some distances at the airport terminal can be long - between the airline check-in desk and the departure gate, say.

**3. Are you taking your own wheelchair?**

**Yes / No**

3 (a) If Yes, is it battery operated? **Yes / No**

3 (b) If Yes, is it: i) Dry Cell **Yes / No**  
ii) Wet Cell **Yes / No**

3 (c) If Yes, does it fold up? **Yes / No**

3 (d) If Yes, what are the dimensions and weight of your wheelchair?

**OPEN:**

Width.....ins. Height ..... ins.

Depth.....ins.

**CLOSED:**

Width .....ins. Height .....ins.

Depth .....ins.

**WEIGHT:**

**4. Do you need to borrow a wheelchair to / from the aircraft?**

**Yes / No**

**There may be a charge for this. Please ask your travel company for details immediately.**

- 5. Can you walk up/down the aircraft steps without assistance?**

**Yes / No**

These can be steep with narrow treads

- 6. Do you require a wheelchair to visit the WC on board the aircraft?**

**Yes / No**

- 7. If there is a transfer coach provided as part of your arrangements, can you board and leave a standard coach without additional assistance other than from your travelling companion?**

**Yes / No**

Buses and coaches may have steep steps

- 8. If there is no transfer coach provided as part of your arrangements, do you need a taxi transfer from the airport to your accommodation and return?**

**Yes/ No**

**There may be a charge for this. Please ask your travel company for details**

#### **D. Accessible Information**

- 1. Do you have a disability that would make it difficult to see or hear important information, or communicate easily with people providing important or emergency information?**

**Yes / No**

For example:

some routine flight departure information will not be announced over loudspeakers and will only appear on a television screen; and on some aeroplanes the safety demonstration may not be accompanied by full spoken explanation

## **E. Flight / Coach Tour**

1. **Is it best for you to sit near to the WC?**  
**Yes / No**
2. **Is it best for you to have an aisle seat?**  
**Yes / No**  
If yes, why?
3. **Do you prefer a no smoking seat?**  
**Yes / No**
4. **Will you be taking medication during the flight?**  
**Yes / No**  
If Yes, please provide details...
5. **Are you taking any medical equipment?**  
**Yes / No**  
If Yes, please provide details...
5. **Are you asthmatic or do you have other breathing difficulties?**  
**Yes / No**  
If Yes, please provide details...
7. **Are you likely to require supplementary oxygen?**  
**Yes / No**  
There will almost certainly be a charge for supplementary oxygen
8. **Are you travelling with any kind of assistance dog?**  
**Yes / No**  
You must make sure that the dog has been micro-chipped, processed and immunised against rabies in accordance with the pet passport scheme (Check with the Guide Dogs Association, telephone: 01189 835 555)

## **F. Accommodation**

**1. Can you walk up/down stairs unaided?**

a) all / most of the time   b) some of the time   c) occasionally

It is important to know how many steps you can cope with unaided and whether this applies all the time.

**2. Would you prefer a ground floor room?**

**Yes / No**

For example:

if the property has no lift, would you be able to cope with a room on the first floor.

**3. Would you prefer a room near the lift?**

**Yes / No**

**4. What special facilities do you require in your room to be accessible?**

For example:

some disabled customers may simply need grab handles, while others may need special facilities to allow access to showers, washbasin and taps, say.

**5. Would you like medication to be stored in a fridge?**

**Yes/ No**

**G. Meals**

**1. Do you have a special dietary requirement?**

**Yes / No**

If YES, please give details.

## **IMPORTANT CUSTOMER INFORMATION**

This information will be passed on to your travel suppliers, who will do their best to meet your needs. However it is very important to remember that:

- Meeting your needs **cannot always** be guaranteed. For example, aeroplanes, coaches and other elements of your holiday may need to be substituted without prior notification due to unforeseen circumstances (i.e. breakdown, cancellation or non-availability of accommodation).
- Your holiday insurance policy should adequately cover any pre-existing medical conditions and cover any expensive equipment you may be taking.
- Any change in your requirements may affect the suitability of the travel arrangements you have made. It is important to let your travel agent or tour operator know of any changes immediately.
- Airlines use an internationally recognised coding system to identify the level of assistance they need to provide to individuals. A copy of that list is included in this checklist.

I confirm that the information given on this form is correct and understand that there is no guarantee that these needs will be met. I also understand that this information will be passed on to those people responsible for supplying all the arrangements for my travel, but that it will not be communicated to any party which is not responsible for the supply of any of my travel arrangements.

### **Customer signature / Date**

If you are answering the above questions on behalf of a disabled person please sign below to confirm that this information is accurate and that you have the disabled person's permission to pass it on for the purpose of making travel arrangements.

### **Customer signature / Date**

(I am over 18 years of age)

## **AIRLINE CATEGORIES FOR DISABLED PEOPLE REQUIRING ASSISTANCE**

<b>MEDA</b>	Passenger whose mobility is impaired due to clinical cases with medical pathology in progress, being authorised to travel by medical authorities. Such a passenger usually has social coverage in relation to the illness or accident.
<b>STCR</b>	Passenger who can only be transported on a stretcher. Such a passenger may or may not have social protection or specific insurance.
<b>WHCR</b>	Passenger who can walk up and down stairs and move about in an aircraft cabin. Passenger who requires a wheelchair or other means for movements between the aircraft and the terminal, in the terminal and between arrival and departure points on the city side of the terminal.
<b>WCHS</b>	Passenger who cannot walk up or down stairs, but who can move about in an aircraft cabin. Passenger who requires a wheelchair to move between the aircraft and the terminal, in the terminal and between arrival and departure points on the city side of the terminal.
<b>WCHP*</b>	Passenger with a disability of the lower limbs who is unable to take care of him/herself. Passenger who requires assistance to embark or disembark and who can move about in an aircraft cabin only with the help of an onboard wheelchair.
<b>WCHC</b>	Passenger who is completely immobile who can move about only with the help of a wheelchair or other means and who requires assistance at all times from arrival at the airport to seating in the aircraft or, if necessary, in a special seat fitted to his/her specific needs. The same kind of assistance is required at both ends of the journey.

<b>BLIND</b>	Blind or visually impaired.
<b>DEAF</b>	Passenger who is deaf or a passenger who is deaf without speech.
<b>DEAF/BLIND</b>	Passenger who is both deaf and blind, who can only move around with the help of an accompanying person
<b>MAAS</b>	Meet and assist - all other passengers in need of special assistance.

\* WHCP is not yet internationally recognised





**DPTAC**  
Access for all

Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee  
(Established under the Transport Act 1985)